COLLABORATION FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT:
Strategic Initiatives of UB School of Architecture and Planning with UB Regional Institute



University at Buffalo
Regional Institute
School of Architecture and Planning

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Regional Institute
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The UB Regional Institute (UBRI) is a local and national award-winning research center working with the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning (the School) to support stronger regional economies for all. UBRI has been working in partnership with the School throughout the region for over 30 years. This work pursues public scholarship with community constituencies at the intersection of public policy, urban planning, urban design, architecture, and real estate development. UBRI has collaborated with faculty and students from the School of Architecture and Planning in a variety of ways throughout its history. This includes teaching and advising students, providing opportunities to work on relevant practical planning efforts, assisting with faculty research, and more. Our collaborations span diverse areas of planning, including economic development, community engagement, transportation planning, food systems, affordable housing, historic preservation, GIS, and more.

Collaborations between the School and UBRI add value to student learning as well as faculty research. Students benefit by gaining practical experience in the planning profession. These projects give students meaningful learning and networking opportunities by connecting them with planning professionals. UBRI partnerships have been valuable to faculty by opening doors to new research opportunities and supporting academic publications. These partnerships add immense value to UBRI's project work, by leveraging the knowledge and expertise of faculty partners, and the creative drive of students who work with UBRI.

This report summarizes these partnerships and how they impact the school and broader community of Buffalo and the Western New York region in a five-year timeframe to demonstrate the effectiveness of collaboration.

LAURA QUEBRAL, Director
ROBERT G. SHIBLEY, Professor and Dean

The Impact of Our Collaborations: 2015-2020

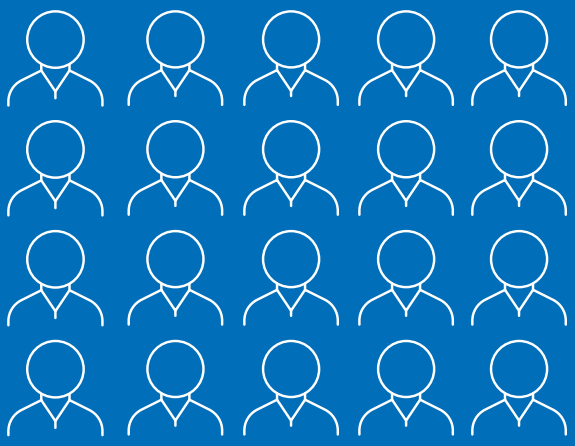
The impacts of UBRI's collaborations with the School on high visibility projects, on academics, student learning, and community benefit are undoubtedly far-reaching, but difficult to quantify. Although hard to measure, these benefits are evident in a number of ways.

The impacts of collaborations between UBRI and the School are shown by:

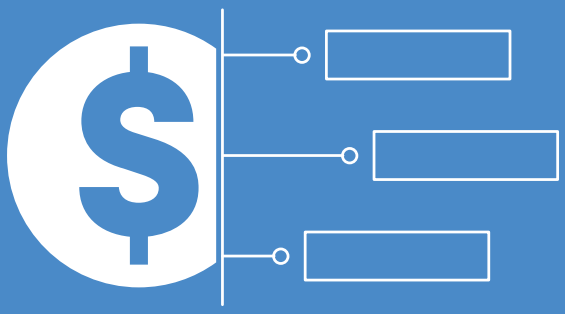
- ... the students who became involved in important local planning projects through UBRI, serving as volunteers and student research assistants, enhancing the educational experience.
- ... the faculty members engaged in practical research through UBRI work, the research opportunities these collaborations offer, and publications developed from this research.
- .. the enhanced value of UBRI's planning work with strategic partners that comes from the knowledge, dedication, and creativity of students and faculty who partner with UBRI.
- ... the added community benefits that come from applied community-based research focused on meaningful, participatory engagement.
- ... the strengthened connections between the school community, the neighborhood, and the broader regional community of Western New York, increasing the School's profile and reputation.

The collaborations bring a range of valuable applied learning opportunities for students and practical research opportunities for faculty. These partnerships brought in a sizable amount of research dollars into the School and produced vital research that deals with relevant regional issues. Partnerships also add value to UBRI's work by tapping into the expertise of faculty members and the creative drive of students. These partnerships also strengthen the campus-community connections for the school to extend benefits to community members in the surrounding neighborhoods and across the WNY community. In all these ways and more, partnerships between the School and UBRI bring immeasurable impacts to students, faculty, UBRI staff, and most importantly, the community we work in.

- **$9M+** research dollars brought in
- **100+** students engaged
  - Dozens of graduate assistants
- **20+** faculty members engaged
  - **2** academic publications
  - **2** symposia
  - **4** academic conference presentations
- **69** professional reports
- **7** awards
- **15** studio classes supported



20+ FACULTY MEMBERS ENGAGED



$9M+ FOR RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC PROJECTS

100+ STUDENTS ENGAGED

VOLUNTEERS AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

RESEARCH

69 PROFESSIONAL REPORTS

7 AWARDS

Teaching and Classroom Engagements

UBRI enhances student learning by supporting classroom activities through lectures, teaching, career development, and hands-on planning experience.

Through classroom engagements, UBRI teaches our objective approach to understanding complex issues and translating this understanding into useful and relevant information for diverse communities. This provides students with a sound approach and key skills for their future work as professional planners.

UBRI's student engagements cover a number of topics from economic development, neighborhood development, community engagement to data analysis. UBRI also teaches students directly by instructing an Economic Development Planning course, while offering students career guidance and networking opportunities. Students also gain direct project experience by working as graduate assistants and volunteers on UBRI's ongoing planning projects, as we work to enhance students' career development.

Career development opportunities for students give valuable work experience and networking opportunities to grow career prospects. Starting in 2020, UBRI assumed career advisement responsibilities for students in the Masters of Urban Planning and Masters of Real Estate Development programs. This work involves:

- Providing one-on-one consultations or resume reviews.
- Hosting monthly career development workshops, in partnership with professional organizations like the WNY Division of the American Planning Association and the NYS Association for Affordable Housing.
- Pairing each first year Masters of Real Estate student with two professional mentors from the local real estate industry.

Engaging students on UBRI projects gives students valuable work opportunities and connects the school with the regional community. Projects using Graduate Assistants/Student Volunteers include:

- Imagine LaSalle - student volunteers assisted with many community engagement activities, including public workshops and the public exhibition of the model.
- Imagine LaSalle; Student Research Assistants: Dalanda Jalloh, Nina Zesky, Kennedy Alexis; "Managing High Quality Park Environments".
- Building Together - Two GAs hired to plan and carry out community engagement activities including workshops, meetings with community organizations, tabling at events; designed community engagement tools; assisted with writing and conceptualizing report.

Guest lectures draw from our project work, local working knowledge of the region, and our various areas of expertise as working planners. Guest lectures allow UBRI to share a variety of technical skills, resources, and local knowledge with students. Examples include:

- UB Environmental Design, Fall 2020: Instructor Jeffery Rehler
  - Looking at clean energy development in the rural context.
- UB Planning Studio, Spring 2017: Samina Raja
  - Using IMPLAN, an economic impact modeling tool, to analyze food systems.
- URP 544 Scenario Planning Class, Spring 2020, Spring 2021: Instructor Lisa Kenney
  - Integrating community outreach into mapping tools, Envision Tomorrow and ArcGIS, to support neighborhood scenario planning.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

END422|URP522

As leading economic development researchers, working in partnership with economic development practitioners throughout the region and beyond, the UBRI team instruct a Master's level seminar offered in the spring semester by the School of Architecture and Planning.

The course introduces students to the diverse ideas, roles and impact of policies in the practice of economic development planning through practical examples drawn primarily from the Western New York region and New York State. The course explores the complex ecosystem of economic development decision making: how regional economies operate, how informed decisions are made and evaluated, strategies and tools for improving the economy, the role of different organizations in a market-driven economy, and overarching themes of equity and sustainability in economic development planning. The course is open to both undergraduate and graduate students in planning, real estate, architecture and environmental design.

The Economic Development Planning course connects students with working professionals from diverse fields who serve as guest lecturers. This gives students an opportunity to learn from a wide variety of perspectives, areas of expertise, and approaches to economic development. Students gain experience with economic development through engaging in-class discussions with instructors and guest speakers. Class assignments are practice-based to instruct student on how to back an evidence-backed, grounded, compelling argument that is based on proven, tactical approaches to economic development that also promote community values, equity, and sustainability.

The course discusses the roles that government, academia, private sector, foundations, non-profits, community groups, and others play in economic development. The class presents workforce development, innovation, placemaking, and sustainability as overarching strategies to economic development by hearing from local planners who put these concepts to practice. By networking with our guest speakers, students in the class have been able to grow classroom connections into beneficial career development opportunities.


WELLNESS
PARKS
URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH
University at Buffalo
School of Architecture and Planning
Buffalo


ONE REGION FORWARD
What is sustainability and how do we define it for Buffalo Niagara?
TELL US WHAT YOU TH
What would you change about your community to make it more sustainable?
What ab community do save for future
A manifested vision for
More bus stops
Science Museum
The PARK (MLK)
science school
the people
ONE REGION FORWARD IS FOCUSED ON
Land Use and Development
Transportation and Mobility
Housing Neighborhoods
The time is here for Buffalo Niagara.
We've worked together to build a more sustainable region. Our many efforts to grow our economy and build livable communities are coming into alignment. We have an opportunity to carry this momentum forward and prosperous future.

Studios and Practical Planning Activities

UBRI guides decision making, design, and strategic planning with implementation assistance for our local, regional, state, and national partners. Through this work, UBRI opens doors for students to work on and contribute to significant planning projects. This applied learning introduces students to important planning topics and expands career development and networking opportunities for students by connecting them with planning professionals. These practical planning projects are invaluable to student learning, and build important connections between the school, its neighborhood, and the regional community.

Studios exemplify service learning opportunities that benefit both students, by providing practical experience, and the local community, by producing in-depth research, creative designs, innovative plans, and thoughtful recommendations. UBRI contributes to studios and practical planning experiences for students on a number of levels. UBRI seeks out local planning projects and issues to develop studio topics for students in the Masters of Urban Planning (MUP) and Masters of Real Estate Development programs. These graduate studio courses give students an opportunity to benefit the community through hands-on planning experience, and exposure to professional planners and project partners. UBRI also assists in studio work by serving as consultants, sharing feedback, technical assistance, resources, and participating in work sessions.

Urban planning studios involving UBRI include international examples, but most are focused by the campus and its surrounding community. Studio work strengthens connections between the School and the broader Western New York community, particularly the University Heights neighborhood adjoining UB's South Campus. In recent years, studios have contributed a number of designs, studies, community engagements, and plans that concentrate on areas near the campus to enhance both the local community and campus environment. Studio work has also produced community-based plans in other nearby communities on Buffalo's East Side. Related studios have worked on topics ranging from sustainable development, green infrastructure, transportation planning, urban design, housing, and more.

Recent studio projects that UBRI has been involved in are described on the following pages.

University Heights

Faculty: Erkin Ozay, Greg Delaney, Hiro Hata, Mark Foerster, Ashima Krishna, Ph.D.

The UB School of Architecture and Planning takes an intentional approach to studying its campus home and the surrounding University Heights neighborhood through a continuous, multi-year engagement. Beginning in 2016, the University Heights became a living laboratory as faculty and students explored specific issues in the community, through the lenses of urban planning and architecture.

The University Heights is a neighborhood in the northeast corner of Buffalo, NY, the largest city in Erie County and the Buffalo Niagara region. Originally planned as a streetcar suburb, the University Heights neighborhood borders the towns of Tonawanda, Amherst, and Cheektowaga. Today, the neighborhood serves as the northern terminus of the City's Metro Rail system and is home to UB's South Campus, whose presence creates a unique cultural and demographic dynamic. The neighborhood is largely residential with three major commercial corridors, Main Street, Bailey Avenue, and Kenmore Avenue which differentiate distinct areas of the neighborhood.

In 2017, UBRI completed a baseline assessment of the University Heights neighborhood that frames the neighborhood in data and past and ongoing planning work. This included a qualitative assessment of 29 recent planning documents that yielded seven key planning themes; and a quantitative assessment about neighborhood demographics, economic trends, land uses, real estate market, crime patterns, and more that helps frame the neighborhood's key strengths and challenges.

Students, faculty, and UBRI worked hands-on in the University Heights neighborhood through master's level studio courses, a graduate-level urban design seminar, and several undergraduate and graduate level course projects looking at key sites and issues, to identify potential design and planning solutions.

UBRI staff participated in reviews, advised on guest speakers, and provided support to connect this work with the School's University Heights initiative. The studios involved in this ongoing work are summarized here.

ARC 607-2 / ARC 609

Urban Design Studio – (transit-oriented development around University Station)
Instructors: Mark Foerster and Hiro Hata
Fall 2016

In this interdisciplinary studio, graduate students from the School's real estate, architecture and planning programs worked together to examine the possibilities for TOD to make transformative impacts on UB's South Campus, the University Heights neighborhood, and the City of Buffalo. The studio offered takeaways regarding the feasibility, benefits, and key considerations of a transit-oriented development on the University at Buffalo South Campus. These include redeveloping surface parking lots, complete streets to connect the campus with the neighborhood, on-campus amenities accessible to the community, mixed-use developments, and public-private partnerships.

UBRI staff helped to secure Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority and Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council as clients for this studio. UBRI served as a regular reviewer of work, and helped connect the work to the School's University Heights initiative.

ARC 589

Urban Design – Town & Gown (campus and connection to place) Instructor: Greg Delaney
Spring 2017

In this studio, students examined the campus-community relationships of University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Pittsburgh, University of Pennsylvania, University of Chicago, The Ohio State University, Northeastern University, and Case Western Reserve University. First, students presented the history of each location's unique town and gown divide, then visualized the historical change of edge conditions at each location through a series of drawings. Findings are meant to inform how the campus can enhance connections with its surrounding community.

UBRI staff participated in reviews of student work and provided support to connect this effort with the School's University Heights initiative.

ARC – URP 565

Design Solutions for Bailey Avenue (Understanding Good Urban Form)
Instructor: Hiro Hata | Fall 2017

Bailey Avenue is the central corridor of the University Heights neighborhood. Bailey has a tight-knit urban fabric that bustles with pedestrian activity and vehicle traffic, but vacant lots, sparse amenities, and limited green space present many opportunities to reimagine the corridor. Through comprehensive on-the-ground field work, students made targeted proposals for redesign along Bailey Avenue. Taken together, these proposals present a sound vision for the corridor, grounded by a thorough assessment.

ARC 606

Articulating the Edge: Imaging the Futures of the University Heights, Instructor: Erkin Ozay
Spring 2017

While UB's South Campus has a distinct civic character, it lacks clarity at its edges. Expansive surface parking and undistinguished commercial plazas exacerbate a sense of groundlessness. This studio focused on six key underutilized sites identified in the UB 2020 Plan seeking strategies to maximize their latent potential. Proposals for these six nodes deal with issues related to vehicular traffic, preserving existing structures, expanding recreational uses, shared community resources, transit oriented development, and more.

END 450

Greater University District, Instructors: Margaret Winship and Kim Amplement
Fall 2019

The Greater University District Plan seeks to create a cohesive vision for an area that straddles three municipalities around the South Campus: the City of Buffalo, the Town of Tonawanda and the Town of Amherst. Examining existing conditions including demographics, land use, natural environment, and transportation, the workshop found a need to coordinate efforts to address common challenges across the study area. The workshop recommends forming an inter-municipal community development organization, inclusive programming, and micro-mobility solutions. UBRI staff served as a guest speaker, provided data and participated in a review session near the semester's conclusion.

Kensington Heights

In May 2018, Erie County Medical Center (ECMC) purchased the 17-acre site formerly occupied by the Kensington Heights public housing complex and made a commitment to the community to engage nearby residents and partners to shape the site's future. To help with that process, ECMC invited UBRI and the School of Architecture and Planning to provide preliminary planning support to meet that goal.

UBRI led a visioning process to understand what neighborhood residents and stakeholders want for the site's future. Guided by a 16-member Community Advisory Committee (CAC), the engagement involved a comprehensive on-the-ground effort to talk to neighborhood residents about their ideas and aspirations for the site. Outreach was led by a team of graduate assistants from the School of Architecture and Planning and involved regular meetings with the CAC, tabling at local events, small-scale neighborhood meetings, youth-oriented engagement activities, and a door-to-door canvassing exercise aimed at engaging local businesses. The findings were summarized in the report, "Building Together: A Community Vision to Inform the Future of Kensington Heights."

ARC 631/URP 515

Selected Concepts in Urban Design and Healthy Communities, Faculty: Erkin Ozay
Spring 2019

As UBRI started its community engagement efforts for ECMC, Professor Erkin Ozay of the Department of Architecture taught a seminar course focused on precedent research of development types that medical campuses across the country have pursued to promote healthy communities and revitalize neighborhoods. UBRI staff offered guidance to students and gave a guest lecture on community-based planning. Findings from the seminar helped inform the community planning support that UBRI provided to ECMC as part of its Kensington Heights initiative.

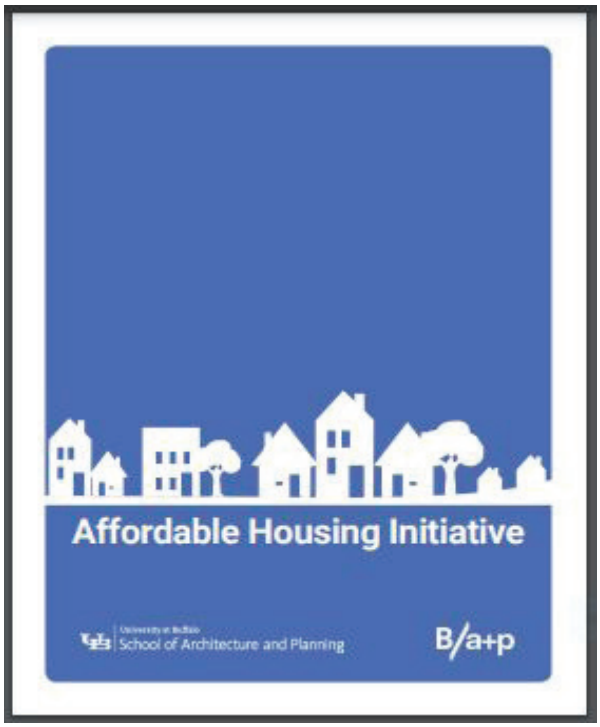
ARC 607/END 593/URP 581

Re-Imagining ECMC, Faculty: Ernest Sternberg, Hiro Hata, and Eric Recoon
Fall 2019

In the fall 2019 semester, students from UB's Master's in Urban Planning, Master's in Science in Architecture, and Master's in Real Estate Development programs participated in an interdisciplinary studio course focused on developing potential design and development strategies for the site and its integration into the ECMC campus. The studio looked to incorporate ideas from the visioning process into development proposals, while also offering recommendations on how ECMC can better integrate the site into its broader campus.

UBRI staff served as a liaison between ECMC and the studio, arranging for data sharing, campus tours, and meetings between the studio and key personnel at the hospital. The team also regularly checked-in on the studio, participated in review sessions, and helped to arrange for community members to interact with the studio.

Student work built upon initial studies conducted by UBRI on community priorities for the site. The studio plan presents a unified vision for placemaking, community economic development, real estate investment, recreation and health-based landscapes, and transportation enhancements to benefit ECMC properties and the surrounding community.



Other Studios and Practical Planning Activities

Affordable Housing Initiative: Inclusive Design Research Housing Studio Instructors: Stephanie Cramer, Hiro Hata | Spring 2018

This studio, led by clinical assistant instructor of architecture Stephanie Cramer worked with urban planning professor Hiroaki Hata's neighborhood master plan to design homes that fit the area's narrow 30-foot lots. Some challenges included contextual sensitivity, with special attention to diversity of family structures. Student projects include a home designed for millennials or seniors oriented toward co-housing for mutual support, a small single-bedroom cottage that facilitates additions, and an agricultural greenhouse into which two full cottages can be placed. UBRI staff participated in reviews, advised on guest speakers, and provided support to connect this work with the School's University Heights initiative.

URP 581/582 & END 460

Project Rainfall (Urban Ecology Planning Studio) Instructor: Zoe Hamstead | Spring 2018

In this urban planning studio, students worked with community partners to advance renewable energy solutions along the Northland Corridor on Buffalo's East Side. Students engaged with Population Health Collaborative of WNY, the WNY Environmental Alliance, Erie County Public Works and others. The studio conducted three community workshops to facilitate community solar planning on a designated Project Rainfall site and in the broader Northland Beltline neighborhood on Buffalo's East Side. While exploring the benefits of solar energy, the studio detailed the processes of community engagement and provided recommendations for how residents may be able to move a community solar project forward. UBRI staff Jason Kulaszewski supported the studio—advising on community solar as a concept and how projects are developed. The effort produced a report on the potential for renewable, affordable energy in Buffalo.

ARC 608-3

Planning and Designing a Compact, Eco-Friendly Suburb of Seoul, South Korea, Faculty: Jin Young Song | Spring 2015

Students worked with Yangpyeong-based Minimax Architects, civil engineers and faculty of Yonsei University, to develop master plans and architectural designs for compact, sustainable development in Yangpyeong—a growing suburb of Seoul. UBRI planner Brian Conley served as a teaching fellow for the studio and advisor for graduate planning students. UBRI helped develop and apply sustainable planning strategies to guide the design work and model environmental impacts of proposed developments.

ARC – URP 565

Jefferson Avenue Improvement Project (Understanding Good Urban Form) Instructor: Hiro Hata | Fall 2020

Intended to be an introduction to urban design, the course investigates the question of urbanism in general, and how the urban designer could be effective in improving the quality of life of cities through facilitating urban reinvestment and encouraging urban sustainability. By improving visual and physical quality of the built environment, urban design attempts all to make neighborhoods and cities beautiful, livable, as well as socioeconomically and culturally stronger. UBRI staff helped develop this studio topic, connecting students and faculty with regional partners.

URP 581/582

Northland Studio; Faculty: Ernest Sternberg, V. Jeffrey LiPuma | Fall 2020

Graduate students in Real Estate Development and in Urban and Regional Planning jointly carried out a capstone/studio project to demonstrate their professional abilities. On behalf of the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation, they investigated the potentials of the Northland Campus, a major industrial development project in Buffalo's Delavan-Grider Neighborhood. Leveraging its ongoing work to support economic development on the East Side of Buffalo, including assisting in the planning for the Northland Campus and its workforce training center, UBRI assisted students by consulting with the studio and sharing data and reports to inform the work.

END 460

Climate Smart Lancaster (Environmental Design Workshop) Faculty: Mary Shaw
Spring 2021

This course exposed undergraduate students to the concept of climate smart communities through an environmental design workshop. UBRI connected the instructor with the Village of Lancaster to serve as a client. Additionally, UBRI staff leveraged its Clean Energy Communities program to provide regular consultation to the students, including sharing data, and reviewing content at key points in the studio.

END 460

Broadway Fillmore Retail Reuse (Environmental Design Workshop) Faculty: Conrad Kickert
Spring 2021

This undergraduate workshop explores options for the adaptive reuse of retail areas in the Broadway Fillmore neighborhood on Buffalo's East Side. UBRI connected the instructor with Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services to serve as a client and advised on potential topic areas and geographies.

Improving Transportation Systems through Electric Micromobility (EMM) Faculty: Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah
Spring 2021

UBRI and the School of Architecture and Planning are working with Shared Mobility, Inc. to research potential impacts of electric micromobility (EMM), or electric bikes, scooters, and other personal mobility devices. These devices were legalized in NYS in April 2020 and are growing more popular locally and around the globe.

UBRI is partnering with UB professors in Urban and Regional Planning, Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah and Daniel Hess, on a focused research project to support the adoption of EMM in NYS. UBRI staff serve as advisors and guest instructors for a spring 2021 urban planning graduate studio course led by Professor Boamah. Students work to provide key research findings that promote local policy development around EMM and shared systems operations. The project involves a survey on how e-bikes and e-scooters may change travel patterns, and is developing a methodology to project the potential impacts that EMM could have on greenhouse gas emissions by reducing vehicle use. More broadly, the work is meant to assist local decision makers and share system operators as they look to effectively integrate EMM into transportation networks. The project focuses on the regions of Buffalo, Rochester, and Albany, and is funded through a NYS Energy Research and Development Authority grant aimed at "Improving the Efficiency of New York's Transportation System."

Faculty Research and Partnerships

UBRI's collaborations with faculty add value to the school's research enterprise through practical planning activities, academic research, and support with publications. UBRI is grounded in the disciplines of research and analysis, contributing to evidence-based planning and design and committed to working with partners to collectively implement strategies to promote stronger economies for all. This focus has made UBRI valuable to faculty by assisting with academic research, seeking out new projects, and networking. Faculty partnering with UBRI lend critical expertise to important local planning projects, and give UBRI an opportunity to contribute to scholarly work. These collaborations also benefit the local community through the range of partners from the public, private and nonprofit sectors who are engaged through the work. The numerous practical planning and academic research efforts that grew from collaborations between UBRI and the School are summarized on the opposite page.

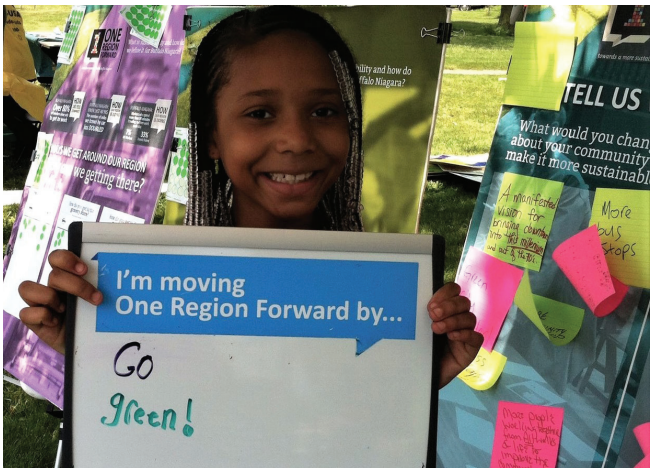
PRACTICAL PLANNING RESEARCH

Connections Beyond Campus: An Evaluation of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority-University at Buffalo Pilot Transit Pass Program; Faculty: Daniel Hess, 2014

This research evaluated the effectiveness of the UB-NFTA Pilot Transit Pass Program which concluded in the summer of 2012 session after 20 months of operations. This report evaluates program costs compared to benefits provided to participating organizations and individual transit users. This is accomplished through the use of both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results of a university-wide survey. The research was sponsored by U.S. Department of Transportation/Research and Innovative Technology Administration through the University Transportation Research Center – Region 2. UBRI served as research assistants and co-authors on the project.

One Region Forward: Professional Reports and Plans: Growing Together and Resilient Buffalo Niagara; Faculty: Samina Raja and Himanshu Grover, 2015

UBRI collaborated with UB faculty on two technical strategy documents completed as part of One Region Forward. A climate change strategy document provided a broad policy framework for responding to anticipated impacts of climatic change across the Buffalo Niagara region; and a food access and justice strategy document charts a course for promoting agricultural viability and improving food access in the region. UBRI developed and led the One Region Forward effort which was initiated from a grant of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development through its Partnership for Sustainable Communities, an interagency collaboration with the US Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. Additional support was provided through grant #1105024-1-62098 from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) of the United States Department of Agriculture to Samina Raja.



Growing Food Connections, Samina Raja, 2015

Local governments can engage in food systems planning to identify and understand the various food production and food security challenges and opportunities in their communities and develop public policy tools to better connect underserved residents with those who produce food in their communities. Working across rural and urban places in all regions of the US, the Growing Food Connections partnership (a diverse group of researchers, planning practitioners, and food systems stakeholders) uses an integrated approach to build the capacity of local governments to deploy these public policy tools, generate knowledge, and nurture future educators and scholars.

Growing Food Connections is made possible with a grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. The project is guided by a National Advisory Committee with representation from diverse disciplines, regions and backgrounds.

The Growing Food Connections team's work is continually shared through academic research and policy-friendly publications that translate research in a way that is useful for planning and policy audiences. UBRI made contributions to the research, design, visual communications and production of the Growing Food Connections website, including the Local Government Policy Database. UBRI also supported the following related publications:

- Raja, Samina, Subhashni Raj and Bartholomew Roberts. 2017. "The US Experience in Planning for Community Food Systems: An Era of Advocacy, Awareness, and (Some) Learning." In Nourishing Communities: From Fractured Food Systems to Transformative Pathways, edited by Irena Knezevic, Alison Blay-Palmer, Charles Z. Levkoe, Phil Mount and Erin Nelson. Toronto, ON: Springer International Publishing. Pages 59-74.
- Jill Clark, Brian Conley, Samina Raja. 2020. Essential, fragile, and invisible community food infrastructure: The Role of Urban Governments in the United States, Food Policy.

Imagine LaSalle; Faculty: Dr. Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah, Prof. Robert Shibley, Dr. Bradshaw Hovey; "Managing High Quality Park Environments", 2018

Imagine LaSalle launched in 2018 with support from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. As an effort to transform the city of Buffalo's largest waterfront park, UBRI and the School of Architecture and Planning were invited by the sponsor and local partners to oversee the community engagement process for the effort. Over a multi-year period, UBRI has managed a robust and community-grounded engagement process, involving dozens of community workshops, stakeholder meetings, and engagement activities. This effort has drawn on the involvement of numerous faculty members and more than 40 students. In 2021, the initiative and the role the School plays in it will be featured at the "Time Space Existence" exhibit of the Venice Biennale.

A key activity of the engagement involves a focus group of 22 community ambassadors who joined faculty on inspirational park tours in three different US urban settings – New York City, Chicago, and Cincinnati. The insights brought home from focus group members are shaping the park's ongoing re-design, but they are also informing research to re-imagine the management and maintenance structures of the park. In 2020, Dr. Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah led a team of faculty and student researchers to look at the takeaways from the out of town tours and how they may inform future governance considerations of the park.

Adapting Buildings for a Changing Climate; Faculty; Nick Rajkovich, 2018

This research offers guidance for policymakers and practitioners looking to implement effective adaptation strategies to cope with a changing climate. This research project, funded by New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and led by Professor Nicholas Rajkovich, seeks to address the role of buildings in adapting to climate change. The work assessed how climate change affects buildings in New York State, modeled the ensuing economic impacts, and identified response strategies. The results of the assessment were shared through reports, a symposium, a series of webinars, and publication in peer-reviewed literature.

Affordable Housing; Faculty: Stephanie Cramer, Mark Foerster, Edward Steinfeld, 2018

In 2018, the School convened a symposium of leading scholars and practitioners across the planning, architecture and real estate development professions to explore current conditions and future trends in housing, and consider new models for high-quality, affordable housing. The ultimate goal of the effort is for students and faculty to plan, design and build single-family or multi-family affordable housing prototypes in underserved neighborhoods in Buffalo. Prototypes will be replicable for Buffalo and similar cities across the U.S. The design-build project will also seek innovative designs, construction materials and techniques. UBRI assisted with research, program design, communications, and report producetion for this effort.

Conversion of Historic Churches in Buffalo; Faculty: Ashima Krishna, 2018

UBRI assisted with this research that examines how in shrinking cities, particularly those now welcoming new immigrants and refugees, serendipitous conservation of vacant churches through faith-to-faith conversion can be an asset to local planners and preservationists in their fight to save urban heritage from demolition.

Smart and Connected Communities; Faculty: Zoe Hamstead, Nicholas Rajkovich, 2018

A team of researchers from the University at Buffalo and Arizona State University examined the different ways in which extreme heat and cold impact the nation's cities. This research examined existing practices related to the management of heat and cold in several cities, including Buffalo, New York, and Tempe, Arizona. The project team aimed to design a strategy for building resilience to thermal extremes that links technology and society. UBRI provided support for the project, including facilitating forums in both cities to learn how practitioners are managing extreme weather. This project was made possible by the National Science Foundation, Division of Computer and Network Systems, Smart and Connected Communities Planning Grant.

Delta Mountains: 3D Representations of Transit Access in Buffalo Niagara; Joshua Stein (Woodbury University), 2019

Joshua Stein, Principal of Radical Craft and Professor of Architecture at Woodbury University, collaborated with a number of UB departments on "Delta Mountains," a project that aims to compare the accessibility of Buffalo's historic streetcar system to that of the current transit network. Stein was invited as a visiting scholar to UB's School of Architecture & Planning through UB's Creative Arts Initiative's Artist-In-Residence program. This culminated in a series of maps and a large ceramic sculpture, "Isochronic Mountain Buffalo," that gives a 3D representation of travel times by transit across the greater Buffalo area. To uncover transit accessibility in both the historic and contemporary networks, Stein engaged UBRI's Brian Conley to create the geospatial data underlying his material structures. Conley applied GIS tools and researched historical maps to model the travel times to Buffalo City Hall via the region's current transit network and Buffalo's pre-war streetcar system. The ceramic structures, maps, and other artifacts that Stein produced through "Delta Mountains" were displayed at the Observation Deck at Buffalo City Hall in 2019.

Hazard Mitigation Planning for Niagara County; Nick Rajkovich, 2021

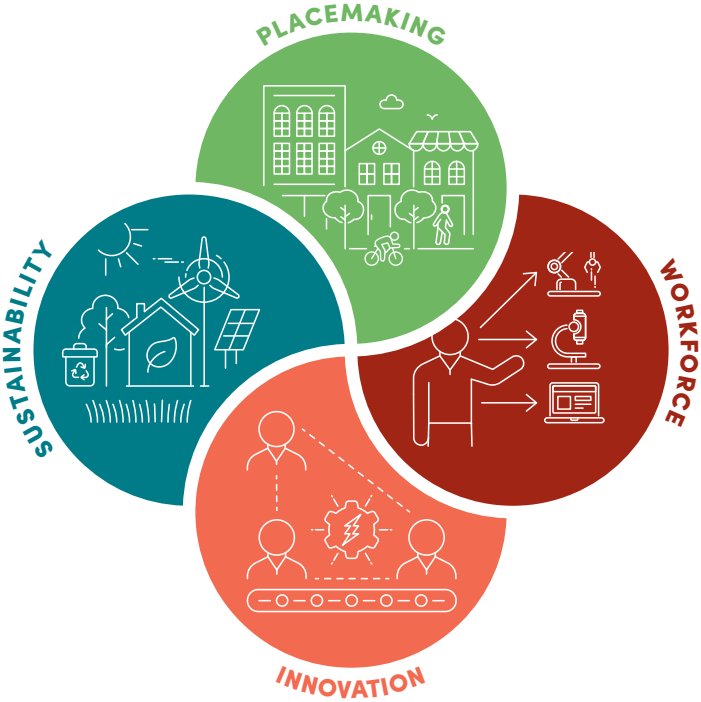
All counties in New York State are required to regularly update Hazards Mitigation Plans (HMP) to prepare for a range of potential emergency events. UBRI is working with by Professor Nicholas Rajkovich on a HMP update for Niagara County. The project will enhance the planning effort by replacing a lengthy paper documentation of the plan with a recently developed digital planning framework to streamline, and better integrate, local hazard mitigation planning across New York State. The team will work with local planners and officials to outline well-organized strategies for hazard mitigation, while promoting collaboration, use of best available data and the efficient use of resources. UBRI will oversee the community engagement process and manage graduate student research assistants involved on the project.

Looking Ahead

UBRI and the School will continue to work together on research, education, public service and scholarship that supports and enhances our community. We will strive to be a critical resource for our strategic partners to guide decision-making, planning and design; advance the implementation of programs at the neighborhood, regional, state and national level; and address key regional issues essential to urban and regional planning and architecture.

UBRI focuses on placemaking, innovation, talent and sustainability. Working alongside the School, community members, foundation staff, government officials and policy leaders, we draw from diverse perspectives and offer innovative and individualized solutions to drive change and progress for our funders, clients and partners and to advance academic programs and enhance the educational experience.

We connect the dots for maximum collective impact to build effective ecosystems. Our networks within the university, businesses, nonprofits, foundation community and public sector, and our deep local knowledge and history of regional planning make us uniquely positioned to take on this role. We look at the big picture, find efficiencies, facilitate learning opportunities, and capitalize on the areas where it makes the most sense to work collaboratively.



We empower the voices of the community. Through feedback from citizens and stakeholders, we strive to tell a community's story that is authentic and elevates the importance of the community's role in transforming the economy.

We look forward to our continued partnership with the School to support stronger regional economies for all.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