

Moving on to Phase 2...

Phase 1, *Elmwood Conversations*, is the initial engagement of the community to develop a high-level vision for the future of the Elmwood Village, for the development of an overall Neighborhood Master Plan. This starting point is the foundation that will direct more focused planning efforts in Phase 2, which will develop implementable action steps for the community. Based upon community desires and concerns expressed during this process, it is recommended that the next phase of the Elmwood Village neighborhood plan should include the following:

- Historic Context of the Neighborhood
- Detailed Inventory of Physical Conditions
- Elmwood Village Physical Improvement Plan
- Streetscape Improvement Guidelines (aligned with GreenCode)
- Circulation, Access & Parking Plan
- Wayfinding Plan
- Marketing Strategies
- Problem Property Owner Strategies
- Quick Improvement Implementation Recommendations
- Operations & Maintenance
- Implementation & Financing Plan
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Elmwood Village Association Organizational Structure Alternatives Analysis



Community engagement during *Elmwood Conversations* helped identify **several issues that lack broad community consensus**. In particular, there remains much debate over the appropriate **scale of new buildings** (like the proposed mixed-use/hotel project at Elmwood and Forest); the preference for **locally-owned versus national chains**; and the questions of who gets to make these **decisions** and how. These are all contentious issues. Although the way forward is not clear, these debates show how deeply people care about Elmwood Village.

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Additional planning resources produced through the *Elmwood Conversations* efforts are available through the Elmwood Village Association website.



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ELMWOOD CONVERSATIONS



The Next Ten Years: A Vision for Elmwood Village

Elmwood Conversations was a community engagement process that was the first phase of a neighborhood plan - the first comprehensive planning process organized by the Elmwood Village Association in over 15 years. The Conversations gave the Association a better idea of what residents, businesses, and organizations think should happen to help Elmwood Village prosper. The Conversations also provided community guidance for the redevelopment of the Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo (WCHOB) campus. The result of the Conversations is this Vision Plan.

Elmwood Conversations occurred over a two month period in 2014, from the beginning of March to the end of April. The process included three meetings of a broadly representative group of stakeholders called the Steering Committee, a public open house, a survey on the Elmwood Village Association website, and opportunities to provide feedback on Twitter and Facebook.

Elmwood Village is one of **America's best neighborhoods. It will get better.** The next decade will bring change to Elmwood Village, like each decade before it. Change will come with great challenges, and will be met by **rigorous debate**. Some issues will have no clear consensus, but these challenges will be overcome. In ten years, Elmwood Village will feel like a **more connected and cohesive community**, from north to south, east to west. The **car will no longer rule**—it will be safe, easy, and inexpensive to get around without one. Living in the village will be like **living in a park**—the street canopy and gardens will flourish. The village will be **a destination in and of itself**, like other great neighborhoods in other great cities. And the success of Elmwood Village will be **a driving force for regeneration** in the rest of the city and region, whose population will be growing, economy strengthening, and quality of life continuing to improve. All this will come from **active and ongoing community engagement**, which will rally villagers to address the most pressing issues of the day.

Through it all, Elmwood Village will remain **the same wonderful place** that we have known and loved for generations. It will still be **a thriving mix** of culture, shopping, education, and close-knit neighborhoods, a place where you can raise a family, go to school, or earn a living, and a place where in a single afternoon you can marvel at a Picasso, visit a street festival, paddle a boat, and buy groceries for dinner, all without leaving the village. Elmwood Village will continue to **foster innovation, creativity, and diversity**, where people young and old gather together to create. Its history—Olmsted, Richardson, Wright, and the



rest—will blend seamlessly with its **modernity and urbanity**.

But Elmwood Village will not only be a place, it will also be a **community of people**, of villagers, who live here, work here, shop here, and learn here. We will walk and ride our bikes along green streets and parkways, grow colorful gardens in our yards and community commons, and steward a few of the world's greatest cultural treasures. Some of us will be visiting, while others will have been here for many years. We will be guided by a **legacy of commitment** to this place, of foremothers and forefathers who poured their hearts and souls into it and fought to protect it. We will be connected, and together we will have the **capacity to transform**. We are and will always be Elmwood Village.

Goals and Strategies

Transportation: Ensure that people of all ages and abilities can travel to and within Elmwood Village safely, reliably, and affordably, with or without a car.

- Increase pedestrian safety by improving crosswalks at busy and wide intersections, placing new crosswalks in the middle of superblocks, replacing unserviceable sidewalks, and removing snow from Elmwood sidewalks during the winter (or build heated sidewalks in high traffic areas).
- Increase bicycle safety by improving signage and education about the rights of bicyclists, improving bike lanes with better striping, and providing larger buffers from traffic where possible.
- Expand bicycle opportunities by creating new bike lanes in accordance with the city's bike plan, and by encouraging building owners to offer indoor bike racks and/or lockers.
- Work with the NFTA to make the Elmwood bus line one of the city's best; increase the frequency, predictability, and affordability of buses using available technology. Consider improving bus shelters on Elmwood, Delevan, Utica and Summer. Provide benches at all bus stops.
- Complete a parking study and parking plan. The plan should create more opportunities for parking without adding new surface parking lots, encourage businesses to provide incentives to employees to drive less, allow parking on both sides of streets where alternate side parking is not necessary, and free up more space along streets near corners for parking. Existing publicly-owned lots and ramps should remain publicly accessible.

Housing: Offer diverse and quality housing for people and families with different needs and incomes.

- Increase homeownership by connecting residents to homeownership programs.
- Ensure that new housing developments provide affordable housing units for low and moderate income individuals and families, as well market-rate, high-end, and aging-in-place options.
- Improve the quality of deteriorating housing by working with the city to enforce building codes, and encouraging property owners to maintain their properties.
- Better integrate housing for college students and low-income residents into the community.
- Provide incentives for qualified home owners to renovate existing homes.

Businesses: Support existing businesses and the creation of diverse new ones.

- Help increase the success rate of new businesses by connecting entrepreneurs with existing business

mentorship programs (such as Small Business Development Center), or creating a new program.

- Expand spaces for businesses by encouraging the renovation and reuse of residential buildings on Elmwood for storefronts, and by encouraging new developments to be mixed use.
- Make it possible for people to meet their daily needs in the village by attracting new businesses to fill gaps in services.
- Attract more patrons to businesses by promoting the village's unique businesses and experiences that cannot be found anywhere else, and by placing directory signage in the village that shows the locations of businesses, attractions, and parking.



Public Space: Ensure the availability of appropriate greenspaces and safe places to gather and play.

- Create small pocket parks, community gardens, and playgrounds on underutilized or vacant land off of Elmwood, especially in the southern part of the village where these amenities are lacking.
- Use green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, when reconstructing streets and sidewalks to provide environmental services. Save existing trees during construction projects, and plant new street trees where they are lacking.
- Create formal and informal gathering spaces by encouraging more sidewalk cafes, as well as placing benches and small tables along Elmwood.
- Reduce litter by placing more effective trash receptacles, and by providing more recycling bins in appropriate places.
- Address public safety concerns such as aggressive panhandling and crime along the edges of Elmwood Village. Work together with the Buffalo Psychiatric Center to integrate the facility and its

patients into the community and to address safety and security issues related to those receiving care.

Arts, Culture, and Education: Strengthen arts, cultural, and educational opportunities.

- Support long-term plans and investments in Buffalo State College, the cultural district, and the Olmsted parks and parkways. Help promote the cultural attractions to bring more visitors.
 - Support and expand existing events like Elmwood Festival of the Arts, Allentown Art Festival, Shakespeare in the Park, and Bidwell Farmers Market. Develop more events, festivals, and performances. Reduce conflicts by working more with



residents and business owners to plan appropriate locations and times for events.

- Work with museums, galleries, and art organizations to place temporary or permanent public art throughout Elmwood Village. The Albright Knox Art Gallery would like to support more public art projects.

Connections: Improve continuity within Elmwood Village and connections between Elmwood Village, surrounding neighborhoods, and the region.

- Make sure that visitors know when they have entered Elmwood Village by placing gateway signage at major entrances, and by placing wayfinding signage to direct people to and through the village and its attractions.
- Increase the perceived continuity of Elmwood Village, especially along Elmwood north of Forest and south of Anderson. This can be accomplished with signage, streetscaping, public art, improved pedestrian amenities, and expanded storefront renovation.
- Redesign the Scajaquada Expressway to reduce speed and to remove physical and visual barriers between neighborhoods and Delaware Park, restore lost parkland, and provide better access for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Connect Elmwood Village planning with planning for surrounding areas, like the Grant / Ferry neighborhood and the medical campus.



Community: Encourage diversity and ongoing community engagement, and strengthen relationships between Elmwood Village stakeholders.

- Strengthen existing block clubs and encourage the formation of new ones where lacking.
- Strengthen partnerships between the Elmwood Village Association and other community organizations such as Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Grassroots Gardens, Allentown Association, and block clubs.
- Continue community engagement opportunities that are open, transparent, and participatory. Establish a platform for ongoing engagement between residents, businesses, EVA, and the city.

Revitalization: Address declining neighborhoods and chronically vacant buildings.

- Reduce the number of chronically vacant commercial buildings by working with the city to create policies that encourage owners of vacant commercial space to fill that space or sell it.
- Reduce the amount of underutilized lots and off-street surface parking by working with those property owners and actively seeking developers for those properties.
- Improve declining neighborhoods by maintaining and improving streetscapes and public infrastructure, and by using public art and performance to encourage reinvestment. Revitalization efforts and investments should be focused on blocks between Utica and Bryant where the need and opportunity is great.

ELMWOOD CONVERSATIONS

GOALS/STRATEGIES:

- Transportation
- Housing
- Business
- Public Space
- Arts, Culture, Education
- Connections
- Community
- Revitalization

LEGEND:

- Improved Streetscape
- Improved Transit Links
- Transformed Complete-Street Parkway
- Potential Transit Hub
- Pocket Park or Playspace Opportunity
- Pedestrian Access Improvements
- Target Areas
- Revitalization Areas
- Gateway Treatment

- Scajaquada Parkway:**
- Reduce Speed
 - Redesign to remove physical & visual barriers between neighborhoods & Delaware Park
 - Restore lost parkland
 - Provide better access for pedestrians & bicycles
- Elmwood Avenue, along its length, should be transformed into a Complete Street, incorporating the following enhanced elements:**
- Bicycle lanes & storage
 - Pedestrian crossings & shared spaces
 - Enhanced Transit Amenities
 - Integrated green streetscaping
 - Sidewalk/street gathering spaces & microparks
 - Appropriate signage & wayfinding elements



This Vision Plan graphically portrays some of the community input obtained during Elmwood Conversations. The illustrated plan is based on the existing physical fabric of the study area as shown in aerial photos and other maps of the community. It draws attention to areas where the community said it sees opportunities for improvement. It is a work-in-progress that represents the on-going visioning process being led by EVA.

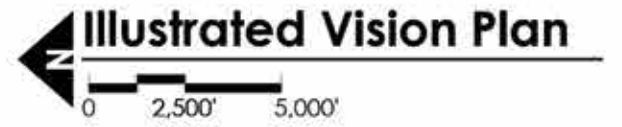


Transit Center Precedent

Elmwood Avenue should develop enhanced locations where the street is equally shared among pedestrians, bicycles, transit and autos. Design considerations should include elements of the Dutch Woonerf and other precedents such as Harvard Square in Cambridge, MA



"I want it to be full of people who take initiative in building an artistic and cultural nexus from the grass roots..."
 - (anonymous EV resident)



Women and Children's Hospital Campus Redevelopment



1889 Plan based on Sanborn Maps: This plan of the site shows Children's Hospital in red. Dark gray areas show (clockwise from the lower left) Tweedley's Riding School, Utica Street Boarding Stable, Elmwood School, and First Congregational Church. Note the difference in character of the fabric on the south side of West Utica compared to other streets. Taking a cue from the past, future redevelopment could incorporate a great diversity of uses into the campus.

Kaleida Health is scheduled to break ground on the new state-of-the-art John R. Oishei Children's Hospital on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus in late 2014. The Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo campus, located between Hodge and Bryant Streets in Elmwood Village, will be redeveloped when the hospital moves. Kaleida Health is scheduled to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of the campus in late 2014. **The redevelopment of the Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo campus should benefit and enhance Elmwood Village.** Below are some specific recommendations for how to achieve this, based on input from the Elmwood Village community:

Key Recommendations

- Include an Elmwood Village Association representative on the RFP/Developer Selection Committee.
- Break up the campus into multiple redevelopment parcels and issue separate RFPs. At a minimum, create four separate redevelopment opportunities: (1) parking lot at the corner or Elmwood and Bryant; (2) the main campus; (3) cluster of residential properties on the south side of West Utica; and (4) large property along the south side of West Utica.
- Establish a time limit for complete redevelopment of the property.
- Keep the Gallagher Parking Ramp available to the public.
- Engage the public openly and meaningfully throughout the process.

Design for the Community

- Create active street frontages along Elmwood, including retail.
- Locate high-traffic uses along Elmwood or integrate them appropriately and seamlessly with residential surroundings.
- Break up the hospital property "super block" by constructing a north-south connector. The connector does not necessarily have to be a roadway; it could be a pedestrian/bicycle connection or a public greenspace. Consider a similar connector between Hodge and West Utica via the Gallagher Parking Ramp.
- Require all proposals to include interim property maintenance and ongoing public safety measures.

Provide Needed Amenities

- Introduce park and public space into the campus, including a children's play space, and make them accessible to the neighborhood.
- Develop new residential offerings that accommodate diverse ages, lifestyles, and incomes.
- Fully consider parking needs so as to limit stress on neighboring streets, residents, and businesses.

- KEY:**
- WCHOB Property
 - ▨ WCHOB Long-term Lease
 - City Owned Parking
 - ▭ Proposed Development

PARCEL NO. 4
Potential mixed-use residential infill development footprint

Potential future redevelopment footprint

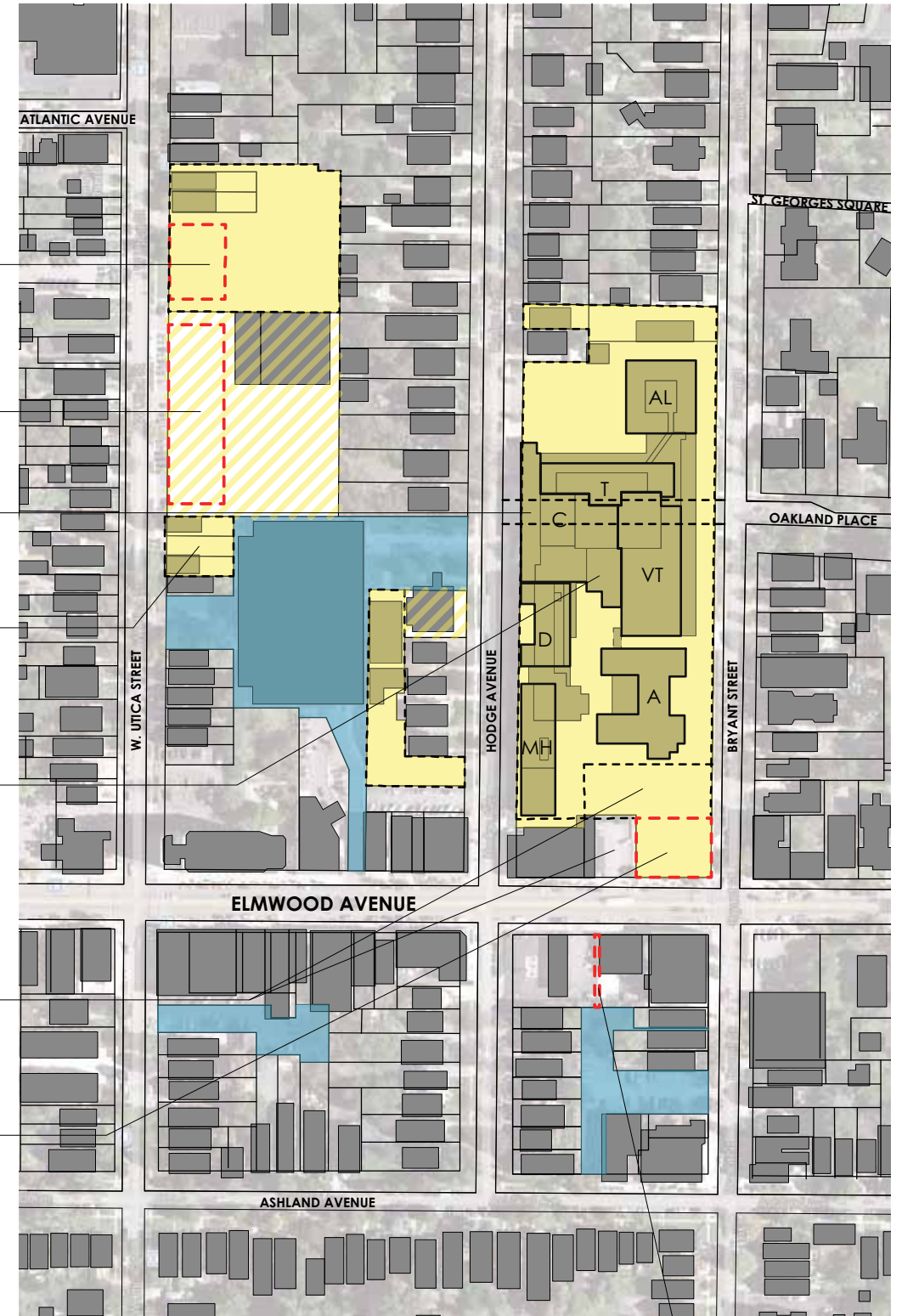
Incorporate thru-block connection (street, path, etc.)

PARCEL NO. 3
Potential residential/mixed-use renovation

PARCEL NO. 2
Incorporate residential/mixed-use development with public green space and play area

Potential land transfer agreement to move parking to rear

PARCEL NO. 1
Potential mixed-use infill development footprint



Potential easement/ pedestrian path

EXIST. BUILDING KEY

A	Annex (1917-27)	- 3 STY
AL	Alfiero (1995-2005)	- 3 STY
C	C Building (1917-56)	- 4 STY
D	D Building (1927)	- 4 STY
MH	MH Building (1927-75)	- 4 STY
T	Tanner (1954)	- 9 STY
VT	Variety Tower (1972)	- 10 STY

