



THE FUTURE IS LOOKING

# UP

ON BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE



University at Buffalo  
Regional Institute  
School of Architecture and Planning



EAST SIDE  
AVENUES

2021-2022  
ANNUAL REPORT

Photo: Nash House Museum



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**WHAT DOES PROGRESS LOOK LIKE  
ON THE EAST SIDE OF BUFFALO?**

IT'S BUILDINGS BEING RENOVATED.  
IT'S RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES  
EMPOWERED THROUGH UNIQUE  
PROGRAMS. AND IT'S HISTORIC  
PLACES SERVING NEW ROLES IN THE  
COMMUNITY. MORE WORK IS STILL  
TO BE DONE—BUT FOR THE EAST SIDE,  
**IT'S ONWARD AND UPWARD.** ➔

East Side Avenues is led by  
a Project Implementation Team  
from the UB Regional Institute.



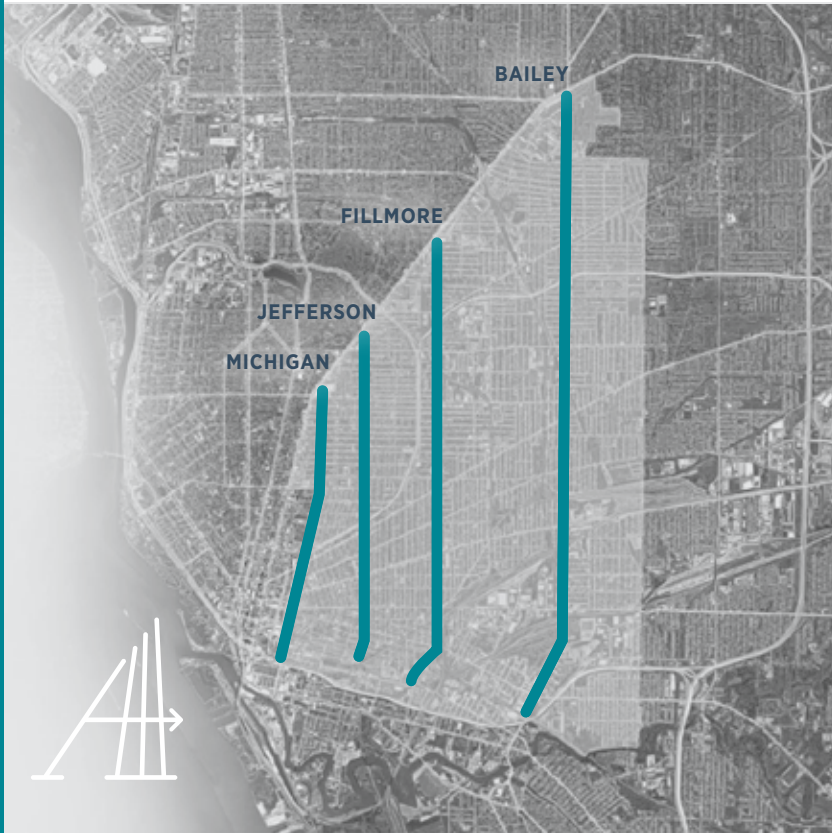


SUPPORT FOR THE  
COMMUNITY TODAY.  
HOPE FOR FUTURE  
GENERATIONS.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Through Empire State Development (ESD), New York State dedicated **\$65 MILLION** to the **REVITALIZATION OF BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE** and is making capital investments along four commercial corridors. East Side Avenues provides capacity building and organizational support to complement these capital investments. The Project Implementation Team (PIT), led by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute (UBRI) and supported by a team of consultants, ensures that appropriate resources are in place for community leaders; assists with strategic planning, program design, organizational capacity building and problem solving; leads the team on technical assistance for community-based organizations; and reports on progress while lifting up the voices of the community.

### WHAT IS ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING?

Capacity building is made up of:

- ➔ A multi-year **FUNDING** commitment
- ➔ **OPERATING SUPPORT**, e.g., salaries for staff positions and program costs
- ➔ **EVALUATION** to assess an organization's starting point and ongoing needs
- ➔ **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE** to address deficiencies and scale up

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### THE BIG PICTURE

#### 2021-2022:

#### BUILDING UP



The first year of East Side Avenues was all about sowing the seeds. In year two, we continued the momentum.

**In year three, we are BUILDING UP.**



**TUNING UP:** In the past year we looked back and acknowledged where we succeeded, identified challenges with the community and made thoughtful program improvements to expand our reach and strengthen our programs.



**REACHING UP:** East Side Avenues is creating a national model for ecosystem building and placemaking.



**SPEAKING UP:** The future is looking up for the East Side. East Side Avenues is helping tell that story.



**TEAMING UP:** East Side Avenues is developing models to fit unique organizational needs while also finding common ground and opportunities for collaboration among programs and partners.



**SCALING UP:** With public and private partners, we developed a strategy to scale up existing East Side Avenues programs and connect with other investments through a broader \$300 Million Regional Revitalization Partnership.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

## COMMUNITY-BASED REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING



→ Executive Summary



2022 graduates were honored at the first in-person graduation ceremony.

The goal of Community-Based Real Estate Development Training (CBREDT) is to train East Side residents and building owners with in commercial real estate development. In 2022, 17 students completed the tuition-free, non-credit bearing, adult education program that provides an in-depth overview of the commercial real estate development process. Past cohorts continue to participate in continuing education opportunities. ESD and UBRI restructured the Community-Based Real Estate Development Training Program Fund (a capital grant program dedicated to CBREDT graduates and their real estate projects) into three subprograms to create a more tailored approach for those who have smaller projects or need pre-development funds, a continuum of support and increased technical assistance. This restructured grant program was rolled out to all three cohorts. In collaboration with the UB School of Architecture and Planning, graduates' commercial real estate projects are being supported within the restructured program.

**THIRD COHORT**  
(17 STUDENTS)  
**COMPLETED TRAINING**

**PAST COHORTS CONTINUED ED  
RESTRUCTURED FUND**

**TO CREATE**

- ▶ MORE TAILORED APPROACH
- ▶ CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT
- ▶ INCREASE IN TECH ASSISTANCE

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS**

**CENTRAL TERMINAL**



The Central Terminal, one of Buffalo's most iconic buildings, will be restored as a year-round venue and asset for the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood, the City of Buffalo and the WNY region. With construction on the former restaurant area adjacent to the Concourse complete, the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation (CTRC) looks to reactivate the Terminal by creating a Civic Commons for indoor and outdoor activities. In line with the master plan's implementation, CTRC is advancing necessary predevelopment, including real estate development and legal expertise; and issued a Request for Expression of Interest for real estate development partners. CTRC is implementing its three-year strategic plan focusing on governance, strategic planning, fundraising, marketing, neighborhood connections and involvement, community-oriented programming, equitable development and care of the buildings and grounds. In line with their three-year fund development plan, CTRC was awarded numerous public and private funds for capital, predevelopment work and programming. CTRC continues to engage the public with events and programming.



**ADVANCING  
PREDEVELOPMENT**



**IMPLEMENTING  
3-YEAR PLAN**



**AWARDED  
NUMEROUS  
FUNDS**



**ENGAGING  
THE PUBLIC**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

## EAST SIDE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS



Al Cohen's Bakery facade improvements were made with ESCD funding.

East Side Commercial Districts (ESCD) is a building renovation program targeted in four investment areas to generate wealth for small business owners, combat vacancies, and revitalize commercial corridors. In 2021–2022, East Side Avenues' nonprofit Local Program Administrators (LPAs) continue to implement their strategic organizational action plans with consultant support. Construction continues on over \$1 million in Round 1 renovation projects. Across four districts, four projects are complete, seven are under construction, two are approaching construction, and seven are in the bidding process. ESD revamped the program for Round 2 by raising capital fund limits, offering more A&E technical assistance, and streamlining administrative processes. Following RFP processes, LPAs are hiring consultants to provide A&E services for Round 2 projects. LPAs launched a second funding Round in August and are marketing the program and accepting applications.

<b>ROUND ONE</b>	4 PROJECTS COMPLETE	<b>ROUND TWO</b>	▶ RAISED CAPITAL FUND LIMITS
	7 UNDER CONSTRUCTION		▶ BETTER A&E TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
	2 IN PRE-CONSTRUCTION		▶ STREAMLINED ADMIN PROCESS
	7 IN BIDDING PROCESS		▶ LPAS HIRING A&E CONSULTANTS FOLLOWING RFP PROCESSES

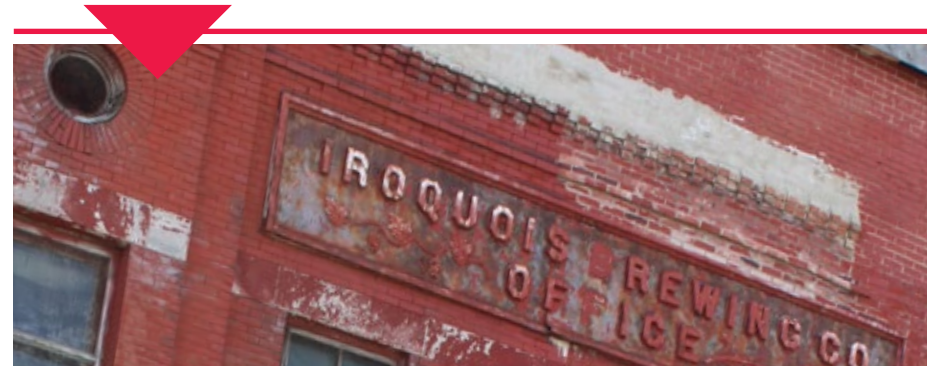


## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

## COMMERCIAL BUILDING STABILIZATION FUND

The Commercial Building Stabilization Fund provides a dedicated funding source to support stabilization of at-risk historic buildings in targeted investment areas. Capacity building funds allowed Preservation Buffalo Niagara (PBN) to dedicate a new staff member to this program, hire a consultant to guide PBN through a three-year strategic planning process, and increase fundraising and marketing. After scope and budget adjustments due to rising construction costs, bidding challenges and emergency interventions, seven Round 1 projects are moving forward. Five projects have completed construction and two more will proceed this year. ESD revamped the program for Round 2 by raising capital fund limits and offering more A&E technical assistance to address challenges. Following an RFP process, PBN hired a consultant to provide A&E services for Round 2 projects including project scoping, bidding and monitoring. PBN launched Round 2 of the program and is completing the applicant selection process.



Funding will support stabilization of the former Iroquois Brewing building on Pratt Street.

Dedicated a new staff member

Hired a Strategic Planning Consultant

**SEVEN PROJECTS FROM ROUND 1 MOVING FORWARD**

**5** Have completed construction



**ROUND 2 LAUNCHED**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

## MICHIGAN STREET AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CORRIDOR

The Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor (MSAAHC) will become a unified international tourism destination around Michigan Avenue's unique historic assets. Engaging with the community, consultant Moody Nolan completed the MSAAHC's Strategic Action Plan and Economic Development Plan. In alignment with the plans, the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission (the Commission) is beginning to prioritize capital improvement projects and associated programming. The Commission continues to use ESA funds to build capacity for themselves and individual anchors with an emphasis on fundraising, communications/marketing and programming. The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation pledged \$100,000 annually to the Commission and anchor institutions. Fundraising to leverage existing commitments continues to be a priority with two fundraising events in September. The Commission built partnerships with community-based organizations to increase their in-person events, activities and tours. MSAAHC is gaining interest and attention in local and national publications.



Rendering from the MSAAHC's newly completed Strategic Action Plan.

PRIORITIZING  
**CAPITAL  
IMPROVEMENTS**  
+  
**PROGRAMMING**

EMPHASIS ON  
**FUNDRAISING,  
MARKETING**  
+  
**PROGRAMMING**

**RALPH C. WILSON, JR.  
FOUNDATION PLEDGED  
\$100,000  
ANNUALLY**

# 8 PROJECTS COMPLETED

▶ 14 MORE CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

\*For the timeframe September 2019-August 2022 (Project Years 1, 2 & 3)

# \$1.9 MILLION

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
INVESTMENT LEVERAGED

▶ **2X MORE** than the additional investments raised last year

# 11,588 VISITORS AT CENTRAL TERMINAL AND MSAAHC

▶ **4.5X MORE VISITORS THAN LAST YEAR**

Visitors were attracted through special events including:

In-person Tours  
Black Lecture Series  
MLK Day of Caring  
Soulful Christmas  
UB Community  
Archeological Digs

Bicycle Tours  
(Slow Roll, East Side Bike Club,  
Buffalo Bike Tours)  
Smithsonian Day Events  
Gardening on Goodell  
WNY Landmark  
Society Conference

# OVER 988,000 SQ. FT.

OF BUILDING SPACE BEING RENOVATED

\*(includes pre-construction)

\*For the timeframe September 2019-August 2022 (Project Years 1, 2 & 3)

# 2,000,000+

PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH:

- ▶ **EARNED MEDIA:** *Wall Street Journal, Buffalo News, Spectrum News, Challenger, Criterion, Buffalo Rising*
- ▶ **PAID MEDIA:** *Criterion and Challenger newspapers*
- ▶ **DIGITAL MEDIA:** UBRI and East Side Avenues eNews  
The New Localism national digital newsletter (2X)  
East Side Avenues website updates | 8 storytelling videos
- ▶ **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:** Flyers, postcards,  
in-person presentations

# 8,630 ENTITIES ENGAGED AND/OR CONTACTED THROUGH:

Branding | Media kits | Enewsletter | Social media  
Emails | Public meetings | Program Websites  
One-on-one meetings (virtual or in person)  
Phone calls | Churches

▶ **MORE THAN DOUBLE** the number  
of entities engaged last year

Notes: Data was self-reported from the five East Side Avenues capacity building programs using through a survey completed in July 2022.  
The reporting period was September 2021 through August 2022 unless otherwise noted.

“The direct impact of ESA funding on our organization is THE ABILITY TO EXPAND OUR STAFF which then allows us to have a stronger presence on the East Side and to expand/create new programs.”

**CHRISTIANA LIMNIATIS**  
PRESERVATION BUFFALO NIAGARA

**Nonprofit leaders emphasized the importance of East Side Avenues funding in growing a professional and skilled staff to carry out their missions and increase their influence and presence on the East Side.** Expanding staff allows our partners to create, implement and manage new programs and projects and increase outreach which creates more awareness and allows them to assist more East Side residents and businesses than ever before. In East Side Avenue’s first two years, time and effort were spent on organizational development, and community engagement in strategic action plans and capital improvement master plans. Permanent and dedicated staff is allowing our nonprofit partners to carry out these plans, manage consultants and implement high-impact actions to ensure success and sustainability into the future. Nonprofit leaders also reported on increased funds leveraged as a result of East Side Avenues. With this infusion of new capital and organizational support, a dedicated staff will help manage and sustain their organization’s growth.

**Nonprofit leaders also find great value in hiring East Side Avenues-funded consultants to help them build organizational capacity and implement their strategic action plans and master plans.** Nonprofit leaders most often mentioned the importance of fundraising and grant writing assistance; marketing and branding consultants; board development, recruitment and training expertise; and assistance with governance.

“As a result of this support, [the Commission] continues to realize EXPONENTIAL INCREASES in donations and sponsorships, increased media attention, and an uptick from developers (both local and national) and investors expressing an interest in learning more about the Heritage Corridor and opportunities within it.”

**TERRY ALFORD**, MICHIGAN STREET AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION

**Nonprofit leaders acknowledge there have been challenges, but are working with ESD and UBRI to problem-solve and make improvements.** Unforeseen capital improvement project complexities and steep learning curves for some business and property owners were mentioned as challenges. Together we are learning from experience and reflecting on challenges to best support our nonprofits and the community. The value of East Side Avenues has been greater than the challenges faced.

“We appreciate the patience that ESD & UBRI have demonstrated, as well as the willingness to make adjustments to the program to increase effectiveness.”

**STEPHEN KARNATH**, BROADWAY FILLMORE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES

“Since being a part of the ESCDP, in partnership with the Black Chamber of Commerce of WNY, more community members and stakeholders have been made aware of Citizens Alliance and the services we provide.”

**CORNELIUS JOHNSON**, CITIZENS ALLIANCE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

**Nonprofit leaders attribute East Side Avenues funding to a myriad of positive impacts for their organizations and for residents and businesses on the East Side.** The ability for nonprofits to leverage additional funding and to hire development consultants because of East Side Avenues was repeatedly mentioned. Nonprofits are experiencing never-before-seen increases in public and philanthropic grant support, private donations and sponsorships, fundraising events and earned income. East Side Avenues funding is leveraging private investment in small businesses, developer and investor interest, and spinoff projects along commercial corridors. Examples of this are New York State’s Downtown Revitalization Initiative and investments in neighborhood anchors like the Eckhardt Building and Schreiber Brewery—all in the Broadway Fillmore neighborhood. Our nonprofit partners are also attracting new board members increasing much-needed expertise. Nonprofits reported an overall increase in awareness of their programs and projects through thoughtful branding, increased marketing, community engagement and events, and media attention. Some mentioned that East Side Avenues has led to unprecedented funding streams for capital and business development support for East Side small businesses, entrepreneurs and developers.

# Building an EFFECTIVE ECOSYSTEM to Maximize East Side Revitalization

It All Started with **\$65 Million in Capital Investments** from New York State



Private Foundations and Banks Provided **\$8+ Million for Capacity Building**



**Listening to the Community**  
Initial and Ongoing Engagement and Community Outreach Informs Program Development



Formed **Project Implementation Team**, Led by UBRI



Comprehensive **Communications Strategy and Storytelling Effort** Create Awareness of Programs and Lift Up Voices of the East Side

## 5 Capacity-Building Programs Built

Capital for new programs, matched by more than \$8 million from local foundations and corporations, strengthens the work of local nonprofit organizations. These programs support small business improvements, historic preservation, real estate development training, and fundamental East Side anchors.



**COMMERCIAL BUILDING STABILIZATION FUND**



**COMMUNITY-BASED REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING**

**MICHIGAN STREET AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CORRIDOR**



**EAST SIDE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS**



**CENTRAL TERMINAL**

MICHIGAN

JEFFERSON

FILLMORE

BAILEY

## Investments in Anchors and Infrastructure

Targeted capital funding ensures community anchors remain accessible and active core assets, improves key mixed-use properties to spur private investment, and enhances the streetscape along the corridors.



**INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE INVESTMENTS**

Areas of infrastructure investments



**BUFFALO NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION FUND**



**DIRECT PROJECT ASSISTANCE**

**MLK PARK DISTRICT**



**COMMUNITY SOLAR ARRAY AT NORTHLAND**



**BROADWAY MARKET**

# OVERVIEW



## YEAR 1 (2019-2020)

### IN REVIEW:

### SOWING THE SEEDS



Terry Alford of the MSAAHCC views Nash House historical photos.



The PIT worked with consultants to develop the East Side Avenues brand and website.

- ▶ Thoughtfully constructed the PIT, hired additional staff members, assigned leadership roles, developed administrative and communication processes, and secured additional funders.
- ▶ Developed a robust marketing communications strategy including a brand identity, ESA website and storytelling video series.
- ▶ Developed and launched new funding and education programs.
- ▶ For nonprofit partners, capacity building funds were used to hire new staff, in some cases the first-ever executive director, strengthen organizational infrastructure and administrative functions, and for marketing and communications.
- ▶ With assistance from consultants, nonprofit partners completed organizational development strategic action plans.
- ▶ When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the PIT adapted quickly, looking for new ways to engage the community, roll out classes and programs, and keep work moving.

# OVERVIEW



## YEAR 2 (2020-2021)

### IN REVIEW: CONTINUING THE MOMENTUM



MSAAHC's Strategic Action Plan will help spur economic development.



ESA's storytelling video series lifts up the voices of East Siders.

- ▶ Nonprofit partners completed and began implementing organizational development strategic action plans.
- ▶ The MSAAHC, Central Terminal, and Broadway Market completed major planning efforts with strong community input that lead the way to the future.
- ▶ Despite COVID-19 challenges in construction, much-needed capital funds hit the streets.
- ▶ Continued telling the compelling stories of people living and working on the East Side through videos, photography, website, earned media, and digital communications.
- ▶ Began building the story of ESA as a national model—compelling to cities looking for sustainable revitalization strategies and a broader range of national funders.



# YEAR THREE

(2021-2022)

# BUILDING UP

**As the community begins to recover from the horrific shooting at Tops Market on Jefferson on May 14, 2022, it is more important than ever to scale up efforts to maximize impacts for those most in need.**

The East Side is a community in mourning following the racially motivated tragic mass shooting at the Jefferson Avenue Tops supermarket on May 14, 2022. There is sadness as the community honors those who lost their lives, and anger at the senselessness of such violence. But there is also an overwhelming sense of unity and resilience in the face of this tragedy. This speaks to the strength and tenacity of the people and organizations deeply embedded on the East Side helping those in need, and bringing hope for the future.

The organizations and programs funded through East Side Avenues were looked to as a model of resilience and sustainability as the community began to recover from this unthinkable event. Backed by nearly three years of collaborative thinking, game-changing funding, hard work and undeniable progress, the momentum that East Side Avenues partners created allowed programs to survive—and thrive—and to serve the East Side community in this time of tragedy.

In year three, as we reflect on how the East Side was impacted by the Tops shooting, we also reflect on what we have accomplished. There is no question East Side Avenues is paving the way for future thinking on the East Side. We carefully developed the foundational building blocks. We know this is a model that works. We must double-down on our existing partners and projects—through increased commitments to funding, collaboration, and strategy—to ensure East Side Avenues' outcomes are transformational and impact is maximized.

The time is now to **look up** toward the future. We are ready to **team up** to build models together that are resilient. We are **scaling up** efforts to maximize impact. And we will make sure East Side Avenues partners **move up** together.



**In the past year we looked back and acknowledged where we succeeded, identified challenges, listened to our community partners and made thoughtful program improvements to expand our reach and strengthen program intentions.**

We took a hard, honest look at what is working and what needs work. We had the best intentions entering into program development in year one and full implementation in year two, but we needed to reflect on where challenges emerged and how we could best support community constituencies.

Based on feedback from our nonprofit partners, students in the CBREDT program, local banks and other lenders, and business and building owners receiving grants, ESD and UBRI held a series of strategy sessions where we looked at guidelines, criteria for eligibility, pricing and costs, and technical assistance needs for all of our capital grant programs. We learned that effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to impact our ability to move construction projects. Rising costs, limited contractors, and struggling small businesses are all unexpected barriers to faster progress. We learned that a grant program alone isn't the solution to many challenges such as securing bank financing and completing pre-development activities. We learned that projects can be complicated and expensive, and it's very likely that a scope will change—both in breadth and cost—causing difficulties for owners.

We recommended policy changes and revamped all of the capital grant programs to bridge the gap between program expectations and realities that have come to light. Based on feedback from the community, we are implementing the following policy changes within our grant programs for Round 2:

- ▶ Raise grant limits;
- ▶ Offer more Architecture/Engineering (A&E) and other technical assistance;
- ▶ Simplify and streamline administrative processes;
- ▶ Add additional financial tools;
- ▶ Explore a continuum of financial support;
- ▶ Offer a greater degree of mentoring and shepherding for community-based entrepreneurs.

## East Side Avenues is creating a national model for ecosystem building and placemaking.

East Side Avenues is a national model which illustrates that effecting economic change for underserved communities cannot be limited to a series of public infrastructure investments and real estate projects by outside developers. Planning must be driven by solid data and community voices. There must be an unprecedented level of public and private collaboration and co-investment that directly invests in the community's vision, and is targeted, coordinated, and large enough to drive real, transformational change. The investments must create vibrant commercial corridors and neighborhoods of opportunity; strengthen historical, cultural, and natural assets; and connect people with family-sustaining jobs. Investments must be made in human capital to equip residents, businesses, and property owners with the tools they need to invest in their own assets, start or expand businesses, and grow wealth with the idea of bolstering resident leadership while generating economic wealth for the people in the community. The East Side Avenues model also reinforces the role for intermediaries in ecosystem building.

As a collaborative model that is unique and unprecedented, the team continues to earn local, regional and national media coverage:

- ▶ East Side Avenues was featured in *Building Back Better Requires Smart Spending and Transformative Investments* in the The New Localism newsletter.
- ▶ UBRI authored a piece about the CBREDT program for Brookings Institute's Postcards blog titled *How Buffalo's East Side Avenues is training citizen developers to revitalize commercial corridors*.
- ▶ Community-driven East Side Avenues' programs were featured in the *Wall Street Journal*.
- ▶ Funding to continue East Side Avenues programs as part of the Regional Revitalization Partnership was announced by Governor Kathy Hochul in early June and covered by numerous media outlets including *The Buffalo News*, WKBW, Spectrum, WBFO and the New Localism blog.

The future is looking up for the East Side. East Side Avenues is helping tell that story.



We are continuing our marketing communications strategy with a focus on lifting up the voices of people living and working on the East Side. Our storytelling program includes videos with community members and dynamic photography. We continue to build viewership and drive traffic to the East Side Avenues website. Earned media and digital communications efforts build momentum and local news outlets are covering East Side efforts like never before. We are building outreach to the media and our partners to create awareness of East Side Avenue’s programs and progress. The future is looking up on the East Side and we are here to tell everyone about it through some of our 2021–2022 communications efforts including:

- ▶ **Building viewership of the existing storytelling video series.** With input from the communications sounding board, we developed and began to implement a communications plan to build viewership/readership of videos and the annual reports. The plan includes media outreach, online ads and funder/partner promotional toolkits. Buffalo Rising featured the videos in a series.
- ▶ **East Side Avenues storytelling videos won two awards at the American Advertising Federation’s WNY award show—** Best in Show and CommUNITY which features under-represented populations. This type of recognition increases viewership and helps us lift up East Side voices regionally and possibly nationally.
- ▶ **Developed and launched a third series of storytelling videos** that provide information about the great work that program partners and community members are doing every day.
- ▶ **Digital outreach continued** with the creation and distribution of several East Side Avenues eNewsletters along with a digital content toolkit for partners.
- ▶ **We are supporting our nonprofit community partners with communications—reviewing marketing communications materials and providing strategic direction on public relations and events/outreach.** The PIT assisted the Commission with earned media in support of its Strategic Action and Economic Development plan launch which garnered extensive coverage and helped them develop an RFP for branding services. The PIT also arranges program/community event photography and provides event images to partners whenever possible.
- ▶ **Several featured presentations were made to funders and the community in support of East Side Avenues.**
- ▶ **Our funders and partners continue to promote our work in their marketing communications.** Evans Bank featured ESA in its annual report for the second year in a row and the Oishei, Key Bank and Wilson foundations use content from our digital toolkit on a regular basis. Our ESA partners (LPAs, PBN, CTCR and MSAAHCC) promoted ESA in their written communications and materials and on their organizational websites

**East Side Avenues is developing models to fit unique organizational needs while also finding common ground and opportunities for collaboration among programs and partners.**



Capacity building comes in all shapes and sizes. The type of help that nonprofit partners need has a broad range—from roll-up-your-sleeves problem solving, to making connections with other expertise, to presenting our stories together. Our nonprofit partners are seeing real growth and planning for the future as a result of East Side Avenues capacity building funds. With help from the PIT, organizations are identifying their most pressing needs and how and when they can be addressed. They are building their capacity and self-sustainability by accessing support from consultants in line with their organizational development strategic action plans. These consultants are assisting in areas such as fundraising, board development, HR training, financial training, communications support, diversity training and cross promotion of events and news. But, we are also looking for shared services opportunities for our nonprofit partners to bolster organizational capacity while maximizing efficiency and cost, and promote collaboration across East Side organizations. For example:

- ▶ **LISC completed a series of six interactive Corridor Management Training workshops** for LPAs and business owners offering beginner-to-intermediate level commercial district skill-building. The workshops taught national models and position daily corridor management activities within a strategic context of the Main Street. As a follow-up to the Corridor Management Training Workshops, LISC WNY provided direct coaching and technical assistance on model implementation.
- ▶ **Two community consultants, Glenda Cadwallader and Tanya Staples, are beginning to work with the staff and boards of our nonprofit partners to develop a succession planning process** for use in future leadership changes. In addition to being an organizational best practice, it promotes good financial stewardship of East Side Avenues and public funds that have been invested in these organizations. The process will begin this fall with a group Zoom session followed by three individualized sessions during the year.

With public and private partners, we developed a strategy to scale up existing ESA programs and connect with other investments through a broader \$300 million Regional Revitalization Partnership (RRP).



ESA funding gave us the opportunity to promote the community's incredible work and explore larger-scale, multi-year funding to give the East Side a true catalytic boost in a time where aggregating state, federal, and philanthropic resources is a unique opportunity. In 2021–2022 we developed a strategy to scale up existing East Side Avenues programs, integrate other East Side investments and anchors such as Broadway Market, the Northland Corridor and MLK Park, and connect to other strategic geographies through a broader regional revitalization initiative.

In 2022, Governor Hochul and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation announced the RRP. The RRP is a multi-year \$300M public and private co-investment in three interconnected geographic areas (Buffalo's East Side and the cities of Niagara Falls and Rochester) to create a comprehensive community-driven economic development vision around strengthening the region's ecosystem and building pathways to individual wealth. See page 63 for details.



Broadway Market will become a year-round destination.



Broadway Theatre received support for building stabilization.



A visionary rendering from Central Terminal's strategic plan.



DREAMING  
BIGGER.  
ACTING WITH  
PURPOSE.



# COMMUNITY-BASED REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

**Train building owners in commercial real estate development to ensure buildings are redeveloped for and by East Side residents.**

The CBREDT program was developed through a collaboration of the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning, UBRI, LISC WNY, Empire State Development, and the City of Buffalo. The intent is to train East Side building owners and community members to undertake a commercial, mixed-use, or infill project. This ensures that revitalization is driven by the community, and buildings don't fall into the hands of absentee landlords or land speculators or sit unused. The first of its kind in the region, CBREDT is a tuition-free, non-credit bearing, adult education program. The approximately 20-week intensive program provides an overview of the commercial real estate development process, including predevelopment, construction, property management, and financing a project from private and public sources. Weekly classroom instruction is provided by a wide range of experienced real estate development professionals and includes lectures and hands-on activities. Participants are also linked with a mentor based on individual needs and interests. Students work toward a final project to present to a panel of jurors.



Students connected with funders at the “Getting to Yes with Financing” networking session.

## CBREDT

To bolster CBREDT program participants' chances at success, ESD established a \$5M Community Based Real Estate Development Training Program Fund (CBREDTP Fund) dedicated to providing program graduates access to much-needed capital for their mixed-use and commercial projects. However, through three rounds of the CBREDT program, and based on feedback from our nonprofit partners, current students and graduates of the CBREDT program, local banks and other lenders, and business and building owners, it was concluded that project size, scope, pre-development needs, and readiness vary greatly among program graduates. In 2022, ESD and UBRI reimagined the CBREDTP Fund to create a more tailored approach and a continuum of support for program graduates in making their visions a reality. ESD and UBRI consequently restructured the originally proposed funding program into three subprograms available only to CBREDT graduates: Pre-Development Fund, Small Project Fund and Real Estate Development Fund. University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning (SAP) is providing technical assistance and recommending a course of action for graduates. Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services is acting as Local Program Administrator—working with ESD and in coordination with SAP to administer Pre-Development and Small Project Funds.

## KEY MILESTONES 2021-2022

- ▶ **Developed continuing education opportunities for the 2020 and 2021 cohorts.** Topic areas were selected based on student and instructor feedback.
- ▶ **Continued our partnership with Urban Land Institute (ULI) New York**—the oldest and largest network of cross-disciplinary real estate and land use experts in the world. The CBREDT 2021 & 2022 cohorts received a complimentary one-year ULI membership to access additional support in their real estate development endeavors; and students under age 40 were matched with a ULI mentor.

*The program includes weekly classroom instruction with real estate development professionals, lectures and hands-on activities.*



↑ The 2022 class toured The Forge On Broadway.

↓ Students also toured the Nash Lofts.



DEVELOPED THREE SUBPROGRAMS  
↓  
**PRE-DEVELOPMENT FUND**  
**SMALL PROJECT FUND**  
**REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT FUND**



▶ **LISC Western New York submitted a report on lessons learned from the second cohort.** The analysis included feedback from student surveys on program satisfaction, program participant characteristics, project scale, challenges to commercial development, and instruction and learning modifications including course additions and extended learning opportunities.

▶ **Opened applications and launched promotion of the 2022 program on November 8, 2021.** Based on 2021 student feedback in LISC’s report, we made adjustments to the program and completed program design for the 2022 class.

▶ **Marketed the program through the application deadline of December 8, 2021.** Robust outreach and marketing included updated web content, earned media, online and paper applications, eNews blasts, postcards, and print ads in *Challenger* and *Criterion* newspapers. Videos with student stories are posted on the East Side Avenues website to share participants’ experiences and progress within the community.

▶ **20 East Side residents and building owners were selected for the 2022 CBREDT class** (following a rigorous candidate selection process that resulted in 69 written applications and 25 interviews). 17 students completed the program.

▶ **The 2022 CBREDT program ran from March through July** on Wednesday evenings and select Saturdays. The class was largely virtual with several in-person activities and events. The 2022 cohort boasted high class participation, and a weekly attendance rate of over 90%. Highlights of the program and special events included: “UrbanPlan”—an 8-hour, realistic and engaging exercise on forces that impact real estate development; “Getting to Yes with Financing” networking session with KeyBank, M&T Bank, CPC, LISC, Evans Bank, Northwest Bank and Bank on Buffalo; several financial modeling work sessions; in-person construction tours of The Forge at 490 Broadway and The Sattler Broadway Theater; and an in-person graduation ceremony. Ongoing student evaluation of the program was overwhelmingly positive.

▶ **Restructured the originally proposed CBREDTP Fund into three subprograms available only to CBREDT graduates:**

▶ **Pre-Development Fund:** provides grants of up to \$50,000 to property owners for work to make their projects more feasible such as but not limited to consultant costs to prepare business plans and architectural drawings.

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▶ **Small Project Fund:** provides grants of up to \$150,000 per property for smaller-scale building improvements that may serve to stabilize a property to allow it to be put into productive use or as an initial phase of a redevelopment that can later be scaled up.

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▶ **Real Estate Development Fund:** for projects that are larger in size and scope, a program graduate can receive a grant of up to \$500,000 to support either a stand-alone, single-site, “shovel ready” renovation/rehabilitation project; or an infill development project on a vacant lot.

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▶ **Developed a new partnership with SAP to provide technical assistance to CBREDT program graduates.** Under the re-structured approach, program graduates are offered technical assistance from SAP. This assistance is required to receive a grant from the CBREDTP Fund. SAP faculty and graduate-level assistants act as “coaches”—assessing needs and providing advice on how to make a proposed project more “bank-able,” and recommending a course of action with regard to the development activities. These advisory/mentoring services will remain available to CBREDT program graduates throughout their project’s lifecycle at no cost to them. To date, SAP has met with 18 program graduates.

## CBREDT

- ▶ **BFNHS was selected to administer Pre-Development Funds and Small Project Funds based upon its past involvement in ESCD program for the Broadway-Fillmore and MLK Park districts.** BFNHS works with SAP recommendations to determine the right course of action for a CBREDT graduate, and is responsible for all administrative activities associated with these funds.
- ▶ **ESD will continue to administer a grant program for large-scale redevelopment projects called the Real Estate Development Fund.** As part of a continuum of support, projects that receive initial pre-development funds may be eligible to apply to this grant program.
- ▶ **Developed a communications plan to rollout these programmatic changes to all three cohorts.** In addition to developing a comprehensive new set of program guidelines for all program graduates, ESD held an information meeting for all three cohorts in August.
- ▶ **To gather feedback for changes and improvements to the 2023 program,** LISC Western New York submitted an evaluation of the third cohort and UBRI held a focus groups for graduates and instructors.

## LOOKING AHEAD: GOALS FOR 2022-2023

- ➔ SAP, BFNHS and ESD will continue to work closely with program graduates to provide financial assistance based on their projects' unique challenges, needs and opportunities.
- ➔ Focus on continuing education opportunities for previous classes.
- ➔ Based on program evaluations, survey and focus group, make adjustments to program and curriculum for 2023.
- ➔ Plan and launch outreach and application process for fourth cohort to begin in February 2023.
- ➔ Continue to share participants' progress with the community through stories and videos.





## ANITA SANDERS

Anita believes the East Side of Buffalo deserves a fresh start. A recent graduate of the Community-Based Real Estate Development Training, she's ready to make her 890 Project on Kensington Avenue a reality.

Anita's plan includes commercial entities

that are desperately needed in the area, such as a bank, pharmacy, fresh food market, and incubator space. She also wants to bring energy-efficiency utilities to the neighborhood, including heat pumps and EV charging stations. "I want the 890 Project to be more than a building. I want it to be a moving force in the community."

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## EVANETTE VEIRA

As a lifelong resident of the 14215, Evanette has heard the stories of when Bailey Avenue was a social hub—and she wants to help revive the avenue into a walkable, thriving neighborhood.

Evanette didn't imagine herself as a real estate developer, but a chance encounter with a friend

introduced her to the Community-Based Real Estate Development Training. Now a training graduate, she is taking what she learned to acquire and redevelop a property on Bailey. She envisions a coffee shop and co-working space that will serve as a new meeting place for the neighborhood.

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## DAROLD FOUNTAIN

When Darold Fountain, owner of Aurora Window Systems & Contracting Inc., first heard about the Community-Based Real Estate Training, he was skeptical. However, after going through the training himself, Darold is now one of its most enthusiastic advocates, saying, “If you have a desire to be a developer, this is the class for you. None better.”

Darold has owned a property on Leroy Avenue for several years. Now, with the financial know-how and confidence gained through the training, he is ready to move forward to redevelop the project into a mix-use building with a storefront and apartments.

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BRINGING  
NEW LIFE TO  
MEANINGFUL  
PLACES.



## COMMERCIAL BUILDING STABILIZATION FUND

**Support East Side building owners and maintain neighborhood character by stabilizing at-risk historic buildings.**

The Commercial Building Stabilization Fund is a dedicated resource that supports the stabilization of at-risk commercial and mixed-use buildings on Buffalo's East Side. Developed in partnership with Preservation Buffalo Niagara (PBN) and the City of Buffalo Department of Permits and Inspection Services (DPIS), the program is designed to identify at-risk historic buildings and administer funds to stabilize them for future use (e.g., institute structural repairs and weatherization to prevent further deterioration). This will protect the buildings from future demolition and allow for their re-use when promising market opportunities arise. Preference is given to historic buildings that need short-term stabilization solutions, are at high risk for demolition, are located along commercial corridors to improve the business environment of the neighborhood, and have interest from the owner in future redevelopment. Buildings are not required to be formally designated on the National Register of Historic Places.



Golden Cup Coffee owner, Larry Stitts, envisions building a new coffee shop, roastery and community gathering place at 1362 Jefferson.

Seven projects were awarded a total of \$500,000 in Round 1 of the program. While capacity building funds allowed PBN to dedicate staff members to conduct outreach, select projects, administer capital grant funds, and monitor construction, we learned that these projects can be complicated and expensive. It's very likely that project scopes will change—both in breadth and cost—causing difficulties for owners often with little construction project experience. For Round 2, we revamped the program to address these challenges by raising capital fund limits and offering more A&E technical assistance at no additional cost to the property owner.

## COMMERCIAL BUILDING STABILIZATION FUND

### KEY MILESTONES 2021-2022

- ▶ **Buffalo Moose Group continues to assist PBN with creating a fund development plan and building up a more robust Development Committee.** Fourteen grant applications were submitted and, to date, six were funded totaling over \$1 million.
- ▶ **Through an RFQ process, PBN selected Susan West Montgomery as Strategic Planning Consultant to guide PBN through a three-year planning process** that actively engages PBN's stakeholders and builds broader coalitions to inform and support its mission. PBN and consultant completed their first deliverable, External Assessment/Equity Audit.
- ▶ **Marketing consultant, 19 Ideas, completed their first deliverable— Discovery and Planning—**to identify all communications assets, materials and platforms; determine project requirements; and establish goals moving forward. The Board will move forward with this effort once strategic planning is complete to make sure marketing efforts are aligned with the updated strategic plan.
- ▶ **Perrin Associates completed Board Training with PBN.**
- ▶ **PBN was part of The Landmark Society of Western New York, Inc. Preservation Conference.** The presentation focused on the Commercial Building Stabilization Fund and its unique approach to ensure that important neighborhood fabric remains intact.
- ▶ **After scope and budget adjustments due to rising construction costs, bidding challenges and emergency interventions, seven Round 1 projects have progressed.** Five projects completed construction and two are completing pre-construction activities.



7  
ROUND 1 PROJECTS

HAVE

PROGRESSED



## COMMERCIAL BUILDING STABILIZATION FUND

- ▶ **PBN hired a dedicated staff person, Constance Denise Strother, for the Commercial Building Stabilization Fund** to assist with program administration, outreach, and project identification as well as other East Side preservation initiatives.
- ▶ **ESD revamped the program for Round 2 to address participant challenges while maintaining and strengthening the original intent of the program.** A comprehensive new set of program guidelines was developed with changes including raising the grant amount to a maximum of \$150,000/building; the addition of contingency funding; the addition of a consultant to provide Architectural & Engineering (A&E) services throughout the process; and the potential for follow-on funding for Round 1 projects.
- ▶ **Following an RPF process, PBN hired Flynn Battaglia Architects to provide A&E services for Round 2 projects including project scoping, bidding and monitoring.**
- ▶ **PBN launched the second round of the program.** They are currently evaluating 20 Round 1 projects for awards in Round 2 and hope to move forward with construction in 2022.

## LOOKING AHEAD: GOALS FOR 2022-2023

- ➔ Continue 3-year strategic planning process and implementation.
- ➔ Complete construction on all Round 1 projects.
- ➔ The Advisory Committee, made up of PBN, ESD, UBRI, the City of Buffalo, and community members, review applications based on revised program criteria and priorities and select and announce Round 2 projects.
- ➔ PBN and A&E consultant will work with Round 2 building owners to develop work scopes, undergo bid solicitations, and begin construction.
- ➔ Round 3 of funding opened October 3, 2022.
- ➔ Continue ongoing outreach to building owners.





## MATT WATTLES

The Niagara Frontier Food Terminal is a meaningful place for Matt Wattles.

Not only is he the company's Director of Development, but his great-grandfather was one of the terminal's original food distributors in the 1930s.

Today, Matt is excited about the new vision for the once-bustling market

—one that combines local food vendors, startup businesses, and artists. Through a grant from the Building Stabilization Fund, the food terminal restored and reroofed a canopy of a two-story building that will be leased. “The food terminal played a huge part in early 1900s Buffalo economy, and we want to reimagine it and take it into the future.”

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CONNECTING  
A HISTORIC  
LANDMARK WITH  
THE COMMUNITY.



# CENTRAL TERMINAL

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## **Increase community access by transforming the iconic Central Terminal into a year-round, neighborhood, city and regional venue.**

This project aims to restore the Central Terminal, one of Buffalo's most iconic buildings, and better connect it to the Broadway Fillmore business district to serve the surrounding community, attract private investment and visitors to the area. The previously all-volunteer-run Central Terminal Restoration Corporation (CTRC) made tremendous strides in caring for the facility and bringing attention to the landmark's importance. With the infusion of New York State funds to support planning and capital improvements, and support from East Side Avenues for capacity building and full-time operational staff, CTRC will live up to its new mission statement: to develop the Buffalo Central Terminal—a majestic historic landmark—as a lasting cultural and economic hub for the community.



East Side Avenues is building the capacity of CTRC by funding a full-time executive director and other paid staff and linking the Board and staff to organizational consultants. CTRC is implementing their three-year strategic plan focusing on governance, strategic planning, fundraising, marketing, neighborhood connections and involvement, community-oriented programming, equitable development and care of the buildings and grounds.

Engaging residents and community members, CTRC completed a 12-month master planning process to guide the vision, operations, capital improvements, and financing structure for the Terminal. CTRC is now advancing necessary predevelopment and beginning the process to solicit development partner(s).

With state capital funding, it is anticipated that the CTRC will reopen Central Terminal for public use in 2024 by creating a Civic Commons that is a flexible year-round active destination. Outdoor events and limited interior activities can then take place in the Concourse, on the Great Lawn and on the former parking deck. The Civic Commons creates a destination, starts revenue generation, propels future uses and private investment. Design and construction, focused on sizeable asbestos remediation and extensive roof repairs on the former restaurant area adjacent to the Concourse is complete.

### KEY MILESTONES 2021-2022

- ▶ **With search assistance from Perrin Associates, CTRC hired an Associate Director, Drew Canfield** to assist with implementation of the site master plan and advance the reuse of the Central Terminal while continuing to engage the Broadway Fillmore neighborhood.
- ▶ **CTRC continues to engage the community with numerous community-based events at the Terminal** including Trunk of Treat with partner Matt Urban Center, public art unveiling and celebration of “Doodle Portal”—a welcoming entry gate by artist Nando Alvarez Perez with neighborhood youth, community clean-up events, Shakespeare in Delaware Park, The Buffalo Flea, Slow Roll, Beau Fleuve Music & Arts Festival and Doors Open Buffalo.
- ▶ **In line with master plan implementation, CTRC is advancing necessary predevelopment, including real estate development and legal expertise.** CTRC selected a Real Estate Development Consultant (James Lima Planning + Development in collaboration with Bisonwing Planning & Development) to help solicit and evaluate development partner(s); and selected Tax Credit Attorney Cannon Heyman Weiss.



- ▶ **CTRC finalized a 3-year Fund Development Plan with support of consultant Linda Ray.** The Plan focuses on building a system for ongoing operational support. CTRC set up Donor Management System and launched its first annual appeal. CTRC has seen the following fundraising success this year:

- 
- ▶ **The Broadway Fillmore neighborhood was awarded \$10 million in Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding with Central Terminal as a key component of the award.** DRI funds will assist with the Terminal’s initial phase of site improvements on the Great Lawn.

- 
- ▶ **CTRC won a Project for Public Spaces Community Placemaking Grant to activate the Great Lawn** in alignment with the Master Plan. A community meeting and survey were used to gather public input. The placemaking outcome is community gathering location with large and artistic tables and seating.

- 
- ▶ **CTRC applied for Department of Environmental Conservation funding to complete a Phase 2 Environmental Assessment.**

- 
- ▶ **CTRC was awarded three grants to date to fund the Real Estate Development Consultant contract** (\$7,500 from the Favrot Fund with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, \$25,000 From the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Legacy Fund and \$50,000 from First Niagara Bank with Key Bank).

## CENTRAL TERMINAL

- ▶ **CTRC focused on marketing communications efforts including creating a media kit, launching the Central Connector newsletter, and selecting consultant White Bicycle for branding/communications support.** They implemented a cohesive social media approach and are tracking results.
- ▶ **The CTRC Nominating Committee undertook a methodical process to identify board of director candidates** with a focus on real estate development, fund development, construction management, business/not-for-profit management, community engagement and the public sector. Thomas Kucharski, Thomas Beauford, Jr., and Gustavo Lima joined the Board in 2022.
- ▶ **CTRC issued a Request for Expression of Interest for a real estate development partner(s) through a wide reaching (local, state, national) solicitation process** to join in delivering on the objectives of creating a vibrant mixed-use complex, one where the newly revitalized Central Terminal is an integral part of creating opportunity for all.
- ▶ **Construction on the former restaurant area adjacent to the Concourse is complete.** This project addressed the severely deteriorated roof and associated abatement and masonry. Repairs to the lightwell in the former restaurant area will take place this year with an Environmental Protection Fund grant.
- ▶ **CTRC commenced regular meetings with the City about the abutting buildings and grounds that are identified together on the National Register listing.** A Memorandum of Understanding is underway to establish shared responsibilities and expectations.
- ▶ **CTRC met with the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service about the complicated multiple building issue that impacts redevelopment.**
- ▶ **CTRC continues to care for the massive building and grounds with a small but dedicated volunteer crew of 15.**

## LOOKING AHEAD:

### GOALS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

- ➔ With state capital funding, CTRC anticipates it will reopen the Central Terminal for public use in 2024 by creating a Civic Commons consisting of the Concourse, the Great Lawn and the former parking deck. Work to reactivate the Terminal will include:
  - ➔ Safety issues such as installation of life safety systems (i.e. fire detection and suppression), asbestos remediation, and repair of loose and falling masonry inside and out;
  - ➔ Functional issues such as window replacement, installation of mechanical, electric and plumbing, repair of severely leaking roofs;
  - ➔ Structural issues, such as repair parking deck, the barrel roof and the Guastavino tiles lining the inside of the Concourse; and
  - ➔ Care and maintenance in accordance with the Facilities Maintenance Plan.
- ➔ Complete necessary predevelopment work including Historic Structures Report and Cultural Landscape Report; Environmental assessments (Phase 2 and Hazardous Materials Abatement Master Plan), Utility Study, Structural Analysis of the parking garage, concourse roof and floor.
- ➔ Update branding and website.
- ➔ Continue to engage the public with events and programming and seek funding to hire support to oversee this initiative.
- ➔ Enter into an agreement with the selected real estate development partner(s).



## ANNIE O'NEIL-WHITE

Annie first experienced the Central Terminal while volunteering at East Side Festival in 2019. She was struck not just by the grand building but by the rich stories she overheard from families walking through the historic station.

By joining the board of the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation,

Annie is helping ensure future generations can enjoy the space in many different ways. Through the support of East Side Avenues and the Regional Revitalization Partnership, she sees the Central Terminal advancing the strategic plan introduced in 2020. “The future of the Central Terminal is to be a partner of this community.”

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ELEVATING  
SMALL BUSINESSES.  
MAKING AN  
IMMENSE IMPACT.





## EAST SIDE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

**Create a building renovation program to generate wealth for small business owners, combat vacancies, and revitalize commercial corridors.**

The East Side Commercial Districts (ESCD) program, modeled after the New York Main Street program, provides matching capital grants to building owners through local program administrators. ESCD provides funding for building renovations in four investment areas through three community-based nonprofit LPAs—Jefferson Avenue Commercial District (Citizens' Alliance, in partnership with the Black Chamber of Commerce of WNY), MLK Park Business District and Broadway Fillmore (Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services), and Kensington Bailey (University District Community Development Association). By ensuring that outreach and priorities are made on a local level, the LPAs roles as community-based conduits is critical to the program's success and to re-establishing the corridors as viable and revitalized business districts.



With ESA funding, LPAs hired dedicated commercial district staff, underwent organizational assessments and capacity mapping, completed strategic organizational action plans, and are implementing their unique plans to strengthen board governance, management, marketing and fundraising with consultant support. At the same time, with the help of consultants, LPAs developed corridor-specific design standards and worked with 20 building owners to complete environmental reviews, develop work scopes, undergo bid solicitations, and begin construction on over \$1 million in renovation projects awarded in Round 1 of the program. While two projects are complete, seven are under construction, and all others are in various stages of the bidding process, ESCD program faced scoping and cost estimating challenges, as well as a need for greater quality control and prioritization of building and overall district needs. For Round 2, we revamped the program to address these challenges by raising capital fund limits, offering a greater degree of A&E technical assistance to create stronger and more uniform cost estimating and planning, and streamlining administrative processes.

## EAST SIDE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

### KEY MILESTONES 2021-2022

- ▶ **Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services (BFNHS) continues to work toward completion of seven Round 1 projects with consultant Labella Associates in the Broadway Fillmore District.** One is complete, one is under construction and five are completing pre-construction activities.
- ▶ **BFNHS hired a new Commercial Districts Program Manager, Brandi Barrett,** a graduate of the Community-Based Real Estate Development Training Program.
- ▶ **BFNHS increased the diversity of their Board, adding three new board members (all women of color).**
- ▶ **BFNHS used Catchafire to redesign and relaunch their website.**
- ▶ **East Side Avenues leverages many of BFNHS' continued revitalization efforts in the Broadway Fillmore neighborhood** including DRI funding and the redevelopment of the Eckhardt Building and Schreiber Brewery.
- ▶ **BFNHS worked with Explore Buffalo to bring Doors Open to Broadway Fillmore in September 2022.**
- ▶ **Citizens Alliance (CAI) continues to develop work scopes and undergo bid solicitations** with assistance from consultant LaBella Associates for five building renovation projects in the Jefferson District.



**3 NEW BOARD MEMBERS,  
ALL WOMEN OF COLOR**



**20 PROJECTS**  
*complete, under construction or  
in pre-construction*



## EAST SIDE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

- ▶ **CAI completed a three-year strategic plan with consultant MWB Ignites, LLC** that will enhance the capacity of the board and management team to achieve their goals and objectives through clarifying their roles and responsibilities and strengthening their ability to collaborate effectively. CAI is in the process of implementing plans for year 1—Housing and Business Development.
- ▶ **CAI is working with The Black Chamber of Commerce to help reestablish a Jefferson Business Association.** CAI assisted businesses with applications to the Erie County Storefront Revitalization Program to leverage ESCD funding.
- ▶ **Following the May 14th tragedy at Tops Supermarket located in the Jefferson corridor, CAI is helping meet the pressing needs of the community** and collaborating with other organizations to provide hot meals, food and supplies and the planning for long term assistance.
- ▶ **University District Community Development Association (UDCDA) continues to perform due diligence work on eight Round 1 projects.** UDCDA assisted projects in developing scopes and assembling bid packages. One project is complete, six are under construction and one is completing pre-construction activities. ESA consultant Kathy Kinan assisted Round 1 projects with scoping, bidding and construction monitoring.
- ▶ **LISC WNY continues to provide CapMap Coaching support to LPAs—**monitoring the implementation of their capacity building plan.
- ▶ **ESD revamped the program for Round 2 to address participant challenges while maintaining and strengthening the original intent of the program.** A comprehensive new set of program guidelines was developed with changes including raising the grant amount to a maximum of \$100,000/building; the addition of contingency funding; the addition of a consultant to provide Architectural & Engineering (A&E) services throughout the process; and streamlining administrative procedures.

- ▶ **Following RPF processes, the three LPAs hired consultants to provide A&E services for Round 2 projects including project scoping, bidding and monitoring.**
- ▶ **LPAs launched a second funding Round in August and are marketing the program and accepting applications.** Outreach to promote the program and solicit interest in grant funding from small businesses began with informational kick-off meetings followed by door-to-door canvassing, outreach to elected officials, and media release distribution.

### LOOKING AHEAD: GOALS FOR 2022-2023

- ➔ Complete applicant selection process and finalize list of projects to be funded in Round 2.
- ➔ LPAs and A&E consultant will work with Round 2 building owners to develop work scopes, undergo bid solicitations, and begin construction.
- ➔ Develop application process and timeline for Round 3 of funding.
- ➔ Complete construction of Round 1 projects
- ➔ Continue ongoing outreach to business owners
- ➔ Continue to implement strategic organizational action plans.



## LEROY LOVE

Mr. Love's Babershop has been a fixture on Jefferson Avenue for three decades. Affectionately known as Mr. Love, Leroy takes pride in offering affordable haircuts to the neighborhood. He serves multiple generations of families. Regardless of age, Mr. Love's philosophy is simple:

"Once you get in here, everybody's a king."

With the support of East Side Commercial Districts funding, Leroy plans to remodel the exterior and interior of the barbershop. Eventually, he wants to pass the business on to his sons, who have been cutting hair in the shop since they were young.

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## CHRIS COVELLI

The story of Al Cohen's involves a 300-year rye bread recipe. But Chris believes the company is just starting to heat up on Broadway. Since acquiring Al Cohen's in 2019, the business has nearly doubled in size, with over 40% of its workforce living in the neighborhood.

Al Cohen's received a grant through the East Side Commercial District program to refresh its facade and install office space used to host customers. The company is also working with Empire State Development to repair our spiral blast freezer, which is critical for the company's frozen pizza dough operations.

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BUILDING  
MOMENTUM  
ALONG  
A HISTORIC  
CORRIDOR.



# MICHIGAN STREET AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CORRIDOR

## Build a unified international tourism destination around Michigan Street’s unique assets.

This project supports the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission’s efforts to create a multifaceted tourist destination focused on the historic assets between William and Broadway (Michigan Street Baptist Church, Nash House Museum, Colored Musicians Club, and WUFO Black Radio History Collective). The objective is twofold: create a cooperative operating and business model and coordinate capital improvements to build a unified tourist destination that will tell the story of Buffalo’s contribution to African American history while attracting new visitors to the region.

In Years 1 & 2 work focused on strengthening the Commission by formalizing its organizational infrastructure and administrative functions and hiring its first executive director. The Commission continued to leverage capacity building funding to strengthen foundational elements of the organization, especially Commission governance, with assistance from Roxanne Kise Consulting.

The Commission and staff also contracted with additional organizational consultants to assist with marketing/communications and fundraising.



MICHIGAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

NASH HOUSE MUSEUM

COLORED MUSICIANS CLUB

WUFO BLACK RADIO HISTORY COLLECTIVE

Concurrently, the Commission completed a strategic action planning process, rooted in community engagement, led by consultant Moody Nolan—the nation’s largest African American-owned design firm. The plan formalizes a cooperative operating model that can support operations, fundraising, and marketing and prioritize future capital investments such as additional upgrades, expansions, ADA and safety compliance, streetscape improvements, community gathering spaces, and other amenities. The Commission is beginning to prioritize capital improvement projects and associated programming.

**KEY MILESTONES 2021-2022**

**Consultant Moody Nolan completed the MSAAHC’s Strategic Action Plan and Economic Development Plan.** In February 2022, the plans were formally introduced to the public (virtually) with over 80 people in attendance.

**In line with Strategic Action Plan, the Commission is beginning to prioritize capital improvement projects and associated programming including:**

- ▶ Moody Nolan and sub-consultant Trophy Point developed cost analysis/investment capital plan for each capital project in the Plan.
- ▶ Planning activities for the acquisition of 136-146 Broadway (considered the prospective headquarters for the Commission and a hub for tourists) including a building and engineering assessment report and two property appraisals.
- ▶ Submitted a Designated Developer Application for city-owned lots abutting the Nash House to the City’s Department of Real Estate for consideration.
- ▶ Ongoing discussions with city officials about public works priorities.
- ▶ Partnered with PBN to create strategies that would garner Local Historic District Designation for the Heritage Corridor District and historical preservation protection for the Broadway Garage.
- ▶ The City of Buffalo issued an RFP for the development of the Broadway Garage, strongly encouraging proposals that align with the Strategic Action Plan.

**The Commission continues to use East Side Avenues funds to build capacity for both themselves and individual anchors including:**

- ▶ Working with the Nash House Museum to move their static website to a new platform that will be jointly managed by the Commission and the Nash House Board.
- ▶ Hired marketing consultant Jackson Parker Communications for promotion, marketing, and branding.
- ▶ Working with WUFO Black Radio History Collective to update the presentation of the collective.
- ▶ Completed the second docent training program certifying six new docents.
- ▶ Attended the Museum Association of New York (MANY) four-day conference in Corning, NY.





**The Commission revised its fundraising plan using strategies suggested by Charity Consultants as a guide with the assistance of Roxanne Kise Consulting; and accomplished or is working toward the following fundraising goals:**

- ▶ Received Congressional Earmark Funding (The Commission \$300,000 & Michigan Street Baptist Church \$500,000).
- ▶ A resident from East Aurora donated shares of stock to the Commission.
- ▶ Awarded a \$50,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- ▶ Developed and began an online store to sell Commission products.
- ▶ Launched an Executive Challenge 30-IN-30 fundraising initiative to raise \$30,000.
- ▶ The Friends of Broderick Park and the Commission partnered to develop a mutually beneficial fundraiser—the *Freedom Ride and Festival*—a day-long cycling and festival event that will promote African American history and heritage in September 2022.
- ▶ To secure donations for final construction stages of the Michigan Street Baptist Church, on September 29, 2022, Michigan Street Baptist Church held a behind the scenes construction fundraiser.



**The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation pledged \$100,000 annually to the MSAAHC and anchor institutions for the next nine years while an endowment is built at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo that will result in permanent operations support.** MSAAHC and anchor institutions are in discussion about disbursement, resource sharing, and hiring shared staff (administrative support and Customer Visitor Experience specialist dedicated to tours, managing the spaces and marketing). They also began creating a scorecard that will be used to provide important metrics on the effectiveness of its endowment utilization/spending.

**The Commission continues to partner with community-based organizations to increase their in-person events, activities and tours.**

- ▶ On December 3rd and 4th, the Commission presented A Soulful Christmas—a weekend-long event featuring holiday music, art, history, shopping and community activities. The 2023 event will expand to include a Holiday Ball to raise funds for the Commission and anchors.
- ▶ Launched in the summer 2022, the Commission partnered with Visit Buffalo Niagara to create new immersive, theatrical tours—*Freedom's Footsteps*.
- ▶ On June 21, 2022, MSAAHC launched Mrs. Frances Nash's Garden Basket in partnership with the African Heritage Food Co-Op, Buffalo Go Green, and the East Side Garden Walk to distribute free Community Supported Agriculture shares to local families.
- ▶ Working with Slow-Roll and the East Side Bike Clubs to develop and promote tours.
- ▶ Partnered with Monarch: Of Infinite Possibilities to conduct the *MLK Day of Caring Community Clean-Up Program* and virtual *Harriet Tubman 5K* event.

- ▶ Partnered with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library to install the Commission's mobile exhibit and offer weekly speakers as part of its *Black History Month Lunchtime Series*.
- ▶ On September 29, 2022 Nash House Museum held a behind the scenes archives tour.

**The Commission continues outreach to community leaders, local businesses, and organizations with a strong message about the direction of the MSAAHC and enhanced communication materials.**

- ▶ Joined the Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance Steering Committee to assist in developing and advancing the vision of a Comprehensive Cultural Plan for Buffalo & Erie County.
- ▶ ED sits on the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) subcommittee and presented with board members at this conference in September.
- ▶ Virtually presented to over 100 participants at the *Citizen Services Community Engagement Chat Series* sponsored by the City of Buffalo Division of Citizen Services.
- ▶ Presented to over 50 participants at Child and Family Services *Black History Month Speakers Series*.
- ▶ Presented to Explore Buffalo constituents regarding the history of the MSAAHC and organization of the Commission.
- ▶ Partnering with Eastside Garden Walk, the NFTA, and State Sen. Tim Kennedy's office to redevelop the Freedom Wall at East Ferry Street near Michigan Ave.

**MSAAHC is gaining interest and attention locally.** There were articles in Buffalo Rising, WKBW, WGRZ, Buffalo News, The Washington Post, The Criterion, The Challenger and Step Out Buffalo.

**LOOKING AHEAD:  
GOALS FOR 2022-2023**

- ➔ Hire a consultant to provide capacity building support for the MSAAHC's historic anchors.
- ➔ Begin initial pre-development and design work for the first phase of capital improvement projects.
- ➔ Implement marketing and branding strategies developed with consultant.
- ➔ Continue to work toward fundraising goals.
- ➔ Continue engaging the community and attracting visitors through events and programming.



## TERRY ALFORD

Terry Alford feels the excitement and momentum on Michigan Avenue. “There have been plans in the past for the corridor. But this is different.” In early 2022, the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission released its strategic action plan and economic development strategy, which includes developing a

headquarters and visitors center on Michigan Avenue.

Through support from East Side Avenues, the Commission hired a full-time program director who works with the four historical anchors to offer a consistent, cohesive visitor experience, as well as launch new community initiatives such as Mrs. Francis Nash’s Garden Basket, a free produce distribution program.

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▶ View this story at [eastsideavenues.org/stories](https://eastsideavenues.org/stories)



ANCHORS &  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
INVESTMENTS

## ANCHORS & INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

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## BROADWAY MARKET

Re-establishing the Broadway Market as a viable and vibrant public shopping hub and attractive regional destination.

**PARTNER:** City of Buffalo

- ▶ A comprehensive planning process was completed to create a business and marketing plan and concept design services.
- ▶ The vision for the transformation of the Broadway Market is a major component of City of Buffalo's Downtown Revitalization Initiative application for Broadway Fillmore, awarded \$10 million in late 2021. Funding will provide an initial phase of market upgrades.
- ▶ A new nonprofit was created and it is called Broadway Market Management, Inc. The Board of Directors has been established and it has conducted three board meetings thus far.

## MLK JR. PARK & BUFFALO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

Ongoing capital improvements to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and the Buffalo Museum of Science in the MLK Park District ensure these historically significant community anchors remain accessible, safe, and relevant assets for the community.

**PARTNERS:** City of Buffalo, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

- ▶ The City of Buffalo implemented interim "road diet" measures, lighting and sidewalk improvements along Fillmore Avenue.
- ▶ Olmsted Parks Conservancy completed an assessment of the historic greenhouses and design for lighting improvements, and began improvements in summer 2022.
- ▶ Construction began to restore the Buffalo Museum of Science's original north entrance and façade.

# ANCHORS & INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS



## NORTHLAND CORRIDOR

A new Community Solar Array at Northland will power the campus and surrounding neighborhood to benefit residents while attracting new tenants and facilitating hands-on training in the renewable energy sector.

**PARTNER:** Buffalo Urban Development Corporation (BUDC)

▶ BUDC completed a microgrid planning effort to determine initial components of the system and a financing package.

## CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The project provides capital grants to the City of Buffalo for use for non-federal matches for streetscape projects on Bailey, Jefferson, and Michigan Avenues complementing already-planned work on Fillmore Avenue. Targeted streetscape improvements will be contracted for construction progressively.

**PARTNER:** City of Buffalo

▶ Preliminary engineering initiated by the City on the Bailey Avenue project; awaiting engineering work to begin on Michigan and Jefferson Avenues.

▶ ESD is working with the City to identify a funding and implementation plan that fits within City's current schedule of infrastructure projects.

## BUFFALO NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION FUND

This multi-pronged housing initiative to increase homeownership, prevent foreclosure, and target zombie properties on the East Side.

**PARTNER:** NYS Housing and Community Renewal, City of Buffalo

# ANCHORS & INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

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## DIRECT PROJECT ASSISTANCE

Mixed use and anchor projects along the targeted commercial corridors that received direct project assistance to facilitate business growth and job creation.

### COMPLETE

- ▶ Expansion at MANDELLA MARKET
- ▶ TORN SPACE THEATER restoration
- ▶ BLACK ACHIEVERS MUSEUM exhibits
- ▶ 1021 BROADWAY (Mosaic 659 Foundation) commercial spaces including Three Stories Coffee
- ▶ THE EXCHANGE AT BEVERLY GRAY interior upgrades and furnishings

### UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- ▶ NASH LOFTS at Michigan & Broadway restoration
- ▶ BUFFALO BREWING COMPANY/SCHREIBER BREWERY acquired and initial phase of work underway

### IN PLANNING/DESIGN

- ▶ VARSITY THEATRE stabilization
- ▶ 1351-1377 FILLMORE AVENUE rehabilitation



MICHIGAN AVENUE

E UTICA ST

33

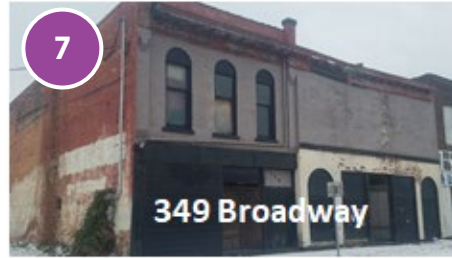
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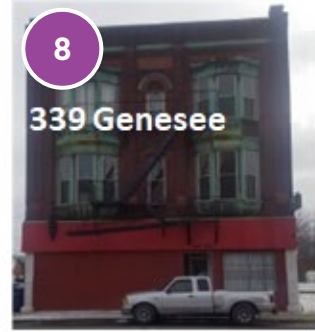
# MICHIGAN AVE INVESTMENTS

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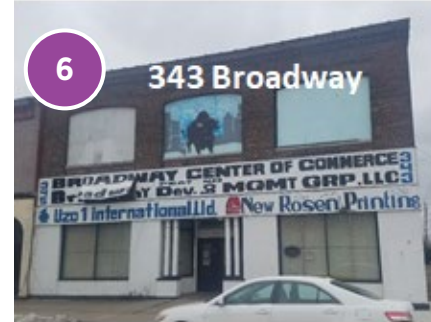
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339 Genesee

6



343 Broadway

5



Nash House

2



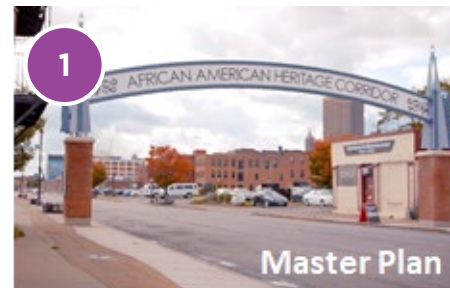
Colored Musicians Club

3



Michigan St. Baptist Church

1



Master Plan

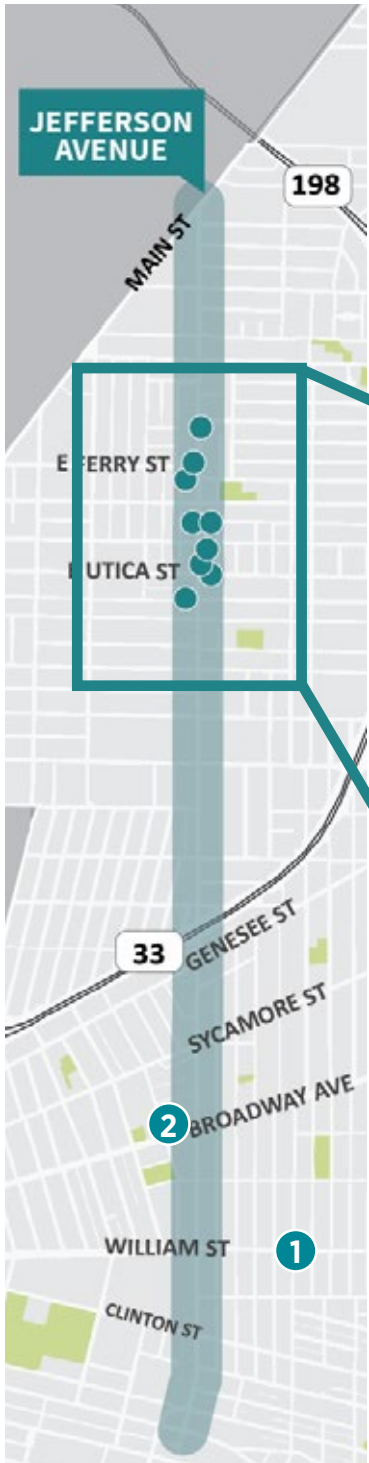
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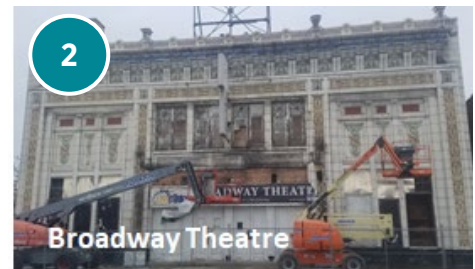
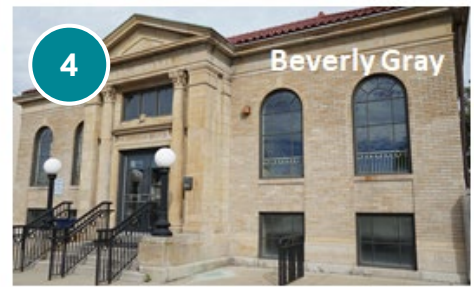
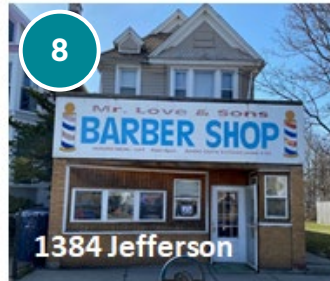
Nash Lofts





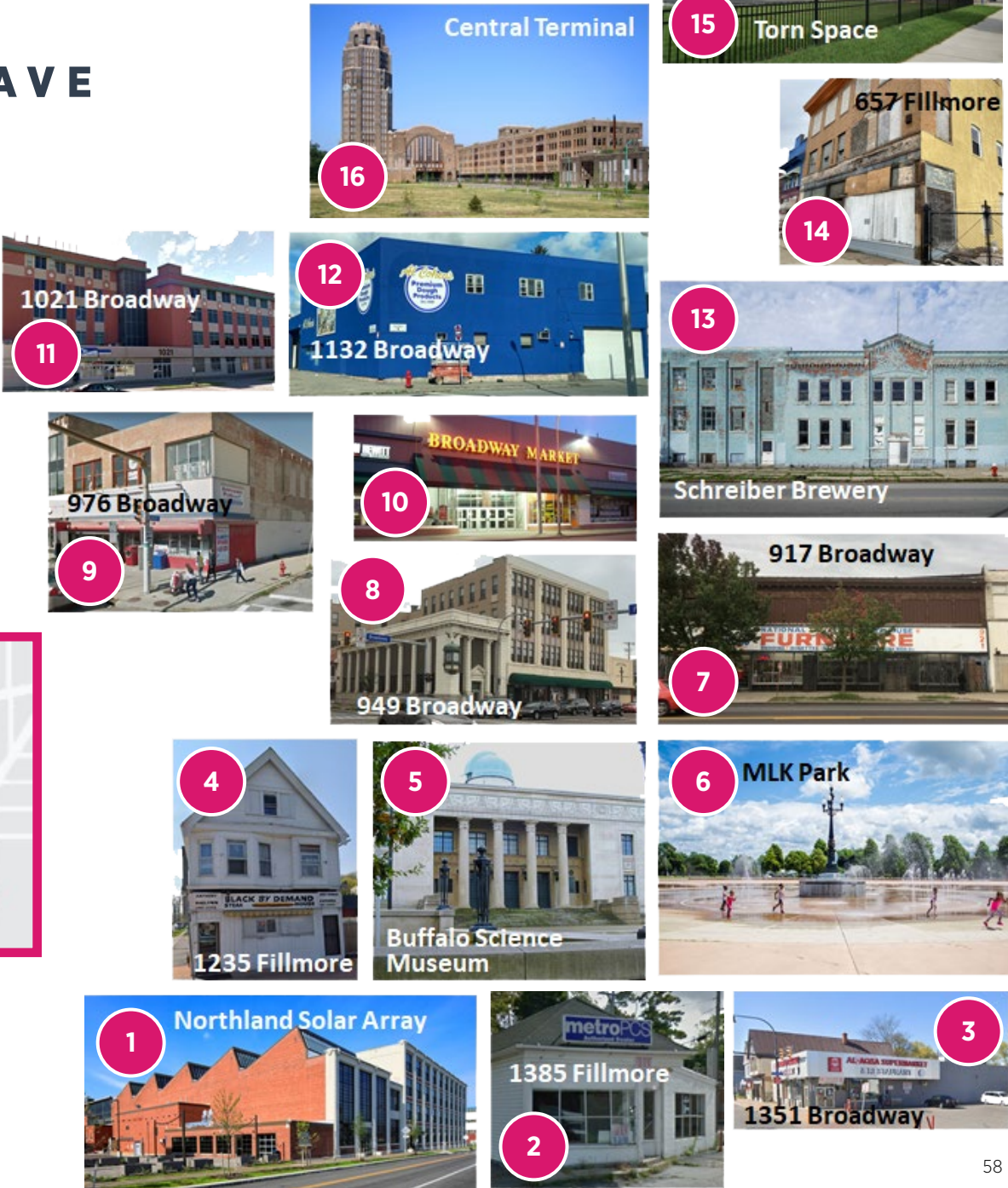


# JEFFERSON AVE INVESTMENTS





# FILLMORE AVE INVESTMENTS





# BAILEY AVE INVESTMENTS



# YEAR THREE TIMELINE

## 10.2021

ESA was featured in Building Back Better Requires Smart Spending and Transformative Investments in The New Localism newsletter.

Citizens Alliance completed a three-year strategic plan with consultant MWB Ignites, LLC.

## 12.2021

UBRI authored a piece about the CBREDT program for Brooking Institute's Postcards blog titled How Buffalo's East Side Avenues is training citizen developers to revitalize commercial corridors.

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation pledged \$100,000 annually to the MSAAHC and anchor institutions.

MSAAHC presented A Soulful Christmas.

## 3.2022

East Side Avenues storytelling videos won Best in Show at American Advertising Federation's WNY awards.

2022 CBREDT classes began.

Developed a new partnership with UB's School of Architecture and Planning to provide technical assistance to CBREDT program graduates.

## 5.2022

CTRC began working with consultant White Bicycle on branding and communications.

## 7.2022

CTRC issued a Request for Expression of Interest for real estate development partners.

Round 2 of Commercial Building Stabilization Fund launched.

MSAAHC partnered with Visit Buffalo Niagara to create new immersive, theatrical tours, Freedom's Footsteps.

## 9.2022

Created a third series of community storytelling videos.

Held CBREDT focus groups to inform the 2023 class.

OCTOBER 2021

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

JANUARY 2022

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER



## 11.2021

LISC began a series of six interactive Corridor Management Training workshops.

Applications opened for the 2022 CBREDT program.

The Broadway Fillmore neighborhood was awarded \$10 million in Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding with Central Terminal & Broadway Market as key components of the award.

1.2022

CTRC finalized a 3-year Fund Development Plan with support of consultant Linda Ray.

## 2.2022

20 East Side residents and building owners were selected for the 2022CBREDT class.

The MSAAHC's Strategic Action Plan and Economic Development Plan was completed and introduced to the public.

ESD and UBRI began strategic planning to revamp all capital grant programs.

## 4.2022

PBN began working with Susan West Montgomery on a 3-year strategic planning process.

PBN completed Board Training with Perrin Associates.

Construction and abatement completed on Central Terminal's severely deteriorated roof in the former restaurant area adjacent to the Concourse.

## 6.2022

Governor Hochul announced the \$300M Regional Revitalization Partnership.

MSAAHC began working with consultant Jackson Parker Communications for promotion, marketing, and branding.

## 8.2022

Rolled out the new East Side Building Capital Fund to CBREDT program graduates.

2022 CBREDT graduation ceremony held.

Round 2 of East Side Commercial Districts Program launched.

Following RPF processes, LPAs hired consultants to provide A&E services for Round 2 projects.





# ONWARD AND UPWARD.

## LESSONS LEARNED

We listened, learned and amended programs to better meet the needs of the community. We knew everything couldn't be perfect from the outset. Year one was about program development, year two was roll-up-our-sleeves implementation, and year three was about reflecting on what worked, what didn't and tweaking programs based on what we learned.

This is a model that works, but it was just the beginning. We must double-down on our existing partners and projects—through increased commitments to funding, collaboration, and strategy—to ensure East Side Avenues' outcomes are transformational and impact is maximized.

The time is now to look toward the future and scale up efforts while making sure the East Side Avenues cohort of projects and partners move up and grow together to reach more community members.





## LOOKING AHEAD

*East Side Avenues programs and capital investments were the core foundational building blocks to build community wealth. East Side Avenues paved the way for future thinking on the East Side as an element of the recently announced Regional Revitalization Partnership (RRP), a \$300 million private and public co-investment in three interconnected geographic areas—East Buffalo, Rochester and Niagara Falls.*

The RRP is a comprehensive, community-driven economic development strategy developed in 2021 by a team led by UBRI. This strategy was made possible by the investment, leadership, and support of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation and in collaboration with the Office of Governor Hochul, Empire State Development Corporation, and partners in the cities of Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Rochester.

**EAST SIDE INVESTMENTS WILL TOTAL \$180 MILLION + AND INCLUDE:**

- ▶ **\$15 MILLION** for Commercial Corridors/ Small Business Development—this will support:
  - East Side Commercial Districts Program
  - Small Business Development Programs such as Open4
  - Community-Based Real Estate Development (CBREDT) Training Program
  - Commercial Building Stabilization Fund
- ▶ **\$37 MILLION** to re-establish and redefine the Broadway Market as a vibrant, multi-ethnic public market and food entrepreneur hub that catalyzes both neighborhood and regional growth.
- ▶ **\$61 MILLION** to continue efforts to restore the Central Terminal—one of Buffalo's most iconic buildings.
- ▶ **\$30 MILLION** to help build a unified international tourism destination at the African American Heritage Corridor by preserving and enhancing key assets and strengthening corridor leadership.
- ▶ **\$21 MILLION** to ensure long term sustainability of the Northland Workforce Training Center which trains workers for in-demand, family-sustaining jobs.
- ▶ **\$6 MILLION** to ensure that Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, a key community anchor, is an accessible, safe and active park that trains and employs East Side residents.
- ▶ **\$10 MILLION** for an intermediary who works with community implementation partners to connect dots between programs, the community, key stakeholders and funders, and leads community engagement, project management, research, implementation, communications and evaluation.
- ▶ The RRP takes a public-private approach that will maximize impact and leverage additional investment for Buffalo's East Side and the urban cores of Rochester and Niagara Falls. This holistic economic development strategy can demonstrate how New York State's partnership with cities as well as private/ philanthropic sectors can drive catalytic initiatives that help disadvantaged communities and lay the foundation for a decade of inclusive recover.

## THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS FUNDERS

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The East Side is a place with momentum... a place with active and engaged residents and visitors, significant historical resources, community-based assets, training and educational resources, and more. East Side Avenues' important work would not be possible without the support, commitment, and enthusiasm of these dedicated funders:



**BANK OF AMERICA**

**CANNON HEYMAN & WEISS, LLP**

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER BUFFALO**

**THE CRAVENS FOUNDATION**

**EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT**

**EVANS BANK**

**FIVE STAR BANK**

**THE JOHN R. OISHEI FOUNDATION**

**KEY BANK/FIRST NIAGARA FOUNDATION**

**M&T BANK**

**THE MARGARET L. WENDT FOUNDATION**

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East Side Avenues is led by  
a Project Implementation Team  
from the UB Regional Institute.

