



City of Buffalo Urban Renewal Plans: Summaries and Proposed Dispositions

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Introduction:

The City of Buffalo has 25 active Urban Renewal Plans (“URP”) that have been identified. A brief overview of these plans is presented including information on them such as, adoption date, amended dates, date of expiration, map key, intent of the plan, funding, relevance to the city, and the recommended disposition. Generally, the primary benefits of an URP are to allow for the expenditure of public funds, permit the use of eminent domain and provide additional performance and zoning standards.

Also, a number of questions should be answered before the termination of a plan takes place. These include:

1. Is there any federal, state, or city funding that requires an URP?
2. Can United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) funds be used with just a slum and blight designation?
3. How likely is city to use eminent domain?
4. Are additional zoning standards still needed with adoption of new Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”)?

Pending satisfactory answers to these questions, the recommendation of this document is to terminate 24 of the total 25 active plans to continue the Homesteading Urban Renewal Plan with revisions. These plans are listed below.

Urban Renewal Plans to be terminated: (24)

- Broadway-Fillmore
- Cold Spring
- Connecticut Street and Amendment
- Downtown Entertainment District Phase I and Amendment
- Downtown Entertainment District Phase II
- Downtown Entertainment District Phase III
- Downtown Entertainment District Phase IV and IV-A
- Downtown Renewal Phase III
- Downtown Renewal Phase IV
- Genesee Village
- Grant-Ferry
- Lower West Side/Georgia Prospect
- Main LaSalle Phase II
- Michigan Street
- New Buffalo Industrial Park
- Oak Michigan Phase I
- Oak Michigan Phase IIA
- Oak Michigan Phase IIB
- Pratt Willert and Amendment I
- Seneca Babcock

- Seneca Cazenovia
- Thruway Industrial Park Pilot Amendment
- Thruway Industrial Park Phase 1 and II
- Union Ship Canal and Amendment A

Descriptions of Urban Renewal Plans

Broadway Fillmore

Adopted:	April 29, 1980
Amended:	NA
Expires:	April 28, 2020

Summary and Intent:

- Upgrade housing conditions for low-and moderate-income households through code enforcement, rehabilitation, and demolition; improve community and public facilities such as schools, parks and playgrounds, streets and infrastructure; upgrade retail and expand economic and employment base of area
- Residential density not to exceed 30 Dwelling Units (DU) per acre (40 if approved by the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency (BURA), or 70 if for elderly); commercial Foot Area Ratio (FAR) not to exceed 2 to 1 unless approved by BURA
- All new construction will comply with existing zoning ordinance
- Broadway-Fillmore Development Coordination Board will serve as Design Review Board; subject to final approval of BURA
- Plan will be completed within 5 to 7 years

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- All plans for private and public development or major rehabilitation must be reviewed and approved by BURA prior to issuance of building permits

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- URP zoning and design standards are covered by new UDO
- URP maintenance and rehabilitation standards covered by existing building codes

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – restrictions of URP are unlikely to encourage redevelopment

Cold Spring

Adopted:	May 29, 1979
Amended:	NA
Expires:	May 28, 2019

Summary and Intent:

- Over 50% of land in neighborhood is vacant and underutilized; URP offers opportunity for displaced households to remain within community
- Remove structurally substandard buildings and eliminate blighting influences; develop vacant and cleared land for low- to moderate-income housing with adequate off-street parking
- Density not to exceed 35 DU's per acre, or 60 DU's for high-rise development

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Office of Strategic Planning (“OSP”), Planning Board, and Common Council may approve variations to site plans that encourage sound and imaginative site planning

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Phase I (East Ferry and Harlow between Purdy and Alexander) complete; mixed-use plan outlined in URP replaced by 13 single-family houses
- Phase II (East Ferry, Waverly, and Chester) still pending

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – URP has been unsuccessful in encouraging development over the last 30 years

Connecticut Street and Amendment

Adopted:	November 1, 1983
Amended:	February 28, 1995
Expires:	October 31, 2023

Summary and Intent:

- Business district contains approximately 40 businesses; annual Italian Festival is area's major attraction
- In May 1980, market analysis indicates that district is capturing less than one-third of potential sales in trade area
- Objectives are to eliminate blighting influences, rehabilitate structures, encourage commercial redevelopment, and provide and construct off-street parking facilities to address current deficiency
- Identifies parcels to be acquired for redevelopment (two sites); and process used to review proposals

Summary and Intent Amendment

- Changes in economic conditions and shopping patterns since original adoption of plan
- Movement towards creating urban villages with compatible uses
- Six additional sites identified for acquisition; design standards repealed
- Some minor tweaks to existing zoning and building codes

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Minimal design and building standards included

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Plan developed as means of acquiring targeted properties for redevelopment; unclear if acquisitions have been made

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – URP unlikely to encourage future redevelopment

Downtown Entertainment District Phase I and Amendment

Adopted:	May 1, 1979
Amended:	January 1, 1985
Expires:	January 1, 2025

Summary and Intent:

- Ensure orderly and expeditious development of Theater District by acquiring and demolishing substandard buildings; preserving and rehabilitating historically significant buildings; improving vehicular and pedestrian circulation; establishing semi-autonomous non-profit to guide development
- Off-street parking and loading required
- Identifies real property to be acquired and disposed of (Exhibit 4 – not included in plan)

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Design plan included to generally illustrate and guide interpretations of land use provisions, building requirements, and public objectives
- Some minor design requirements

Attachments to funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Plan developed as means of acquiring targeted properties for redevelopment; unclear if acquisitions have been made

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – URP unlikely to encourage future redevelopment

Downtown Entertainment District Phase II

Adopted:	January 22, 1980
Amended:	NA
Expires:	January 21, 2020

Summary and Intent:

- Based on 1978 Downtown Entertainment District Master Plan completed by University at Buffalo
- Total project area of 15.1 acres; including 6.0 acres (36 parcels) proposed for clearance
- Area can support additional retail and office space, as well as new convention hotel facilities
- Laid groundwork for Fountain Plaza redevelopment and unbuilt Huron/Convention Center parking ramp

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Some minor design requirements

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Plan developed as means of acquiring targeted properties for redevelopment; unclear if acquisitions have been made

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – URP unlikely to encourage future redevelopment

Downtown Entertainment District Phase III

Adopted:	May 26, 1981
Amended:	NA
Expires:	May 25, 2021

Summary and Intent:

- Proposed to assemble land for Augspurger parking ramp and/or other public, retail, and commercial space as necessary on block bounded by Chippewa, Pearl, Huron, and Franklin

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- None identified

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None identified

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – project was successfully completed

Downtown Entertainment District Phase IV and IV-A

Adopted:	June 26, 1986
Amended:	NA
Expires:	June 25, 2026

Summary and Intent:

- Encourage residential development downtown by acquisition, clearance or rehabilitation, land assembly and redevelopment
- Pearl/Franklin/Delaware between Theater District and West Village should be highest priority for new housing development; Theater District highest priority for residential reuse
- Rezone northwestern area of downtown as residential district - Edward/Goodell on north; Oak on east; Mohawk/Genesee on south; Elmwood on west
- Market for 150 units annually; total of 2,800 to 3,200 units over 20 years

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Some siting and design guidelines

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – allow zoning in UDO to replace

Downtown Renewal Phase III

Adopted:	April 6, 1976
Amended:	NA
Expires:	April 5, 2016

Summary and Intent:

- Covers block bounded by Church on north; Pearl on east; Swan on south; Franklin on west
- Erie Street vacated between Pearl and Swan to create Erie Street pedestrian mall
- Protect, conserve, and enhance adjacent facilities developed in Phases I and II

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Creates pedestrian mall at southeast corner of property

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Queen City Waterfront Plan calls for reintroducing vehicular traffic to Erie Street; which contradicts this URP

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – project was successfully completed

Downtown Renewal Phase IV

Adopted:	November 6, 2006
Amended:	NA
Expires:	April 5, 2016

Summary and Intent:

- Covers area bounded by Clinton on north; Ellicott on east; Eagle on south; Washington on west (Lafayette Hotel and Warehouse Lofts block)
- Total of 10 privately-held parcels totaling 2.2 acres. Had 54 residents in 2000
- Allow BURA to undertake land acquisition and site assembly, relocation, sale or lease of land, and construction of public improvements

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Changes land use map to encourage mixed-use development consistent with Downtown Opportunity District
- Associated changes to siting and buildings

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None identified

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – project was successfully completed

Genesee Village

Adopted:	December 31, 2005
Amended:	NA
Expires:	December 31, 2015

Summary and Intent:

- Identifies sites for acquisition and assembly; priority investments; and recommended land uses
- 15.5 acres; 60 parcels (55 privately-owned and 5 publicly-owned)
- Land acquisition (34 of 55 privately-owned parcels): 18 parcels (Phase One); 6 parcels (Phase Two); 10 parcels (Phase Three)
- Reduce Oak Street south of expressway to two-lanes with bump outs at intersections

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Uses under plan restricted to those permitted within Downtown Opportunity District
- Other uses allowed after consideration by Advisory Subcommittee and Zoning Board of Appeals
- All development must conform to state and local laws
- Some additional siting and design standards included

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Project ongoing; unclear if acquisitions have been made
- Oak Street reduction not implemented; zoning will be replaced by new UDO

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination

Grant Ferry

Adopted:	April 29, 1980
Amended:	NA
Expires:	April 28, 2020

Summary and Intent:

- Contains about 90 businesses; large supermarkets are main draw, but plenty of Italian-American specialty food stores
- Only capturing about one-third of potential sales in trade area; lack of sufficient parking most pressing problem
- Acquire property, relocate occupants, facilitate rehab, sell or lease land, construct public improvements, assist property owners and merchants with technical and financial aid
- Six parcels identified for acquisition, clearance, and redevelopment; 16 additional parcels may be acquired. Condemnation may be used if negotiation with owners is unsuccessful
- Establishes Grant-Ferry Development Coordination Board for design review

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Establishes three land use categories: public parking, residential and related, and neighborhood business
- Additional guidelines covering building materials, signage, and illumination

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None – too many changes over past 30 years to have any relevance

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination

Lower West Side (Georgia-Prospect)

Adopted:	February 23, 1982
Amended:	NA
Expires:	February 22, 2022

Summary and Intent:

- Covers 17.8 acres in two sections; 2.8 acres (39 parcels) identified for acquisition
- Maintain historic character, stabilize property values, recapture vacant land and parking lots, buffer neighborhood from downtown, rehab existing structures
- Build 42 units of new housing (32 in Georgia-Prospect and 10 in Virginia-Carolina corridor)

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- URP supercedes existing zoning
- Some siting and design requirements

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None identified

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – project was successfully completed

Main LaSalle Phase II

Adopted:	March 3, 1987 (Phase I)
Amended:	September 25, 2001 (Phase II)
Expires:	June 30, 2021

Summary and Intent:

- Phase I included successful development of 32 single-family homes on William Price Parkway
- Phase II allows for assembly and clearance of 4.5 acre site; 11 parcels (one vacant, five occupied residential, five occupied commercial) and development of 22 single-family homes; fronting on south side of LaSalle and abutting rear property line of Phase I units

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Some siting and building requirements (minimum lot size of 5000 sf; minimum frontage of 50 feet; at least two off-street parking spaces)

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination

Michigan Street

Adopted:	November 22, 2002
Amended:	NA
Expires:	December 31, 2023

Summary and Intent:

- Permit acquisition and site assembly; mixed-use redevelopment with retail, entertainment, and cultural uses
- Foster preservation, restoration, and adaptive reuse of historic properties, including Michigan Street Baptist Church and Nash House; stimulate revitalization and redevelopment of project area
- 6.4 acres 58 parcels (56 parcels privately-owned)
- Acquire 20 parcels (1.2 acres) along Michigan, Arsenal, and Nash; relocate commercial parking lot operator; establish visitor’s center, visual and performance park, museum, picnic area, and monument

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Permitted uses restricted to C3 – central business district zone
- All site and development plans subject to Planning Board and Common Council approval
- Some siting and building requirements

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Reinforces cultural tourism potential related to Underground Railroad

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination

New Buffalo Industrial Park

Adopted:	July 27, 1982
Amended:	NA
Expires:	July 26, 2022

Summary and Intent:

- Plan developed jointly with ECIDA
- Acquisition of 15 parcels (134 acres) of largely vacant property; over half from railroads
- Subdivide into 26 parcels from 1 to 20 acres; 1.25 miles of road to serve

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Project designed to provide areas suitable for industrial development protected from intrusion of non-industrial uses
- Use, performance, siting, and building standards outlined
- Development Plan Review Committee responsible for reviewing all development proposals

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None identified – park largely built out

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination

Oak Michigan Phase I

Adopted:	March 18, 1980
Amended:	NA
Expires:	March 17, 2020

Summary and Intent:

- Redevelopment of 22-blocks originally intended for depressed highway connection.
- Phase I prepared prior to plan for entire corridor in order to accommodate surface parking for Comptek project located to south; covers single block bounded by Eagle, Elm, North Division, and Oak.
- 21 total parcels (11 publicly owned); 1.8 acres.

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Initial use of site is for surface parking; anticipated that more intensive uses will evolve and be permitted.
- Landscaping and lighting standards; no curb cuts permitted on either Elm or Oak.
- Use, performance, siting, and building standards outlined for future development.

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None identified

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – site remains as a surface parking lot

Oak Michigan Phase IIA

Adopted:	December 9, 1980
Amended:	NA
Expires:	December 8, 2020

Summary and Intent:

- Phase IIA prepared prior to plan for entire corridor in order to accommodate Allentown Industries development; covers single block bounded by Clinton, Elm, Eagle, and Oak
- Four parcels (two publicly owned); 2.5 acres
- Land for buildings and improvements will be sold to redeveloper; land for surface parking will be retained by BURA and leased to redeveloper

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Use, performance, siting, and building standards outlined
- Development Plan Review Committee responsible for review of all redevelopment proposals

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None identified

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – project was successfully completed

Oak Michigan Phase IIB

Adopted:	March 17, 1981
Amended:	NA
Expires:	March 16, 2021

Summary and Intent:

- Encompasses eight blocks – six blocks bounded by Goodell, Elm, Clinton, and Oak; and two blocks bounded by Goodell St, Michigan Ave, Genesee St, and Elm St
- Total of 38 parcels (majority in public ownership); 28.2 acres
- Acquisition, clearance, assembly, and sale or lease

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Use, performance, siting, and building standards outlined
- Development Plan Review Committee responsible for review of all redevelopment proposals

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination

Pratt Willert and Amendment

Adopted:	July 23, 1985
Amended:	April 29, 1986 March 2, 2007
Expires:	April 29, 2026

Summary and Intent:

- Acquire and clear underutilized land and combine into sites for housing
- 12 blocks bounded by Genesee, Spring, William, and Milnor
- 40 private parcels combined with 91 city owned parcels
- 30 single-family units; 10 townhouses (20 units)

Summary and Intent Amendment 1:

- Adds five blocks to original plan
- Acquire additional 13 parcels for 14 units in original area; five parcels for 7 units in new area

Summary and Intent Amendment 2:

- Adds four blocks bounded by Sycamore, Jefferson, Broadway, and Spring (Buffalo Forge and Sycamore Village sites)
- New area includes 79 parcels (57 owned by city); of which 60 are vacant. No additional acquisition planned
- Plan calls for 26 new homes on 3.9 acre parcel; 8 subsidized and 18 market rate

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Density not to exceed 35 DU's per acre; 20 percent minimum open space; height restrictions; off-street parking

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning Amendment:

- Development based on New Urbanist principles
- Mixed-use development encouraged on Jefferson and Broadway
- Use, siting, and building standards outlined

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- 15 homes in Sycamore Village completed; proposals solicited for remaining 9 homes in August 2012

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – project was successfully completed

Seneca Babcock

Adopted:	December 27, 2005
Amended:	NA
Expires:	December 27, 2025

Summary and Intent:

- Allow for acquisition and site assembly of underutilized and substandard properties for redevelopment as low-impact commercial and light industrial
- Specific acquisition of two undeveloped properties totaling 21.5 acres; and relocation of materials recycling operator
- Inspection and concentrated code enforcement program for all non-residential properties, particularly junk yards, material recycling, and outdoor storage
- Moratorium on construction or erection of new billboards

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Lists prohibited new uses
- Performance, siting, building material, off-street parking, signage, and landscaping standards

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Concerns regarding existing uses specifically materials recycling operator

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – UDO zones area for industrial, commercial and residential as appropriate.

Seneca Cazenovia

Adopted:	April 29, 1980
Amended:	NA
Expires:	April 28, 2020

Summary and Intent:

- Seneca Mall and Southgate Plaza have drawn customers from business district
- Ensure orderly and harmonious commercial revitalization and provide for continuing maintenance of program area
- Acquire property (7 parcels); relocate occupants; remove substandard structures; rehabilitate existing structures; sell or lease land acquired by city; construct public improvements
- Additional properties may be acquired, but will be considered an amendment to the plan and require BURA and Common Council approval

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Land use plan identifies areas for public parking facilities, residential (including above retail), and neighborhood business and general commercial
- Outlines standards for urban design, rehabilitation, building materials, signs, lighting, and parking
- Design Review Board to review proposals

Attachments to Funding:

- Proposes additional legislation by the Common Council, Planning Board, or BURA to finance acquisition of land and construction of public facilities; and to begin condemnation proceedings

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- None

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination

Thruway Industrial Park Pilot Amendment

Adopted:	March 19, 1968
Amended:	June 7, 1971
Expires:	March 18, 2018

Summary and Intent:

- Acquisition and clearance of substandard structures and development of light and medium industrial uses in area bounded by William on north, New Babcock on east, Howard on south, and Lewis on west
- 47 total parcels; 40 to be acquired

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Specifically prohibits six uses;
- establishes performance standards;
- siting and building requirements; and
- off-street parking requirements

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Still some undeveloped within area
- Brownfield Cleanup Program site at Diamond Hurwitz Scrap

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination

Thruway Industrial Park (William Street Phases I and II)

Adopted:	April 20, 1976
Amended:	NA
Expires:	April 19, 2026

Summary and Intent:

- Acquisition and clearance of substandard structures and development of light and medium industrial uses in area bounded by Penn Central RR on north, Erie Lackawanna RR on east, William on south, and the US Post Office site on west
- Four parcels to be acquired; 123.4 acres

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Specifically prohibits seven uses;
- establishes performance standards;
- siting and building requirements; and
- off-street parking requirements

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- May be some land at end of Valenti Drive available for development

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination

Union Ship Canal and Amendment

Adopted:	June 30, 2003
Amended:	September 30, 2005
Expires:	June 29, 2043

Summary and Intent:

- Establish long-term, comprehensive program for redevelopment and revitalization of 275 acres of former heavy industrial and railroad lands
- Bounded by Tifft on north, Seneca Rail Yard on east, city line on south, and Route 5 on west
- Focus on office, research, clean industrial, and light manufacturing
- Prohibits residential, freight terminals, junkyards/recycling, and heavy industry

Summary and Intent Amendment:

- Increases height allowance from 45- to 60-feet in office and light industrial zone; and from 40- to 60-feet in manufacturing and light industrial zone, to accommodate “high-bay” structures that require overhead crane clearances

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Land use plan specifies areas for: open space and recreation; office and light industrial (2-acre minimum site); and manufacturing and light industrial (5-acre minimum site)
- Specifically prohibits 19 uses
- Provides siting and design standards

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Area still has undeveloped parcels
- Design guidelines do not meet light industrial needs

Recommended Disposition:

- Termination – the UDO zones the area as light industrial

Urban Homestead Program

Adopted:	September 17, 1974
Amended:	September 16, 1984, May 17, 2005
Expires:	NA

Summary and Intent:

- BURA designated by Common Council as coordinator of homestead activities – develop policies and procedures, identify eligible properties and homesteaders, arrange and coordinate assistance
- Targeted to one-, two-, and three-family homes and vacant residential lots
- OSP and BURA staff will provide updated lists of appropriate homesteading properties on July 1 and December 31 of each year for Planning Board, BURA, and Common Council approval

Impacts on Land Use/Zoning:

- Encourages reuse of existing properties and redevelopment of vacant lots

Attachments to Funding:

- None identified

Relevance to Current City Priorities:

- Still useful tool for neighborhood stabilization

Recommended Disposition:

- Necessary to update eligible boundaries