

**BUFFALO NIAGARA MEDICAL CAMPUS PHASE III (ALLEN ST. EXTENSION)  
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING #1  
OLMSTED CENTER FOR SIGHT, 1170 MAIN STREET, BUFFALO, NY  
FEBRUARY 12, 2014 - 6:00 PM**

**Attendees from the design team:**

John Bidell	City of Buffalo-Design & Planning	jbidell@city-buffalo.com
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**The following outline summarizes discussion during the February 12, 2014 meeting – 6:30 PM - 8:30PM at the Olmsted Center for Sight.**

**PROCEEDINGS:**

- John Bidell introduced the project followed by a brief explanation by Mark McGovern about how the funding became available for this project.
- Kelly Thompson began the PowerPoint presentation for the Stakeholders with the following key points:
  - The funding for the project is 80% FHWA and 20% City of Buffalo. The City of Buffalo Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets will be the Responsible Local Official with Federal Oversight by the NYSDOT.
  - This project is assumed to be a Class III Environmental Assessment and must comply with the National Environmental Protection Act and the NY State Environmental Quality Review Act.



- Upon determination of the design concepts, plans for Phase A area will be developed with the remaining funding used for Phase B. If additionally funding is acquired, it will be available for construction of the Phase B area.
- Phase A area, (BNMC from Washington Street to Oak Street), the following efforts have been underway:
  - Photogrammetric survey and mapping including available GIS parcel and ROW data (ROW and Parcel lot data will be field verified within the next month).
  - Environmental screenings.
  - Compilation of future land use data for abutting segments.
- Phase B area,(Allen Street from Main Street to Wadsworth Street), the following efforts have been underway:
  - Photogrammetric survey and mapping.
  - Environmental screenings.
  - Existing traffic operations analyses.
  - Public involvement activities: A public input survey was administered to Allen Street merchants and property owners and available to accept comments on the Project website until February 26, 2014.
- Discussed existing traffic analyses including the development of a Synchro model including vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle operation impacts. The goal moving forward is to create a complete street design for this urban roadway with upgrades to the aging infrastructure and access for all modes of travelers and users.
- Project will include extensive public participation including development of a project website to receive and share information on the project development and a 3D simulation to provide a visual comparison between existing to proposed plans as they are considered. Martins Innus, UB Center for Computational Research developed and demonstrated the existing 3D model. View sheds were provided of the existing project area with the future UB Medical College building imposed. The building will include a ground level through-passage accommodating pedestrian and bicycle traffic while prohibiting vehicular traffic.
- Tanya Zwahlen, Highland Planning, provided a current summary from the survey as of February 11, 2014. The survey results are attached to these minutes and are summarized as follows:
  - A public outreach plan was developed to engage the public from start to finish. It is a flexible plan that can be adjusted to meet the needs of the public.
  - The public survey administered in the Allen Street area was geared toward Phase B of the project and consisted of eleven questions aimed at identifying assets, issues, and priorities along the corridor.
  - The survey results indicated a desire for better pedestrian/bicycle accommodations along Allen Street.
  - The challenge will be to take all the design elements that the public wants (amenities, trees, landscaping, bike lanes, street lighting, etc.) and determining what is achievable along the corridor.
  - Improving the aesthetics, calming traffic, and updating the infrastructure were identified as the most important objectives for the design, while several write-in comments



- emphasized improving connections between the BNMC and Allen Street confirming initial project goals.
- Project schedule and identification of upcoming activities were shared.

### **BREAKOUT GROUPS:**

Meeting attendees broke out into five small discussion groups. Group facilitators led each group through four questions and documented comments. The following is a combined summary for all five groups.

#### **What are the current issues?**

##### Infrastructure

- The physical condition of the existing pavement is bad
- Aging infrastructure
- Nearly all buildings on Allen St are without driveways
- The sidewalks are in disrepair

##### Aesthetics

- Need to maintain the historic look
- The generic streetscape like the bike racks are incongruent with the historic architecture
- Landscaping is poor, is there sufficient room?
- Maintain and add to the sandstone curbs and the sidewalk slabs

##### Amenities

- There are no benches
- Certain areas have poor lighting and there is increased pan handling
- Trees need to be replaced. They are dead because of:
  - Salt
  - Dogs
  - Lack of water
- Is there enough room for all proposed amenities?

##### Other

- Panhandlers
- Sidewalk cafés take up a lot of room
- Noise
- Rats
- Allentown Association structure; there needs to be a homeowner group emphasis or a business emphasis
- Property owners aren't being responsible; they will allow any business to rent. Would like to see more commercial and creative tenants
- Snow removal on the road and sidewalk needs to be improved
- There is very little police presence



### BNMC Pathway

- How to connect through portal?
- Portal safety

### Trash

- Littering is a problem; recycling should be offered
- There is a lot of trash from Elmwood to Wadsworth
- The trash is dangerous for dogs
- More trash receptacles are needed and they need to be designated better

### Traffic Flow

- Trucks such as beer delivery and garbage need to coordinate times as to not overlap
- Traffic signage is inadequate
- The space between Days Park and Allen Street needs improvement
- The city busses need to be off of Allen St
- At Irving Place is it difficult to see traffic on Allen St
- Because of the narrow street width, side view mirrors on parked cars get smashed by cars traveling by
- Tight roadway (two lanes plus parking)
- There was an incident when a bus was unable to get down Allen St
- It's currently an odd road alignment. Navigating the one-ways is challenging.
- One-way streets are confusing
- Traffic (two-way versus one-way)
- The street seems narrower between Elmwood and Delaware

### Pedestrian

- Lack of pedestrian amenities/accommodations
- It is unsafe for pedestrians to cross the street, not just on Allen St. but also on Main St.
- There aren't enough safe, dedicated pedestrian crosswalks
- There is a lack of lighting on the sidewalks
- Public safety is an issue
- Snow maintenance negatively impacts the pedestrian experience
- Crosswalks are missing at many intersections, they are needed for a multimodal commercial district

### Parking

- Parking at Allen and at Days park is an issue
- There is a lack of parking on Allen Street and on side streets for businesses and residents
- Parking enforcement needed, BNMC affiliates are parking in the neighborhood
- Location and quantity of parking is an issue
- Traffic flow is interrupted by poor parking
- Delivery trucks and busses that double park cause problems

### Bicycling

- Bicycling is very dangerous, there are a number of accidents
- Some bicyclists will not ride on the street because width seems inconsistent (from Elmwood to Delaware it is quite narrow)



## Where are the problem areas?

- The alley at the Allentown Association
- The east end by the park is desolate it is very unsafe at night. There needs to be better lighting here
- Run-down, vacant buildings at Pearl St.
- Lack of enforcement for building owners (design standards)
- Busses can't circulate in the snow because the road is too narrow
- There aren't bicycle lanes or signage
- Current sidewalk width is adequate
- Between Franklin and Elmwood the pavement is in disrepair which is also problematic for bicyclists
- Franklin intersection is dangerous for bicyclists because there is vehicular stacking for those turning north
- Franklin signals are very long
- Area by Main St is not inviting
- Crossing at Main St is very unsafe for pedestrians
- Queuing of cars at Allen at the Main Street crossing
- At the corner of Allen St. and Main St. there is an empty lot
- Vehicles don't stop at Allen at the Wadsworth intersection
- Wadsworth at Allen St is a problem area
- The bend off of Allen St at Wadsworth
- Traffic flows quickly at Allen at Wadsworth
- At Allen St at Elmwood intersection double parking is an issue on Elmwood
- The Alcove at the Red Jacket building is being used as a bathroom
- Cars and delivery trucks are parking in no parking zones at intersections
- The curb cuts and access is poor to the gas station on Delaware
- Fruit belt/BNMC growth
- Richmond corridor/Elmwood Village to the BNMC



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## What are some potential improvements you see regarding the existing conditions?

### Lighting

- Pedestrian level lighting
- LED lights are needed, the current incandescent lights are insufficient
- Synchronize lighting on Allen Street to slow speed

### Materials

- Permeable pave sidewalks
- Pervious pavement
- Would like to see consideration of different paving materials e.g. brick or cobblestone

### Infrastructure

- Like the idea of pavers without curbs
- Keep sandstone curbs
- Preserve the slate and brick sidewalks
- Use bollards to stop cars and trucks on the sidewalks
- Green Infrastructure (like Elmwood)
- If road and sidewalk infrastructure stay the same with the new design outdoor seating could spill into parking

### Traffic calming

- Curb bump outs at intersections
- Crosswalks need better marking, signals, and materials

### Aesthetics

- Historical plaques for historic building sites (interpretive signage)
- Historical streetscape elements e.g. fire box, traffic signals, lighting
- Look at the streets architecture and infrastructure to influence design
- An Allentown Gateway sign at the entry points designating the neighborhood
- Directional signage for pedestrians and cars
- Signage that provides directions to other attractions
- Highlight the connection from Main St into BNMC
- Ornamental lightening
- Street trees
- Branded/Customized street signs

### Would like to see:

- Grocery stores
- Banks
- Gift card boutique
- Hardware store



#### Parking

- Parking needs to be marked
- More parking (hydraulic lifts)
- There is insufficient parking, a parking garage is needed at the BNMC
- Police also need to follow parking rules
- Maintain the parking at Days Park and Allen St

#### Amenities

- Would like to see benches
- There needs to be more trees and they need to be better protected
  - Soil

#### Other

- Rain garden between Days park and Allen Street
- There needs to be better snow storage
- Tow cars for plowing
- There should be a tax on maintaining litter or some other incentive to do so
- The west end is very active at night there are currently surveillance cameras in the businesses, what about having them record the street?
- Improve the quality of the Allen at Main intersection
- Is it realistic for BNMC to assume mass transit will take care of its commuters?
- Include Wadsworth in the design even if it isn't funded in this project (Wadsworth is the gateway to Allen Town)
- Make a special space that is identifiable

#### Traffic Flow

- Convert Allen St to a one-way to add more parking
- Not in favor of turning Allen St into a one-way
- There should be a roundabout at Delaware at Allen and at Main at Allen. Is this viable?

#### Bicycle Accommodations

- Implement bicycle lanes
- There needs to be a bike path. Connect the path to Carlton Street and the BNMC. This fits with the citywide bicycle master plan



## What do you believe to be the biggest priority for the project?

- Preserve the historic integrity
- Maintain eclecticism
- Place for visual elements e.g. sculptures, fountains, etc.
- Public art worked into the design (banners)
- Incorporate public art where possible
- Double percent for arts (2%)
- Way finding and marketing with signage incorporating artsy punctuation
- Allentown to be unique in character (artsy and bohemian)
- Allen Street needs to remain a creative district and not spillover from the medical campus
- For Allentown to not be changed or dwarfed by the medical campus
- Allen Street needs to have a fresh look
- Allen Street needs to be a destination
- Improving the neighborhood's identity
- Establish/punctuate entryway
- Add value to urban environment
- Maintain independent businesses
- Coordinate shop local
- Complete streets model
- Have the whole street work together
- Use high quality materials
- The completed result should be durable and sustainable
- Pedestrians should be the first priority, then bicycles, and lastly cars
- Improve traffic flow for all modes
- Improve public safety
- Design for flexibility
- Curb-less right-of-way will maximize flexibility with festivals
  - Festivals need smooth continuous surface (no trip hazards)
  - Set-up festivals to benefit businesses
- Instate a business association or business improvement district to help with coordinated activities or maintenance
- There needs to be better street tree planting and care
- Trees should be used for shade rather than be ornamental
- Lights illuminated in the trees such as in Elmwood Village
- Restriping and repaving infrastructure





**NEXT STEPS:**

**Bergmann Associates Team**

- Continue to gather more existing condition information, studies/analyses.
- Complete survey/mapping including right-of-way/parcel locations.
- Begin development of design alternatives.
- Complete business/resident survey.
- Share information gathered from Public Meetings on Project Website.

**Upcoming Meeting Schedule**

- Design charettes/public meetings – April to September 2014.
- Design Public Hearing in October 2014.



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