

SOUTH BUFFALO  
BROWNFIELD  
OPPORTUNITY AREA

**NOMINATION  
DOCUMENT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**DRAFT**

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South Buffalo BOA 1920s

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Situated on the shores of Lake Erie and the Buffalo River, at the crossroads of a number of important transportation networks, the approximately 2,000 acre South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) represents an immense opportunity for the City of Buffalo and the Buffalo-Niagara region. An expansive area of well serviced, formerly industrial, now vacant and underutilized land, the BOA has significant potential for redevelopment and return on investment. Properly strengthened and leveraged, the BOA can refocus growth and diversification back to the core of the City, providing a strong catalyst for economic renewal in the City and the Region and supporting long term community reinvestment.

This document is a summary of the full Nomination Document, including the detailed analysis and Master Plan of the South Buffalo BOA. The Nomination Document is intended to be the framework to guide to the redevelopment of the BOA, including the rehabilitation of brownfield, abandoned and/or vacant sites, the enhancement of parkland, the creation of new recreational, employment and mixed-use opportunities and increased access to and within the site. The outcome of a detailed study and

program of stakeholder and public consultation, the Nomination Document is divided into six sections:

- an overview of the project and boundary;
- the Community Participation Plan;
- an analysis of the BOA;
- a summary of the elements that influenced the Master Plan, such as Smart Growth concepts, a series of Master Plan Principles and a Community Vision;
- the Master Plan; and,
- a Remediation Strategy for Strategic Sites.

The project overview and Community Participation Plan explain the BOA's context and the engagement process incorporated throughout the study. The BOA analysis begins with an overview of the demographic and market setting, followed by a review of the challenges and opportunities facing the City and Region, a detailed examination of the BOA land base and a summary of economic and market trends, allowing for an understanding of the BOA's full development potential. The Principles synthesize the Nomination Document's key messages, incorporate input from the project's steering committee and the general public and

## A. Project Overview and Description

underpin the Master Plan. The Master Plan provides an overall concept to guide redevelopment of the BOA, including a description of proposed land uses and potential phasing. The final section outlines the strategy for the assessment and remediation of strategic sites.

The Nomination document provides the foundation and basis for the South Buffalo BOA to be considered as an approved BOA. With this designation, the site and many properties become eligible for site assessment funding. In addition, the South Buffalo BOA has been identified as a Brownfields Smart Growth Spotlight Community. Together with the Vision and Master Plan, these two designations provide significant incentive and momentum to transform this underutilized site into a high value employment area complemented by a mix of new uses, strengthened communities and significant open space and natural areas, which adds value to both the South Buffalo community and the City as a whole.

The City of Buffalo is the second largest city in the State of New York and is the transportation hub of the Buffalo-Niagara Region. The City is located on the shores of the Niagara River, at the eastern end of Lake Erie. It is the fifth busiest trade city in the U.S. and at the center of North America's fifth largest market, with access to over 9 million consumers living within a 125-mile radius. A former industrial giant, the City is now the center of the Buffalo-Niagara region for law and administration, banking and business, technology and communications, media and creative services, health care and medical research, culture and heritage, sports and entertainment, restaurants and retailing.

Due to economic restructuring over the past several decades, Buffalo now finds itself in a state of transition. Its older factories, not easily adapted to the requirements of the new economy have been closing down for some time. The slow and permanent decline of large scale heavy manufacturing industries combined with an increasing substitution of technology for labor has resulted in a fewer number of high paying, career-path jobs. As a result, the City and Region have been losing industrial sector jobs and population for decades.

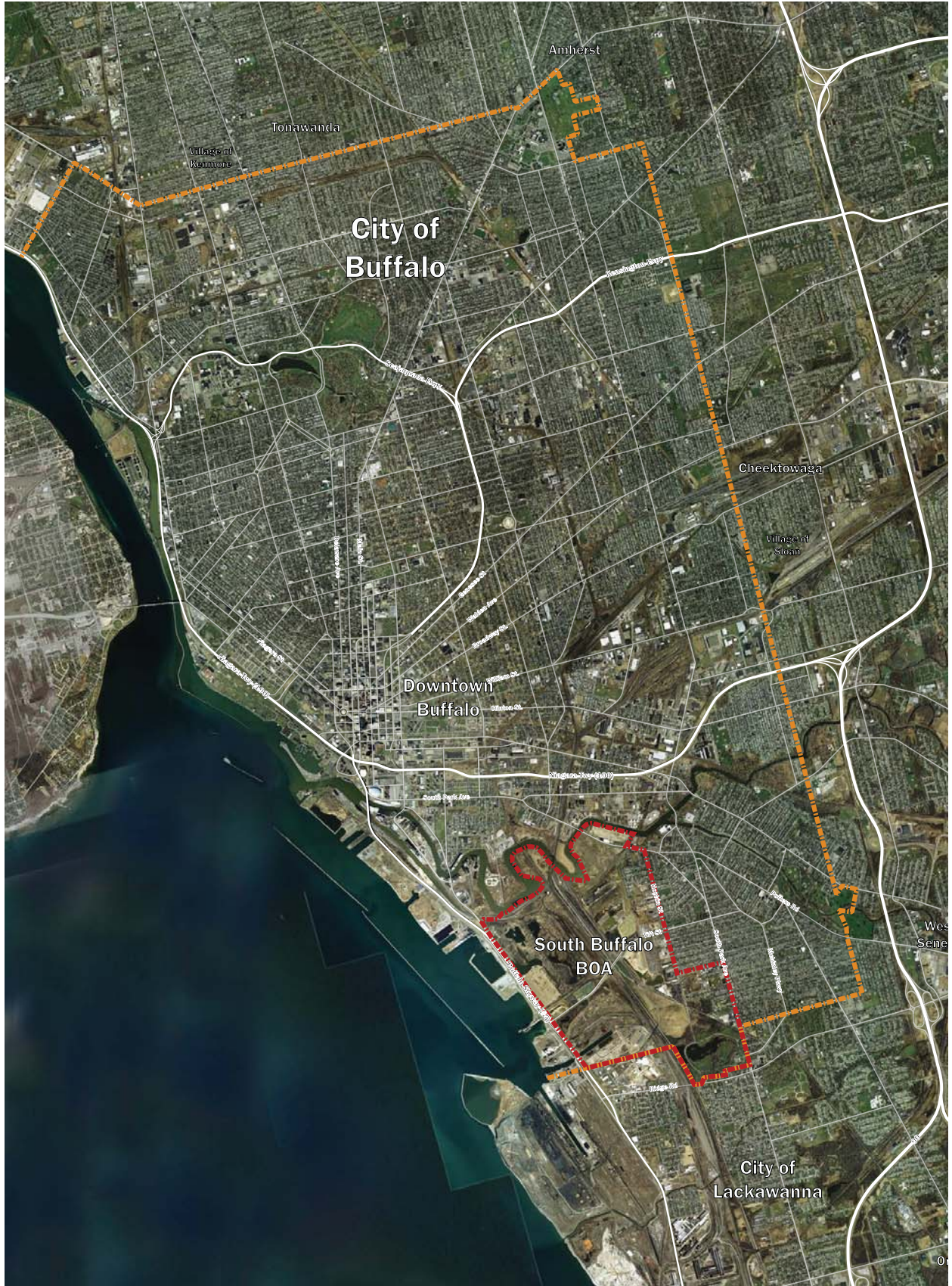
As older factories close down, they leave behind large empty tracts of land. Lower environmental standards during the first half of the 20th century have meant that many of these sites are contaminated and in need of significant rehabilitation before they can be reused. However, as they are often located in well serviced, prime locations – on waterfronts, and next to rail, highway and utility corridors – these brownfield areas provide significant prospects for redevelopment, economic centralization and a recapturing of the former strength of the core of the City. Just as their strategic position renders them valuable, so does the fact that development

of these places takes pressure off of important environmental and agricultural areas, which are often compromised by continued suburban growth and decentralization of the City and Region.

Recognizing the potential of these sites for economic and community rejuvenation, the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) have established a Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) program to give communities the resources need to plan for the rehabilitation and revitalization of underutilized Brownfield land. The BOA program provides communities with grants to prepare a three step BOA Plan for specific brownfield sites. Step 1 of this process, the Pre-Nomination Study, involves the selection and provision of basic information concerning an area in need of Brownfield cleanup and redevelopment. Step 2, the Nomination Study contained in this report, is made up of a thorough description of the project, boundary and existing conditions, an intensive public consultation plan, and an in-depth analysis of the proposed BOA, including a Master Plan. Step 3 constitutes the Implementation Strategy, which lays out the direction for overall implementation, as well as the means by which key strategic sites will be rehabilitated and redeveloped. This three step process culminates in the designation of the candidate BOA as an official BOA; a designation which unlocks significant funding for site rehabilitation. Upon acceptance of this study, the City of Buffalo will apply for enrolment into the third step of the BOA program.

The 1,968 acre South Buffalo BOA is located a few miles south of downtown and is the largest BOA to date to receive funding in the State of New York (Map ES.1). It is within the southwest portion of the City of Buffalo, Erie County, in the western region of New York. It is bounded by NYS Route 5 on the West, the Buffalo River on the north, Hopkins Street and South Park Avenue on the east and the City of Buffalo-City of Lackawanna municipal

boundary on the south (Map ES.2). Lake Erie is located to the immediate west of the BOA, directly across Route 5. The BOA represents the portion of the City having the largest geographic concentration of former heavy industries. Today, apart from the New Village Industrial Park and CSX Intermodal rail yard to the south, underutilized industrial lands north of the Buffalo River, and the RiverWright renewable energy facilities on the northwest, the immediate development context is primarily low rise residential, including the Old First Ward to the north of the Buffalo River and the neighborhoods of South Buffalo to the east. Land ownership within the BOA is split almost 50/50 between public and private ownership, which provides the municipality with an important opportunity to establish and advance key catalyst projects which kickstart private sector reinvestment.



Map ES.1: BOA Site in the Greater Buffalo Area





Map ES.2: BOA Boundaries

## **B. Public Participation Process**

Public and stakeholder participation has been an invaluable component of the Nomination process. Each element of the comprehensive engagement process - stakeholder interviews, public open houses, and steering committee meetings - contributed directly to the BOA analysis and evolution of the Master Plan. Public outreach at each stage of the planning process was synthesized into ten Principles, which in turn, directed the development of the Master Plan. The description of the public participation process is broken down into four parts. The first focuses on understanding the audiences who must be engaged to ensure a successful, inclusive BOA planning process. The second presents the communication tools and strategies. The next two sections respectively outline the process for community participation and dialogue with identified stakeholders.

### **B.1 Understanding Audiences**

The comprehensive consultation strategy was designed to inform and engage the public in the development of the Nomination Document. Audiences included City Councilors, community leaders, the general public, neighborhood groups, businesses, community activists, landowners and the Steering Committee.

City Councilors, as representatives of the public interest and owners of the Nomination Document were kept actively involved through participation in public events, and by acting as points of contact for the broader community.

Community leaders, of critical importance for their leadership roles and access to wide social networks, were engaged through a stakeholder visioning session and stakeholder interviews early in the process.

A two-way conversation with the general public is key to any successful public participation

strategy and achieved through multiple techniques, including web-based information postings and citizen “bulletins” to solicit input, and five public open houses which created a structured, facilitated forum to host a dialogue with the broad community about the future of the BOA.

Neighborhood groups and community activists, the former concerned with specific areas, and the latter with particular issues or interests, were also engaged through the open houses. Communication techniques which encouraged people to think broader than their own neighborhood or area of interest provided an effective means to address critical big picture socio-economic issues facing the community.

As landowners’ property rights may be affected by land use decisions, landowners were contacted on a one-to-one basis through key-stakeholder interviews to bring a needed measure of confidential discussions to address issues and achieve input.

The Steering Committee was comprised of elected officials, residents and representatives from the several City and State departments, non-profit organizations, the University of Buffalo and local businesses. It was charged with the task of advising the project team throughout the BOA process and functioned as an active partner in developing a long term 25 year vision for the BOA. The Steering Committee was involved at each stage of work through 9 Committee meetings, key discussions and 5 open houses.

### **B.2 Communication Strategies**

A number of different outreach methods to ensure effective participation were employed throughout the consultation process. These include maintaining and building contact lists, the use of graphic and illustrative communications techniques, the development of project website, and the creation of project bulletins / newsletters.

### B.3 Consultation Events

The public participation plan was comprised of multiple types of events, designed to seek strategic input from a variety of potential partners, including residents, businesses and community groups and local and state agencies, in formulating and implementing the vision for the South Buffalo BOA Nomination document. A robust consultation program was emphasized to build momentum and support for the vision, and to cultivate support for the BOA objectives from multiple governmental agencies, the private-sector, not-for-profit organizations and the general public.

#### *Public Open Houses*

Five Public Open Houses were held throughout the planning process to solicit input from the audiences identified above. Each Public Open House was

structured to reflect the stage of the planning process at which it was held. The first entailed the introduction of the project to the community and a facilitated discussion of broad community goals, aspirations, opportunities and challenges. The second was comprised of a visioning workshop which sought to create a structured framework for incorporating a range of market based uses on the sites as well as identify needed area-wide improvements. These resulted in the development of a series of Principles representing the community vision for the BOA and allowed the consultant team to produce a range of land use development options, which reflected these Principles. The initial options work was described and evaluated at a third public open house. The Principles and analysis of options formed the basis for the development of the draft master Plan, which was presented to the public at a fourth open house for review and commentary.



Steering Committee Working Session

Feedback from the fourth open house was incorporated into the final Master Plan, presented to the public at a fifth and final open house. In addition to presenting these materials, the final open house acted as a formal conclusion of the BOA study and provided an overview of the next steps in the BOA process.

#### *Steering Committee Meetings*

Nine Steering Committee Meetings were held over the course of the BOA planning process. The diverse knowledge and expertise of the Steering Committee was drawn upon at critical junctures to inform key elements of the plan and vet important ideas and approaches prior to public open house events. These meetings focused on a range of topics including refining the study boundary, articulating a vision, evaluating options and reviewing the Master Plan and key implementation and remediation strategies.

#### *Key Stakeholder & Small Group Sessions*

These targeted consultations with key stakeholders and stakeholder groups were conducted early in the course of the project. These sessions were designed to inform community members about the study process; discuss, record and incorporate their views and opinions; and, identify the issues and concerns of primary importance to stakeholders.

#### *Municipal Stakeholder Sessions*

As municipal stakeholders have an intimate working knowledge of the BOA study area, and its political, social and economic context, they are invaluable partners in the planning process. These targeted sessions broadened the planning team's access to local expertise and knowledge beyond the advice of the Steering Committee. Additionally, politicians have access to and represent a wide constituency, and as such they provided a key point of access to the broader community and the State.

#### *Key Stakeholder Visioning Session*

This session allowed those potential partners with an active role in shaping the future of the BOA area an opportunity to participate in the articulation of a vision for the future, and a chance to better understand how they might participate in that vision.

#### *Spotlight Community Event*

A day-long event highlighted the selection of the South Buffalo BOA as a Spotlight Community, a New York State initiative that demonstrates how existing state programs can support and complement local efforts to redevelop brownfields and simultaneously achieve neighborhood revitalization and smart growth objectives. The event included a presentation on the BOA and Master Plan, a tour of the BOA study area and a panel discussion on how best to advance key projects and initiatives through interdepartmental state coordination.

## **C. Existing Conditions, Economic Challenges and Opportunities**

### **C.1 Local and Regional Demographic and Market Trends**

In Buffalo and around the BOA, demographic and employment shifts reflect overall stagnation, but opportunities exist within key economic growth sectors. The regional economic picture is not one of outright decline, but a result of major shifts in the employment base requiring economic and employment opportunity restructuring to capture new and emerging growth sectors. Buffalo is not alone facing this economic restructuring challenge -- it is experiencing what can be considered a national and global restructuring of the labor force and economy.

Particularly, while the Buffalo region has seen a sharp decline in its base of manufacturing employment, its employment base has grown in sectors such as scientific research, education and health care, and back office insurance and financial services. Further, while the manufacturing employment base has shrunk, it remains a key part of the overall economic base. The loss of manufacturing jobs is due in part to movement of businesses to other parts of the country or globe, but also due to the modernization and mechanization of manufacturing techniques. Technology in the modern manufacturing sector is critical to global competitiveness, but, as a consequence, requires fewer jobs.

To compete, the City must diversify its economic base into new sectors in order to be able to retain and attract a more diverse and well skilled labor force including the young, professional, educated workforce, known as the 'Creative Class'. While Buffalo has a sizable number of younger households, a key component for the knowledge-economy, the majority of these households have relatively low incomes. Buffalo has a number of colleges and a university that are producing highly qualified

graduates. The missing ingredient appears to be a concentration of high-paying jobs with strong career potential that appeal to these graduates.

### **C.2 Land Base of the BOA**

Given its size and location – approximately 2,000 acres adjacent to downtown Buffalo - the South Buffalo BOA represents a tremendous opportunity to renew the South Buffalo community and the City of Buffalo. More than 500 acres of land in the BOA is vacant and underutilized, demonstrating the scale of the opportunity to re-shape and re-brand the BOA area. Further, the approximately 350 acres of land which are vacant and publicly controlled offer an opportunity for local and state governments to partner in catalytic investments and projects which can strengthen the local economy and promote market innovation and emerging growth sectors. Located along two waterfronts and at the intersection of several important transportation corridors, including bi-national routes, the BOA is a valuable resource. Strategically managed, the BOA can be well positioned as a strong regional economic and recreational center. Complementing the City's distinct cultural, employment and education centres.

Although the BOA has a long history of former industrial uses and contamination, much is known about the state of brownfields in the BOA. The majority of publicly-owned land in the BOA has been remediated and is ready for redevelopment to commercial standards. These publicly-owned lands include some of the best opportunities in the BOA to attract high value, well paying and high density employment uses over the long term. Nonetheless, much of this land is disconnected and surrounded by lower value uses. The challenge for the City of Buffalo is to strategically make best use of the BOA's assets, determine which uses have the greatest long term potential for the BOA, and decide how and where uses should be sited, while addressing the

decay and blight that stigmatizes the area. This means a comprehensive vision and master plan is needed to kick start investment and define how the entire BOA should evolve over time.

The parks and open space network, including the Tift Nature Preserve and Olmsted's South Park are central assets that make the BOA a distinctive place. Collectively these assets have significant potential to be leveraged and enhanced, igniting change and renewing the identity of the BOA as a place of nature, sustainability and economic resurgence.

This BOA is well served by existing and planned rail, road and water connections but redevelopment will necessitate new investment in servicing infrastructure. This represents a significant opportunity to support the identity and brand of the BOA and is necessary to attract private sector investment. Alternative solutions such as stormwater management ponds, district heating and renewable energy should be considered that are more efficient and cost effective over the long-term and will help to turn the BOA's competitive disadvantages into competitive advantages.

### **C.3 Economic Analysis**

#### *Buffalo's Strengths and Challenges*

The City of Buffalo and Region have a number of core strengths that can provide true foundations for economic resurgence. These strengths include a low cost of living, the fact that the City is strategically located within North American trade, research and education corridors, the inherent value of an urban waterfront setting, and a hard-working and educated labor force.

There are also some clear challenges facing the City and Region as it pushes for an economic resurgence. Some of the largest and most pronounced include the challenge of reversing decline, continued

decentralization through suburban competition, urban decay, attracting and retaining a quality workforce, aging infrastructure, the high cost of doing business, in particular high energy costs and a large tax burden.

While these challenges are not easily overcome, many of the strengths do present opportunities to create a sustainable economic resurgence through regional growth industries. In order to mitigate challenges and leverage strengths, strategic public investment and economic development initiatives and strategies should be focused to growth industries that have potential to generate economic growth for the City and Region.

Focusing on expanding economic sectors, promoting private sector investment in emerging sectors, and diversifying the region's economy represent a threefold strategy for future economic growth. The following have been identified as key growth sectors:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Research and Development
- Regional Research Linkages
- Alternative Energy
- Business Park, including Call Centers, Back Office Support Services and smaller industrial facilities
- Multimodal, Logistics, and Distribution Facilities
- Local Tourism

#### *BOA Opportunities*

While the Region has historically been driven by the manufacturing sectors, Buffalo hosts an array of economic sectors. Supporting the growth of the sectors sited above will be key to reversing the trend of economic decline.

## D. Community Vision and Principles

The BOA represents a great opportunity to contribute to this effort. Coordinated decision-making and investment to renew the market perception of the BOA will help to better leverage the area's competitive advantages, which include its location along the Buffalo River and Lake Erie, proximity to the downtown, available large tracts of land, rail, water and highway access and the area's many natural, recreational and tourism assets.

It is important to balance near-term objectives with the overall goal of supporting sustainable economic growth in the BOA. Planning for the long term is essential. The BOA strategy should: be grounded in the regional economic landscape and aligned to the competitive advantages of the BOA and City; catalyze economic activity that promotes sectors of growth in the City and Region; ensure the BOA has the flexibility and opportunity to evolve over time; seek to diversify the economic base through market and locational use segmentation and branding; and, be strategic on where and what uses are situated in the BOA. Market destination in the brand or multiple related brands of the area should be created to attract high value, high density employment. Available incentives should be leveraged to attract industries that have the potential for long-term economic growth and can complement, strengthen and ultimately contribute to the BOA's many assets and are consistent with the vision established through this process. The market focus must renew the BOA's identity as an urban community with special amenities that make it a great place to live, work and visit without compromising other core City assets.

In November 2008, the South Buffalo BOA was designated a Brownfields Smart Growth Spotlight Community by Governor David A. Paterson. This designation links the BOA to the Governor's Smart Growth Cabinet, strengthens State support for the future implementation of the plan and establishes an additional funding source for important public sector initiatives. Smart Growth balances the need for economic development with the need to preserve and enhance the built and natural environment, while doing so in ways that support long term sustainability. These principles underpin and create a guiding theory for redevelopment of the BOA.

Smart Growth advocates long term planning over short term gain. Principles have been developed for the Master Plan which incorporate several Smart Growth concepts, particularly:

- Diversifying the employment base to support greater economic resiliency;
- Fostering distinctive communities to create a strong sense of place;
- Mixing land uses and increasing densities to support existing or future higher order transit service and to discourage sprawl and car dependence; and,
- Preserving open space and critical environmental areas to add ecological and economic value.

Ten Principles have been developed to guide the Vision for the transformation of the BOA, . These Principles have been refined through visioning sessions and with input from the Steering Committee, stakeholders and general public. They are intended to address the context, strengths and weaknesses of the BOA and the City and to complement the tenets of Smart Growth. Collectively, these principles represent the community's Vision for the BOA. They include specific objectives and provide a clear framework to guide investment decisions, including those related to proposed land uses, design, phasing and implementation.

**1. Leverage Existing Assets:** The natural, open space, transportation infrastructure and neighborhood assets of the BOA can act as catalysts for realizing desired change, strengthening the BOA's competitive advantage and attracting higher value uses to the area. In particular, public land holdings and remediated lands are important assets that, if leveraged strategically, can attract further public and private investment.

**2. Diversify the Economic Base:** The BOA should actively cultivate a range of uses and use clusters that build upon emerging regional growth industries, can leverage existing assets and ultimately support long-term sustainable economic growth. These use clusters have the potential to draw out new synergies and catalyze further regeneration and create resiliency in times of economic recession.

**3. Enhance and Leverage the Natural Environment as a Key Asset:** Fostering a clean and healthy natural environment should continue to be a priority within the BOA. A healthy functioning environment is important not only for enhancing the quality of life of area residents and employees but also for continuing to support the many diverse species and unique habitats of the BOA.

**4. Create a Strong Market Brand:** A focus on the green economy, innovation, commercialization, place-making and city building would help to rebrand the BOA as a high-value area and transform negative perceptions of the area.

**5. Prioritize Investment in the Public Realm:** Strengthening the public realm promotes place making and provides a renewed and attractive physical setting needed to capture desired new investment. Strategic investments in the public realm should celebrate the heritage and unique qualities of the BOA, improve connections across and to the BOA, advance economic and tourism goals and improve the image of the area and access to the Riverfront.

**6. Promote High Quality Urban Design and Place Making:** Success in the BOA will rely on its diversity of uses and the character of its intentionally created places, set within a high quality urban environment. The BOA should evolve as an urban destination, distinct from environments found in more suburban locations. Adopting a culture of high quality design will set high expectations for new investment in the BOA, prioritize the strengthening of the area's sense of place and help to achieve an urban character appropriate to the core City.

**7. Foster Collaboration and Partnerships:** BOA success will depend upon the collaboration and coordination of many people and agencies, including state and regional departments, the City, private sector investors and the local community.

**8. Provide Benefit to Neighboring Communities:** The redevelopment of the BOA should significantly benefit surrounding communities through targeted renewal and streetscape initiatives. It should fill gaps in local services and housing, strengthen connections to the BOA, improve community amenities, and generate new training and employment opportunities that deliver greater prosperity.

**9. Plan for the Long Term:** Short term activities should not preclude long-term goals. Decisions must consider long-term impacts to place-making and ensure the achievement of the vision. Interim uses must be carefully considered such that they do not preclude the BOA's transition to higher value uses or impact the potential of adjacent properties. Development must be compatible with the vision and incentives must be targeted accordingly.

**10. Establish a Range of Implementation Activities:** Due to its size, the BOA will be developed over time. A range of targeted implementation activities, managed by the City and including on-going policy changes and partnerships with state and federal agencies, will be needed to achieve the Master Plan. Many of these actions will be identified in Step 3 of the BOA program.



## **E. The South Buffalo BOA Master Plan**

The South Buffalo BOA Master Plan represents the culmination of the extensive analysis and consultation that occurred between November 2007 and April 2009. The Master Plan establishes a framework for guiding the evolution of the BOA to a higher value employment area complemented by a mix of new uses, strengthened communities and significant open space and natural areas.

### **E.1 Prevailing Themes**

Adherence to the Master Plan Principles aided in determining the most logical land use, transportation and market solutions for the BOA. The Master Plan has several prevailing themes, drawn from the Principles, which highlight the place-making and physical characteristics of the BOA. These structuring elements emphasize growing economic sectors, enhancing the natural environment, strengthening existing and new communities and creating vibrant and complete ‘Main Street’ corridors. The following section details the thinking behind core themes.

Potential land uses focus on achieving greater long-term employment diversification and sustainability, with emphasis on green industry, business parks and R&D throughout the BOA, sectors which have significant growth potential and offer higher value employment opportunities as determined by the market analysis. A concentration of these uses has the potential to brand the BOA as the regional center for sustainable research and methods of production to support on-going competitiveness of ‘leading edge’ green industries.

The natural environment is preserved both for its intrinsic worth and for the value it creates as an attractive setting for development in adjacent areas of the BOA. Hundreds of acres of connected open spaces, both enhanced and new, will establish an identity for the BOA as a place for nature and recreation. The Buffalo River, one of the BOA’s most

significant assets, is positioned as a model for both development and preservation as industrial uses and a port facility are maintained along the River’s edge while still permitting extensive rehabilitation of much of the riverfront.

The highest value areas and most complex land use patterns are designed as mixed use communities comprised of residential, commercial and retail uses adjacent to significant open space features. These communities are centered on re-designed ‘Main Streets’ that provide a vibrant corridor for new neighborhoods, civic, cultural and economic exchange, and improve access and movement to and throughout the BOA.

A series of maps, ES.3 to ES.5, illustrates the core underlying structure of the Master Plan, highlighting the land use, build out and open space potential of the BOA.

#### *High Environmental Performance and Economic Resiliency*

The BOA is at the center of Buffalo’s Green Belt, an area stretching from Buffalo’s downtown in the north to Lackawanna in the south. The area boasts a strong work force, beautiful scenery along Lake Erie, significant available development lands and progressive businesses. Initiatives underway in the Green Belt include: RiverWright’s existing ethanol storage and production plant and proposed use of the historical grain elevators for biomass handling (Map ES.3); Honeywell’s efforts to create a green alternative for automotive air conditioner fluid; and, renewable energy generation from eight state-of-the-art wind turbines on the Steelwinds site.

The BOA Master Plan builds on this activity and strengthens this emerging “green” cluster through initiatives such as a potential waste to energy facility, wind and solar power generation, advanced recycling and the creation of a Brownfield Center; a broadly defined, multi-purpose Center

which could foster partnerships with educational institutions, support remediation research, provide skills and training for green industry jobs and act as a sustainability resource for the community. As cornerstones of the new BOA economy, these industries will integrate the BOA within and create synergies with the Green Belt. In addition, green development and maintenance standards for buildings, servicing, parking and landscaping are encouraged for all new developments.

The economic success of the BOA will depend upon redevelopment strategies that leverage near-term opportunities while positioning the BOA for more sustainable long-term growth. The BOA possesses distinct assets and market opportunity that, if carefully managed, can create an identifiable brand for the BOA. These can be leveraged to transform perceptions, support place making initiatives and attract new employment and research activity. Gradually, as the BOA transitions from an underutilized industrial area into a competitive regional employment center, higher value uses will be developed. This long-term orientation of BOA renewal requires the City to direct incentives towards industries that have the potential for sustained growth, rather than towards industries that remain only as long as incentives are provided.

#### *Emphasis on Employment*

The land use strategy positions the BOA to capitalize on the economic strengths of the City and the Region. The strategy allows for a breadth of land uses that will support new jobs and higher salaries. In order for the BOA to be an engine of growth, the Master Plan anticipates that appropriate growth industries and priority initiatives, particularly within the new knowledge-based economy, green industries, R & D and business park uses, are targeted with public sector investment. Early successes will be strengthened by the ability to co-locate and strategically phase uses to achieve the greatest land use synergies and create an identifiable brand.

In response to market demand and the particular infrastructure resources of the site including rail, road and water access, approximately half of the employment land in the BOA is reserved for industrial uses, including green industries, advanced manufacturing, warehousing and distribution (Map ES.3). These uses are situated in Lakeside Commerce Park and Riverbend in close proximity to essential infrastructure including the rail corridor and port, but away from residential neighborhoods and lands with the potential for higher value uses such as the Riverbend Peninsula and Riverbend Drive.

The remaining employment areas are expected to be developed as high quality urban destinations and include new business parks, business service areas and R & D uses. While some employment uses, such as R & D, may take longer to develop than more traditional industries, they will help to diversify the employment base, offer significantly higher salary potential, and possess greater economic resiliency and diversity for the BOA's and the City's economy. Additionally R & D connecting to green industry initiatives, alternative energies and state of the art Brownfield remediation will create synergies with envisioned industrial areas and has the potential to establish Buffalo as a leader in the green technology industry.

#### *Strong Places and Mixed Use Communities*

The Master Plan prioritizes good urban design through the proposed development of performance criteria to foster a desirable sense of place, ease land use restrictions and establish a more compact form of development, attractive streets, an improved public realm and green linkages.

These features are most encouraged in the Riverbend Peninsula and in the mixed use community centered on the Hopkins Street/Reading Street intersection (Map ES.4). These communities take advantage of proximity to natural assets and each is served by

a ‘Main Street’: Riverbend Peninsula is adjacent to the Buffalo River and centered on South Park Avenue; Hopkins/Reading is just north of South Park and east of the golf course and is focused on Hopkins Street. Riverbend Peninsula will be further reinforced as a high value area as it is planned to be served by a higher order transit link to downtown. Mixed use communities are also envisioned along the waterfront but are beyond the scope of the South Buffalo BOA and should be explored further in future BOAs planned for the lakefront and Outer Harbor.

*Complete Streets along Hopkins Street, Tift Street and Riverbend Drive*

The current relationship between the BOA and adjacent neighborhoods is poor. The neighborhood is bordered by derelict lands and there is limited connectivity west into the BOA, with only Tift Street leading to the lakefront. The BOA Master Plan seeks to strengthen this relationship by extending the neighborhoods west into the BOA and creating new and improved lakefront and River connections. Although additional crossings over the rail corridor are envisioned only in the long term, the Master Plan anticipates that the Tift Street bridge will be improved early on to create a more generous, inviting and safe crossing of the rail infrastructure below for pedestrians and cyclists. Combined with streetscape improvements, Tift Street becomes a welcoming route, enhancing access to the lakefront for bikes and pedestrians. Similar improvements to Reading Street allow for an additional east-west connection to the community (Map ES.4).

Over time, Hopkins Street will be strengthened with new low to mid rise business services type uses. Buildings will contain a mix of commercial and retail uses at grade with the potential for residential above. New infill development on Hopkins Street will be appropriately scaled to integrate with adjacent low rise neighborhoods, support the character of the neighborhoods and create a re-

newed commercial ‘Main Street’ of shops and business services. Hopkins Street will also serve as a buffer between single family homes to the east and larger scaled employment areas to the west.

As the main north-south route linking South Park to the river through the heart of the BOA, a new street referred to as Riverbend Drive will act as an important new employment address for the BOA. A generous boulevarded street, capable of accommodating a range of users including commercial traffic, pedestrians and cyclists, the new street is intended to open lands for new development and direct truck and commuter traffic away from local streets. Over time Riverbend Drive will form part of an enhanced intercity grid network connecting the BOA north to I-190 and relieving pressure from Route 5.

As the principal crossroads of the BOA, the intersection at Riverbend Drive and Tift Street has been positioned as an important hub of activity. Situated at one of the BOA’s most visible junctures the area has been designed to create a high value setting for signature office, hotel and conference uses fronting onto a new urban square and golf course.

*Enhanced and Integrated Network of Open Spaces*

The BOA Master Plan expands existing open space assets to create a focus for new investment and support a range a range of active and passive recreational activities, including a rehabilitated riverfront and bird sanctuary, an enhanced Union Ship Canal park, new neighborhood parks and regional open spaces. The existing natural assets can be added to and improved creating new opportunities for active and passive recreation, including new open spaces on the Marilla and Alltiff landfills, the expansion of the Tift Nature Preserve on the vacant industrial land to the east and naturalization of the Conrail property as a species habitat area (Map ES.5). The system is anchored



Map ES.3: Land Use



Map ES.4: Demonstration of Build Out Potential

by a recreation and cultural hub in the southeast, comprised of Olmsted's South Park, a new athletic center, sports fields and golf course, providing a continuous linkage to the Tift Nature Preserve and Conrail site. This system represents hundreds of acres of uninterrupted open space.

The scale of the BOA and the separation of these assets by distance and by the rail infrastructure that bisects the site, has led to a significant emphasis on improved open space and community connections. The gradual build out of the BOA is seen as an important opportunity to reconnect South Buffalo to both the waterfront and the River and create an interconnected system of parks, natural areas and waterside places. There are a number of strategies represented in the BOA Master Plan aimed at enhancing connectivity including:

- The installation of an enhanced pedestrian crossing on the Tift Street bridge;
- The creation of an expanded network of pedestrian and cycle paths through public open spaces and adjacent to the lakefront and riverfront;
- Improved streetscapes, particularly Tift Street and Hopkins Street;
- An expanded network of public streets, including Riverbend Drive east of the rail corridor and a north south road on the eastern edge of the expanded Tift Nature Preserve;
- An expanded South Park amenity area connected north to an expanded Tift Preserve;
- The creation of a continuous riverside park and open space network; and
- The creation of a series of smaller neighborhood open spaces linked by local streets and pathways.

#### *Restoration and Development along the River*

The Buffalo River is both a natural and industrial resource for the BOA. The Master Plan balances enhanced conservation and new recreation opportunities with a range of new economic prospects, providing benefit to individuals and businesses beyond the boundaries of the BOA. Although the

River had long been the site of heavy industry and port-related uses, less intense activity today permit rehabilitation of much of the riverbank and adjacent landscape (Map ES.5).

The Master Plan anticipates renewal of the riverbank in the Riverbend Peninsula and on the Conrail site with a combination of naturalized spaces and passive landscape areas. These efforts will be supported by the establishment of a bird sanctuary on a portion of the Conrail property and by a minimum one hundred foot development setback from the River in Riverbend. Activity within this setback will be limited to biking and walking along riverfront trails, and a proposed Riverfront Center for boating and other publicly accessible water-related activities. The north side of the River also has potential for rehabilitation, and this opportunity should be explored in a separate Buffalo River BOA.

While the intent of the Master Plan is to create an accessible, rehabilitated, riverfront open space system, it recognizes that there are also sites for lower impact industrial activities (Map ES.3). In the medium term, while dredging is still required for flood control purposes, the Master Plan preserves for the creation of a shallow draft port. The RiverWright facility, a significant anchor for the Green Belt, will also continue activities on its site just north of the Tift Nature Preserve and, if new uses can be found to reactivate the existing grain silos, may expand onto the western portion of the Conrail property.

Development criteria will ensure that these riverside activities do not interfere with the bird sanctuary and will allow for public riverfront access, where feasible. Additional green related industries, such as grain storage, advanced recycling and a waste to energy facility, may be considered on the industrial lands on the south bank of the River north of the Nature Preserve, or on the RiverWright lands but details will be resolved as the RiverWright expansion progresses.



Map ES.5: Potential Open Space Network

## E.2 Land Use

The South Buffalo BOA Master Plan is designed to achieve a broad mix of land uses, as illustrated on Map ES.3. The land use mix includes a range of employment types, significant naturalized areas, and additional housing in new and existing neighborhoods, supported by small commercial and retail businesses located in mixed use buildings, parks and recreational opportunities. The diversity of land uses is based on market data and intended to enable the BOA to evolve as a ‘complete community’ with a range of employment and housing typologies to achieve a stable and economically resilient community over time. Attracting new businesses, residents, and

activities will create a vibrant and economically sustainable community with benefits extending far beyond the boundaries of the BOA.

Based on the Master Plan, it is estimated that up to 30,000 new jobs and 3,000 new residents could be located in the BOA. The approximate land area and number of jobs anticipated for each land use is listed in Table ES.1. Although similar areas of land are reserved for Business Park/Business Services uses (286 acres) and Industrial uses (317 acres), higher job densities for Business uses yield a significantly greater number of estimated jobs than for Industrial uses.

Land Use	Area (acres)	GFA (sq ft)	Estimated Jobs
R&D	33	500,000	700
Business Park	220	3,800,000	15,000
Business Services	66	2,100,000	8,600
Industrial	317	2,800,000	2,300
Rail	190	0	0
Mixed Use	102	4,400,000	4,200
Neighborhoods	138	N/A	N/A
Tifft & South Park	450	N/A	N/A
Natural Areas	212	N/A	N/A
Golf	133	N/A	N/A
Parks & Open Space	107	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>13,600,00</b>	<b>30,800</b>

Table ES.1: BOA Areas and Estimated Jobs by Land Use



### E.3 Development Performance Criteria

Performance Criteria are recommended to control how the development of buildings, roads and open spaces throughout the BOA will occur. Different criteria should be developed for different areas, depending upon the desired character of the area.

More stringent criteria should be implemented where quality design is integral to branding and place-making, such as in mixed use or higher value employment areas. Examples of performance criteria which should be considered for various land use categories within the BOA are presented in Table ES.2.

Type of Criteria	Description of Elements to be Regulated
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted range of land uses</li> <li>• Restricted and prohibited land uses (such as non-conforming uses, outdoor storage and recycling, metal yards, big box stores, heavy industry, drive thru restaurants)</li> <li>• Requirements for commercial uses and specific uses at grade in certain locations</li> <li>• Restrictions on retail and commercial gross floor area</li> </ul>
Built Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum and maximum density</li> <li>• Minimum and maximum building heights</li> <li>• Building massing, envelopes, orientation and setbacks</li> <li>• Green development guidelines</li> </ul>
General Architectural Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building articulation</li> <li>• Building Entrances</li> <li>• Materials and glazing</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Signage and canopies</li> </ul>
Parking and Loading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards per land use</li> <li>• Where permitted (ie. above and below grade structures, and on surface lots located behind or to the side of a building)</li> <li>• Where prohibited (ie. in front of a building between the building façade and a public or private street)</li> <li>• Shared access encouraged</li> <li>• Green parking standards</li> </ul>
Site Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Buffering and screening</li> <li>• Green maintenance standards</li> </ul>
Public Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streetscape</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Private Open Spaces</li> </ul>
Road Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right-of-way</li> <li>• Function and performance for streets, laneways and private roads</li> <li>• Prohibited road closures</li> <li>• Permitted and prohibited street parking</li> </ul>

Table ES.2: Performance Criteria

## E.4 Precinct Areas

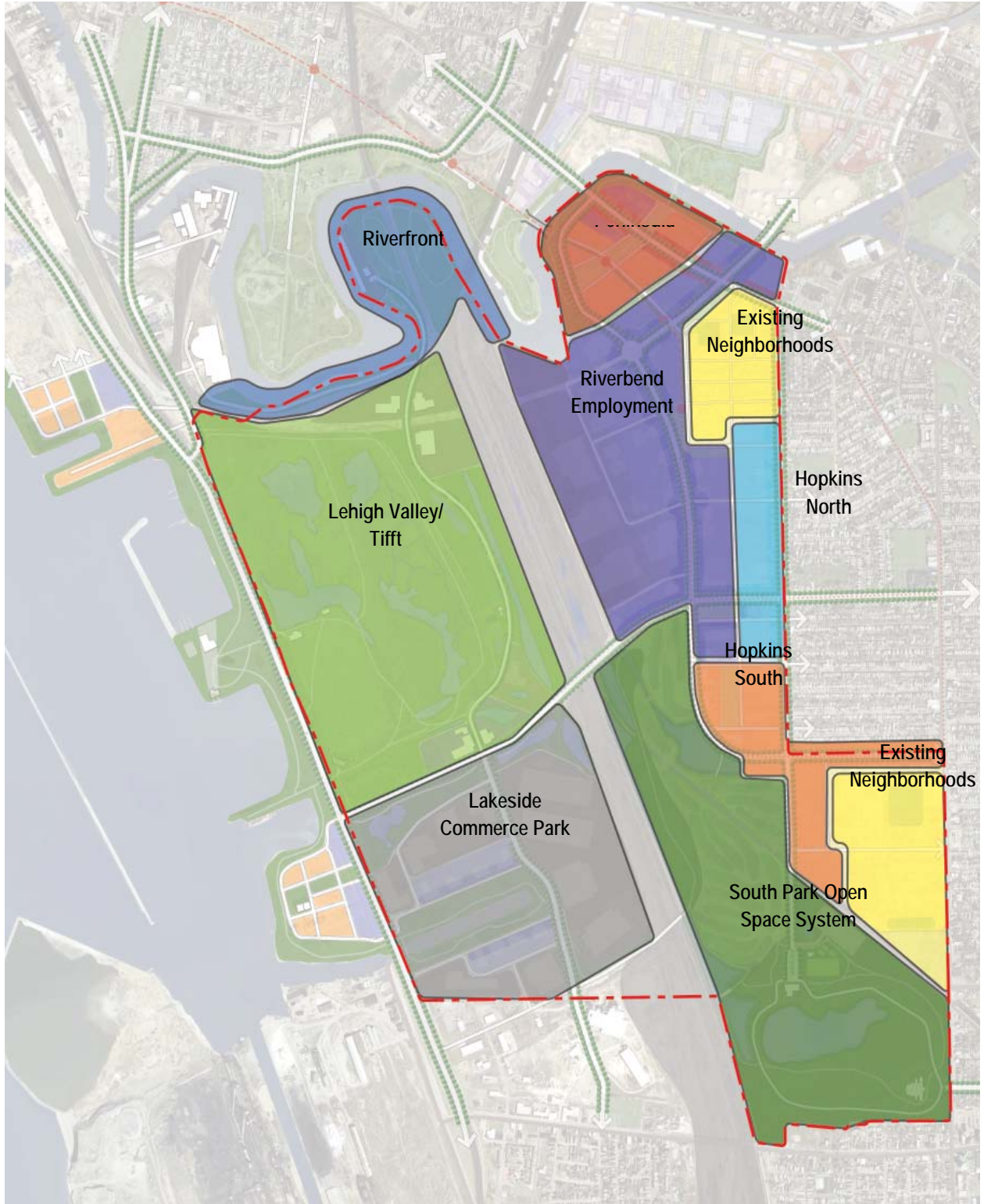
Due to the scale of the BOA, the study area can be understood as a number of distinct character areas, or precincts. While the BOA was examined holistically for the market projections, the land base analysis and development of the Principles, gradually, as the strategy for the BOA evolved, smaller areas emerged, each with distinct qualities, assets and potential. The BOA has therefore been divided into nine Precinct Areas (Table ES.3 and Map ES.5), each with a logical collection of land parcels and a unique development emphasis. This allows for a better response to the BOA's diverse characteristics and a manageable

description of each area's role, land use and development character.

Although the Precincts are distinct they work together as a cohesive whole. Land uses are complementary which provides a vibrant overall land use mix but ensures compatibility between adjacent uses. Open spaces in one Precinct create value for development in neighboring Precincts. Natural assets are situated throughout the BOA but connected by public parks and improved streetscapes that allow for seamless transitions between formerly isolated areas.

Precinct	Description
Riverbend Peninsula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A higher density, high value mixed use destination and commercial hub that functions as the center for a new community and new employment uses. The area will evolve as a distinct mixed use village with unique opportunities for waterfront access and recreation.</li> </ul>
Riverbend Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A business and industrial area with opportunities for higher salary jobs, shorter term redevelopment and signature employment. Focused on a public open space at Tiffit/Riverbend, development here has the potential to demonstrate early success and reinforces the business center and/or green 'brand' of the BOA.</li> </ul>
Existing Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily stable low rise residential communities with opportunities for appropriate infill, enhanced open spaces and improved connections that preserve and strengthen the neighborhood's character.</li> </ul>
Hopkins North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small scale business cluster that reinforces Hopkins Street as a 'Main Street' with mandatory commercial or retail uses at grade and the potential for residential or commercial uses above.</li> </ul>
Hopkins South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A mixed use precinct, centered on Riverbend Drive, Reading and Hopkins Streets which builds off the value of South Park and the golf course.</li> </ul>
South Park Open Space System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A smart growth urban commerce park with higher value businesses sited adjacent to the canal capable of capitalizing on current market demand.</li> </ul>
Lakeside Commerce Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A smart growth urban commerce park with higher value businesses sited adjacent to the canal capable of capitalizing on current market demand..</li> </ul>
Lehigh Valley/Tiffit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A nature refuge dedicated to conservation, environmental education and passive recreation, supplemented by green industry and brownfield related R&amp;D, that provides a green focus and identity for the BOA.</li> </ul>
Riverfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A naturalized Conrail property overlooking the river that allows for habitat restoration and passive recreation, adjacent to sensitively sited industry that does not inhibit remediation of the Buffalo River.</li> </ul>

Table ES.3: Precinct Areas



Map ES.6: Precinct Areas



*South Park Open Space System*

**Below are precedent images which represent the various character and uses of the proposed precinct areas.**



## E.5 Phasing

Redevelopment of the BOA will be implemented over the next several decades. The sequencing of public sector initiatives, whether an investment in infrastructure, enhancement of the public realm or construction of a building, that will help to encourage private sector development will be a complex and intensively managed process. The phasing strategy illustrates a 25+ year horizon with several big moves supplemented by many smaller actions. Initial phase initiatives are positioned based on need and market data findings. They will support the creation of the business park and warehouse and distribution precincts which have been identified as having existing market demand and can achieve significant early employment in the BOA area. Improvements, such as certain additional road infrastructure and park and open space improvements, that will enhance the physical setting and allow for higher value land uses, including research and development facilities and mixed use communities, are reserved for the medium to longer term.

The estimated timing of implementation of public sector initiatives is positioned within one of four phases, from current projects to long term proposals. These are supplemented by initiatives that have no phased timing and can occur as funding or sponsorship becomes realistic, or as need dictates.

### Phase 0: Current and Approved Initiatives (Map ES.7)

While the public sector actions in Phases 1 to 3 are BOA focused, the list of current and approved initiatives highlights investments that are occurring both within and in the vicinity of the BOA; the majority of which are situated beyond the BOA boundary. Not all of the activities have commenced, but funding has been approved. Many of these, such as improvements to Fuhrmann Boulevard, represent significant public expenditures and will contribute to the BOA's successful transformation over time.



Map ES.7: Current and Approved Initiatives

**Phase 1: 0 - 5 years (Map ES.8)**

Actions within this phase include public sector initiatives that will support private sector development identified as a short term or immediate market opportunity. Public investment is targeted towards completion of catalyst roads, such as Riverbend Drive and the road north of the canal in Lakeside Commerce Park, the purchase of strategic land parcels, including Village Farms in Riverbend Peninsula, and the establishment of performance criteria to regulate development in high profile areas. Community focused initiatives are also recommended in this phase, including Riverbank rehabilitation, Tifft Street bridge improvements and construction of a new community based Athletic Center. A program of rehabilitation for private homes will also be encouraged. Early private development will be employment focused, led by the initial build out of Riverbend Employment and the continued build out of Lakeside Commerce Park with Industrial and Business Park uses. Hopkins Street may also begin to redevelop with Business Park and Business Service uses, supported through streetscape enhancements.

**Phase 2: 5 - 15 years (Map ES.9)**

Phase 2 shifts the investment focus to open space enhancement, unlocking the potential of areas outside of Riverbend Employment. Lehigh Valley is purchased, allowing for an expansion of the Tifft Nature Preserve, a new north-south road and additional lands for advanced recycling and green industries. A bird sanctuary is formalized across most of the Conrail property while Concrete Central is retained for industrial use. A golf course is established on the former landfills creating a new open space and recreational amenity and the value needed for employment and community development. The isolation of natural assets is resolved with improved open space connections. These changes are supplemented by the construction of new local roads in Riverbend Peninsula.



Map ES.8: Phase 1



Map ES.9: Phase 2

The emphasis on parks, natural areas and local roads will create a desirable setting to encourage new private development. Residential, commercial and retail development in mixed use buildings will commence in the Riverbend Peninsula. Following the relocation of the containment cell, new investment is expected to fill a majority of the employment areas including the Lakeside Commerce Park and Riverbend Employment areas. A Research and Development campus is reserved in the mixed use Riverbend Peninsula and will be achieved through public/private partnerships and linked with the activities of the proposed Tiff Brownfield Center. This will create a local resource promoting leading edge technology which can be utilized and commercialized by green industries and businesses. This will enhance the BOA's competitive advantage in the Region as well as nationally.

**Phase 3: 15 - 25+ years (Map ES.10)**

The final phase will target investment towards build out of the highest value areas and completion of the most expensive projects. Riverbend Peninsula, and the mixed use areas along Reading Street and along Riverbend Drive south of Tiff Street, will fully develop once there is sufficient residential demand. Completion of a higher order bus or light rail transit link to downtown will enhance mobility options and raise the profile of the BOA. This will be most evident in the Peninsula, which will offer high quality walkable living environment with easy access to the downtown. Although improvements to the facilities and recreation opportunities along the lakefront will have been on-going, the lakefront will not be a fully embraced asset without barrier free access from the BOA. The repositioning of Route 5 as an urban boulevard, assisted by the improvements to Fuhrmann Boulevard occurring today, will promote seamless movement between the lakefront and the BOA for those living and working within the BOA and beyond.



Map ES.10: Phase 3



Map ES.11: Additional Projects



### **Additional Projects: Flexible Timing (Map ES.11)**

Certain projects, including a River Center, Railway Museum and additional bridge over the rail corridor are not tied to the phasing program and can be completed whenever financing or sponsorship is secured. These projects will add value to the BOA community and its cultural and recreational offerings.

## **E.6 Key Recommendations**

The following eight recommendations will serve as the basis for the Implementation Strategy. They are comprised of critical activities centered on managing the BOA, financing the BOA's redevelopment and commencing development within the BOA. They recognize that realizing the full potential of the South Buffalo BOA will take a concerted and coordinated effort by many parties, significant up front public resources and completion of priority public projects to initiate redevelopment. Successful implementation will result in a strong return on investment over the medium and long term and demonstration of interest for contemporary urban solutions to city building and renewal.

### **Managing the BOA**

#### *1. Apply for Step 3: Implementation Strategy*

The Implementation Strategy, the third step of the Brown Opportunity Areas Program, provides a description of the full range of techniques and actions, ranging from actions and projects that can be undertaken immediately to those which have a longer time-frame. These are necessary to implement the area-wide plan and to ensure that proposed uses and improvements materialize. As well, site assessments on strategic brownfield sites may be eligible for funding if environmental data is required.

Although the Master Plan, completed as part of Step 2 of the BOA Program, proposes preliminary phasing and a list of strategic sites, the actual implementation details and determination of which sites will be assessed will occur in Step 3. An application for Step 3 should be submitted by the City to the Department of State and the Department of Environmental Conservation shortly after completion of the Step 2 Nomination Document and Master Plan to build momentum and maintain public interest in the BOA process.

#### *2. Use the Master Plan to Guide Decision-Making*

The BOA Master Plan should be adopted as a core framework to guide change within and in the vicinity of the BOA and should be formally recognized within Buffalo's planning and regulatory framework. The Principles within the Master Plan were developed with significant public input and represent the overall Vision for the BOA. The Principles, along with all elements of the Master Plan, particularly the Precinct Areas and the Phasing Strategy, provide clear direction for decisions about land use, growth and investment priorities. As additional studies, such as the Buffalo River or Outer Harbor BOAs come forward, the South Buffalo BOA Master Plan should act as a strong departure point for initiatives in and around the BOA. As such, development in adjacent areas should complement and not compete with the emerging economic sectors that will be fostered in the South Buffalo BOA. Similarly, the suitability of private development proposals and public infrastructure investment should be based on their consistency with the land use, built form and other directives in the Master Plan.

#### *3. Seek Commitment to both the Short Term and Long Term Potential of the Site*

Many of the immediate opportunities on the BOA involve land management, such as conducting site assessments and acquiring land, overseeing feasibility and Master Plan studies, and constructing

crucial road infrastructure, primarily to support the development of industrial and business park uses. Given the potential scope of activity, the BOA would benefit from the establishment of a Redevelopment Authority or Implementation Council to coordinate initiatives, make applications and manage reports and analyses. The structure and composition should be explored in Step 3 of the BOA program but it is recommended that the Steering Committee established in Step 2 be a significant part of this body, given their breadth of experience, commitment and knowledge of the BOA.

Medium to longer term activities are comprised of several large scale investments, including the re-positioning of Route 5, the relocation of the containment cell and the construction of a higher order transit link to the downtown. It is anticipated that the development of the highest value lands with mixed uses and R & D will also occur in the medium to longer terms. Fostering this long term potential will require significant financial resources as well as the preservation of land for high value development and the transit right-of-way. It will be important to continue to build public and State support for the Master Plan to successfully seek funding and investment for the most ambitious BOA initiatives and to resist pressure to develop high value lands in the near term with uses that are incompatible with the long term vision for the BOA.

#### *4. Formalize Partnerships between the City, State, Public Agencies and the Private Sector*

The Master Plan Principles recognize the importance of partnerships for the BOA. In particular, Principle 7 emphasizes that “Success in the BOA will depend upon the collaboration and coordination of many people and agencies, including state and regional departments, educational institutions, the City, private sector investors and the local community.” Partnerships should be reinforced and enhanced that move forward many of the initiatives envisioned by the Master Plan, including:

- with private owners to encourage the assessment and remediation of privately owned sites;
- with educational institutions to create an R & D campus, Brownfield remediation facilities and Center and green industries;
- with the Olmsted Parks Conservancy and other private interests to determine the appropriate ownership structure of the landfill sites, develop a golf course and construct a joint Athletic Center and golf club house; and,
- with the Department of Transportation to conduct an assessment for higher order transit, facilitate the remediation of lands for certain roads and construct key streets such as Riverbend Drive and the connection to I-190.

### **Financing the BOA**

#### *5. Seek and Leverage Funding Sources and Partners*

While the BOA program will provide financial assistance to undertake the assessment of strategic sites, funding for the remediation of these sites and for redevelopment initiatives, including infrastructure improvements, building construction and public realm enhancements, will need to be sought from other sources. There are many potential agencies, such as the Environmental Restoration Program, the Brownfield Clean-up program, the Department of Transportation and the New York Power Authority, that may offer support or incentives for public or private led projects. These agencies should be approached now to determine the level of assistance they can realistically offer. The Brownfields Smart Growth Spotlight Communities Initiative, which has designated the South Buffalo BOA as a Spotlight Community, will be an important source of funding and organizational capacity building, helping to raise awareness and improve coordination and partnerships with state agencies.

## *6. Target Reinvestment to Encourage Private Development*

Requests to State agencies should seek to target funding to the delivery of priority projects. While the full redevelopment of the BOA will occur over decades, focusing resources to specific areas and actions will make the best use of initial investments by demonstrating coordinated action and change in key locations. Selected projects can be either small or expansive in scope, but must face limited barriers, be feasible to implement, capable of demonstrating early success and/or deliver a community benefit or fuel further growth. Public funds will not finance the redevelopment of the BOA but will ultimately attract the private development that will transform the area. These projects leverage public money and represent the first wave of investment. Additional waves of investment will follow which are much less dependent on City and State resources. Priority projects should therefore not only benefit existing communities but should also act as magnets for private sector interest, such as the installation of infrastructure to allow private lands to be developed or improvements to the public realm to create an attractive setting for new residential and commercial development.

## **Commencing Development**

### *7. Commence Site Assessments and Priority Projects*

The Master Plan identifies numerous initiatives that will facilitate the development of the BOA (Table ES.4). While several of the initiatives involve the construction of a building, infrastructure or public realm project, many of these activities are focused on more preliminary actions, including completing studies, undertaking management actions and developing partnerships. These initiatives are critical as they illustrate to the general public and development community that change is occurring

on the BOA, they often provide a public benefit that has been absent and they may put in place support for private sector investment. Also identified as part of the Remediation Strategy are Strategic Sites. These are discrete land parcels located throughout the BOA that are recommended for site assessment and potentially site remediation depending upon the outcome of the assessment.

### *8. Integrate Sustainable Building Practices*

Green standards for the BOA, which address the preparation of sites, the installation of infrastructure and the construction of buildings, should be adopted and implemented as development occurs. The standards can either be drafted specifically for the BOA, or can be adapted or taken directly from an existing set of criteria, such as the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. The purpose of these practices is to mitigate the environmental impacts of development on air and water quality, to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and to improve the provision of city services and utilities, such as solid waste and stormwater management. Performance measures for sustainable development should specifically address such elements as building energy efficiency and materials, road, pedestrian and bicycle network design, landscaping and plant selection, and stormwater management through ponds, green roofs, permeable paving and other measures. Adherence to these criteria both respects the health of the natural environment, a significant feature of the BOA, and contribute to the branding of the BOA as a hub for green industry, creating a district where the design of buildings, infrastructure and spaces and the activities and industries that occur within them are focused on sustainability.

Project	Project Type	Significance
Riverbend Drive	Infrastructure Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The creation of Riverbend Drive linking Tift Street to I-190 will help to enhance access to the BOA and be key to the establishment of a new high profile address for the Riverbend Employment area</li> <li>The connection to I-190 will also serve to enhance access to the Elk Street Redevelopment Area north of the River</li> </ul>
Riverbend Peninsula and Employment Area	Park Feasibility Study and Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The market data indicates the employment area can come forward in the short term. This will rebrand the area as a focus for new employment and green economic activities and encourage additional employment growth</li> </ul>
Riverfront Naturalization	Environmental Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The re-naturalization of the Buffalo River will complement existing initiatives to enhance the quality of the river, improve public access and help to create a setting for higher value investments on the Peninsula</li> </ul>
Lakeside Commerce Park Road	Infrastructure Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design and construction of north canal road will provide access to the remaining available lands within the commerce park. This will enable the ongoing development of the area and feed the current market demand for industrial and business uses</li> </ul>
Hickory Woods Clean Up/ Residential Property Rehabilitation/ Tift Street bridge	Community Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These projects, intended to promote the ongoing cleanup and renewal of local neighborhoods represent an important opportunity to demonstrate a continued commitment to the South Buffalo community. New streetscaping along Hopkins Street and Tift Street Bridge enhancements will help to improve the image of the area and strengthen connections between the neighborhoods and the area's various natural amenities</li> </ul>
Athletic Center	Public Realm and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new community athletic center at the gateway to South Park represents an important opportunity to enhance the recreational offer in South Buffalo at an area which is both accessible to the local community and capable of dovetailing with existing Olmsted recreational and site initiatives</li> </ul>
Tift Expansion	Environmental Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The remediation and expansion of the TIFT Nature Preserve represents an important opportunity to create a green focus and identity for the BOA. The remediation and expansion of Tift will help to improve its hydrological functions and create the potential for a new research campus focused around sustainability, natural sciences and remediation</li> <li>Enhanced access to the lands adjacent to the rail corridor will create space for new green industries</li> </ul>

Project	Project Type	Significance
Golf Course/ Open Space	Feasibility Study and Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of these lands are former landfill sites and have little development potential. The extension of Riverbend Drive and development of an open space amenity such as a park or golf course will create a high value setting for new commercial and residential uses as well as the existing neighborhoods east of Hopkins</li> <li>• A new golf course would enable the relocation of the existing golf course within South Park and restoration of the park to its original Olmsted design</li> </ul>
90 Hopkins/ BLCP Parcel 4	Assessment and Remediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary site assessments under Environmental Restoration Program have occurred and DEC is currently reviewing Remedial Action Plans</li> <li>• Remediation of BLCP Parcel 4 would enable the construction of north canal road and enable short term redevelopment opportunities</li> <li>• 90 Hopkins has potential for longer term redevelopment as a component of the South Buffalo Golf Course / Open Space</li> </ul>
Sustainability Center	Education/R&D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of a sustainability centre off of Tifft Street would contribute to the branding of the BOA. The center could create a focus for research and educational activities related to energy conservation, the environment, brownfield remediation and / or green development. It would help to support employment within the BOA by encouraging the clustering of “green” research related activities and industry</li> </ul>

Table ES.4 Priority Projects

## **F. Strategic Sites and Remediation Strategy**

Following completion of the land base inventory and site profiles, an analysis was undertaken to determine the scope and location of strategic site parcels for which site assessments and/or remediation would be necessary and appropriate to spur redevelopment opportunities in accordance with the BOA Master Plan. The primary focus of the Remediation Strategy was to identify specific parcels that are eligible for site assessment funding under the BOA Program and sites that require remediation which may be eligible for funding and/or incentives under other State programs.

The Strategic Sites were determined through extensive input from the steering committee and with reference to specific criteria per the BOA program. An analysis of individual tax parcels was undertaken to determine whether:

1. sites with known contamination, no site characterization, or sites categorized as brownfields should be assessed under Step 3 of the BOA program;
2. sites that have been adequately assessed require remediation under a State or Federal program to accommodate the potential contemplated use; and
3. sites that have been remediated can accommodate the identified contemplated uses.

Within the BOA, there are approximately 900 tax parcels in an area comprising approximately 2,000 acres. However, approximately 500 tax parcels on 1,000 acres include residential, parks and open space, rail corridors and rights-of-way, public services/utilities and closed landfills and are not considered to be appropriate candidates for site assessments under the BOA Program. The remaining approximately 400 tax parcels on approximately 1,000 acres include vacant and underutilized land, industrial and commercial uses. Brownfield, abandoned and

vacant sites within these areas became the primary focus for site assessment prioritization consistent with the goals and objectives of the BOA program.

### **Key Findings and Recommendations**

- A total of 86 individual tax parcels on approximately 311 acres have been identified as priority strategic sites for which site assessments are recommended
- Site assessments not conducted under the BOA Program would be limited to a few sites (e.g., Riverbend berm and rail right-of-way) and could be undertaken under a different State program or by another public entity
- Remediated sites can accommodate commercial or industrial development and include significant acreage in the Riverbend Commerce Park and Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park
- Remediation activities could be funded under several different programs including the State's Brownfield Cleanup Program which offers significant tax incentives to applicants
- Remediate publicly owned strategic sites including the Village Farms site, BURA-owned parcels along Beacon and Abby Streets in the Hickory Woods neighborhood, the 90 Hopkins Street site and Parcel 4 within Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park
- Relocate the Riverbend containment cell off site and conduct a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study of lands beneath the containment cell
- Further define parameters and limitations regarding development of a golf course on the landfill parcels and conduct a study to determine the feasibility of locating a public golf course at this location