



Part of the Mayor's Livable Communities Initiative



Byron W. Brown, Mayor
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WHAT IS THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHOICE PROGRAM?

In cities across America, families are discovering the advantages of city living: city houses with architectural character, access to recreation and shopping, urban sophistication, and historic charm are seen as attractive homeownership opportunities. Buffalo's premier residential neighborhoods have these advantages in abundance. Characterized by historic homes of unparalleled beauty, easy access to parks, parkways and waterways, proximity to vibrant commercial streets, near institutions of higher learning and other community assets, these desirable neighborhoods are being described as "Neighborhoods of Choice".

The City has created the ***Neighborhoods of Choice*** program that will focus on expanding the number of neighborhoods of choice in the City. The City of Buffalo along with its partners in the private sector will invest in the targeted neighborhoods to facilitate their development into Neighborhoods of Choice. Key strategies in the plan will include purchasing old-tired housing stock, turning them into newly-renovated homes. The homes will be sold to families who use the home as their primary domicile.

Over \$3.5 million dollars is committed to Phase One, beginning in Summer 2007, which will focus on two neighborhoods: Hamlin Park and Grant Ferry. It is expected that neighborhoods will be added to the program in additional phases in future years.

Neighborhoods of Choice designations are based on stringent criteria contained within the 2000 Neighborhood Condition Index (NCI) Rankings. The NCI was originally developed during the planning process leading up to "Queen City in the 21st Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan", which was adopted by the Common Council on February 7, 2006.

WHY IS THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHOICE PROGRAM NEEDED?

The reasoning behind the Neighborhoods of Choice program is based on the need to regrow our residential population. Along with economic development and improving our schools comes the need to fix our neighborhoods. The City of Buffalo recognizes that we cannot fix every neighborhood at once. Nor can we fix every neighborhood with the same strategies. However, we do believe that if we make strategic investments in certain neighborhoods the result will be an improvement overall in what the city has to offer to families looking to become homeowners.

HOW WILL THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF CHOICE PROGRAM BE FUNDED?

PHASE ONE FUNDING – 2007 (projected)

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| City of Buffalo | \$1,000,000 |
| Citizens Bank | \$1,000,000 |
| CDBG | \$500,000 |
| Capital Improvement Program | \$1,000,000 |
| TOTAL | \$3,500,000 |

WHAT ARE THE PROGRAM ELEMENTS?

Created in partnership with the Buffalo Niagara Association of Realtors, Citizens Bank, the Neighborhoods of Choice program will involve:

1. **Marketing.** The City will work with the Buffalo Niagara Association of Realtors to effectively implement state-of-the-art marketing of Neighborhoods of Choice and houses for sale within them.
2. **Neighborhood Planning.** Each neighborhood will receive professional neighborhood planning assistance from the Office of Strategic Planning, to maximize the integration of targeted investments with overall assets of the neighborhood.

3. **Rehabilitation and Resale of Key Residential Properties.** Thanks to a partnership with the Buffalo Niagara Realtors Association, key residential properties will be identified and rehabilitated with particular attention paid to quality, detail, and historic sensitivity. The Neighborhoods of Choice Program will then make these fine homes available to homebuyers for purchase in move-in condition, with mortgage assistance provided through a strategic partnership with Citizens Bank.

4. **Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements.** Public monies will be used for streetscape (street, curb, sidewalk, signage) and landscape (trees, greenery) improvements in targeted areas.

PHASE ONE NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

GRANT FERRY (Figure 1): Characterized by elegant homes with historic charm, the Grant Ferry neighborhood offers its residents the tranquil beauty of a parkway (Richmond Avenue) designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, shopping along the famous Elmwood Village and the Grant Ferry business districts and recreational opportunities along the Niagara River.

The Elmwood Village features a number of chic boutiques and restaurants, while Grant Ferry includes an eclectic array of neighborhood stores and services, including the popular Italian grocery Guercio and Sons and the nationally renowned pizzeria La Nova.

Residents of this Neighborhood of Choice enjoy the proximity of the Niagara River waterfront. This includes historic Broderick Park on Squaw Island, which connects through recreational trails to destinations north and south along the shoreline, including downtown Buffalo. The Grant Ferry Neighborhood of Choice has much to offer those seeking exciting city living with housing of great character and a diverse selection of activities.

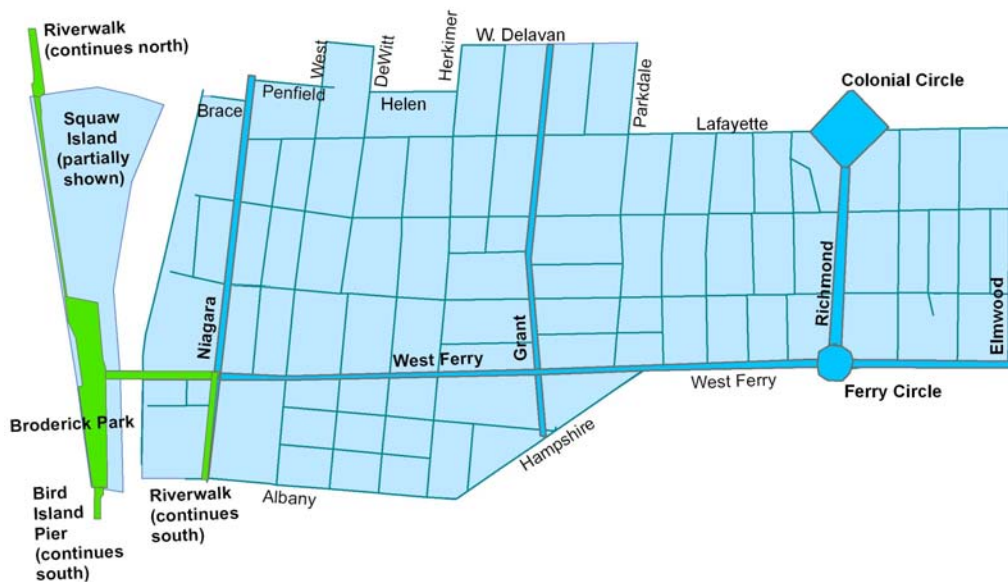


Figure 1

HAMLIN PARK (Figure 2): Hamlin Park was originally the site of a racetrack for carriage races. In the early 1900s, this expansive space was developed as a carefully planned community, offering security and beautiful homes to a growing Buffalo middle class along Olmsted's Humboldt Parkway. Today, Hamlin Park is a historic district with homes of exceptional quality, a low number of vacant residential properties and low crime rate, with proximity to Delaware Park, Metro Rail and Canisius College. Hamlin Park features park-like urban design with architecturally distinctive buildings near highways and public transit, making it a Neighborhood of Choice with unparalleled convenience and access to city amenities. Hamlin Park is also expected to be designated as a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA). This designation will give the City an opportunity to use Community Development Block Grant funding with greater flexibility, optimizing its impact in this Phase One Neighborhood of Choice.

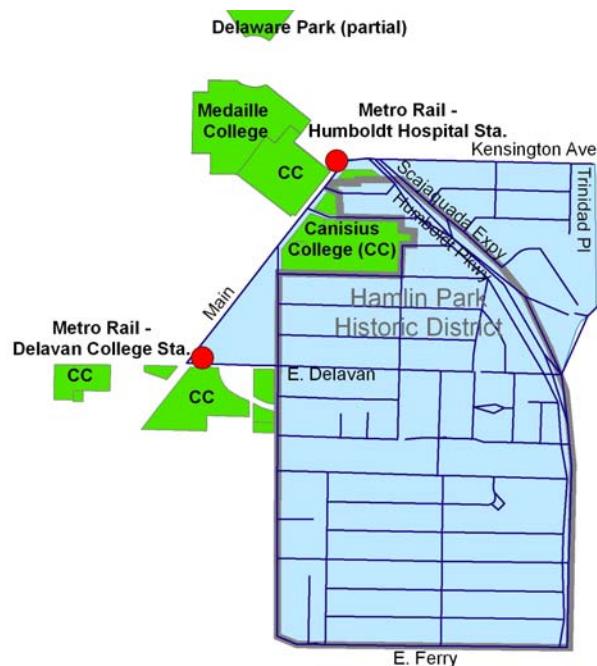


Figure 2