

**Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services**

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Re: Location of new Amtrak Terminal

As we observe the resurgence of the city of Buffalo we can see a number of extremely positive things. One is the great amount of development, new construction, and renovation of existing buildings, that has taken place over the past five years. This has been noticed nationally and internationally. It has also been noticed, however, that one area of the city has largely been left behind in this wave of development, and that is the historic East Side. Now that Buffalo has an opportunity to have a 21<sup>st</sup> century railroad terminal to match this wonderful resurgence, it will be good to see what would be the best location both for travelers and for the further renewal of the city. Currently there are two stations in Buffalo, one in Depew, which is not near anything, and one downtown which is isolated under the 190 and separated from the new development there.

There are two main sites being considered for the new terminal, keeping the terminal downtown but moving it to the Canalside area, or locating it at the Central Terminal. Both sites have their pros and cons, of course, but we would propose that relocating the new terminal at the historic terminal makes all the sense in the world. Operationally the Central Terminal site is much more logical, as its location at the junction of Canada-bound and westbound tracks means that the isolated Depew location can be abandoned and one location utilized for both northbound and westbound trains. Also of great significance is the existing infrastructure at the Central Terminal. The tracks, platforms, and even interior spaces already exist, and with a little creative design work could result in a world-class facility, and likely at a significantly reduced cost to building all new elsewhere. A stop could still be located at Canalside for the Toronto-bound trains, but it would not require major construction.

The benefits of the Central Terminal location go beyond cost savings. Locating it there would also benefit the East Side, and the whole city, by helping to spur new development in the area. This long-neglected area has many strengths, and its revitalization would begin to correct the lack of investment in the East Side which has remained a blot on the renewal of Buffalo. There are the beginnings of renewal in the area, with Better Buffalo Fund grants going to the Torn Space Theatre, located just several blocks from the Terminal, and other properties in the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood. Our organization has saved the remains of the historic Jankowski Cigar Factory at the gateway to the Central Terminal at Fillmore Avenue and Paderwski, and we are seeking funding to rebuild the site with 6 apartments and one commercial space. We have already earmarked \$230,000 (and spent \$130,000) for this total \$1.3 million dollar project. Over the past 2 years we also have been able to leverage over \$1 million dollars in home repair funds from the state to assist low income residents of the neighborhood remain in their homes. Our organization is working along the whole corridor from MLK Park to Larkinville, taking part in the beginnings of transformation and revival, working together with other non-profits such as the Matt Urban Center, Fillmore Forward, and others. In addition, we have partnered with the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy to prepare an amendment to the National Register of Historic Places listing for the Olmsted Parks and Parkways to include Fillmore Avenue south of the park, which was for many decades a park approach road, and was included as such in the original construction of the park system.

Jericho Road Health Center has just purchased a major building on Broadway and will be developing a major healthcare facility there. The Broadway Market has so much potential for additional vendors, especially as the immigrant community brings an exciting and diverse change to the area. Other non-profits are working hard to help bring the area back, and developer Harry Stinson has grand plans for the Terminal and surrounding area itself. Locating the new terminal here could piggy-back of this groundswell of positive movement and help jump-start the long overdue investment and revitalization of this essential area, which is close to downtown, close to the 33 and 190 highways, and in the future could be well served by extending the Metrorail to Larkinville, the Central Terminal, and eventually the airport.

As a board, we have recently unanimously voted to endorse the Central Terminal for the location of the new Amtrak terminal, and we urge you to locate it there.