

Buffalo Building Reuse Project Recommendations Overview

<p><i>Make downtown more attractive to existing and future potential tenants with appropriate space and amenities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus resources within the BBRP target area (Queen City Hub strategic investment areas and Larkin District) for public infrastructure and amenity investments, housing and mixed use developments. • Implement a housing in-fill strategy. • Increase knowledge and data on industry, commercial real estate, and economic development trends as well as on existing tenant needs to better plan for and meet demand. • Develop a comprehensive approach to downtown access (transit, parking ramps and lots, on-street parking, light rail, pedestrian and multi modal opportunities). • Develop a downtown master plan for public infrastructure and amenities, which is context sensitive and captures the unique attributes of each downtown district (Theatre, Chippewa, Lower Delaware, etc.).
<p><i>Establish a “smart” development process and management structure</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House downtown specific resources (dedicated staff, development programs, loans and grants, etc.) in the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation to leverage its existing expertise and capacity. • Utilize existing, and add dedicated BUDC staff to stimulate and facilitate development downtown; coordinate between existing economic development entities and downtown stakeholders. • Utilize clearly defined criteria for allocating resources for public infrastructure and amenities and for project gap financing.
<p><i>Develop effective tools that encourage investment and redevelopment (improve existing tools; develop new)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate residential parking stall zoning requirements to encourage mixed use. • Amend NYS Brownfield Clean-Up program legislation to include asbestos as a qualifying contaminant. • Use data and criteria to guide decision making regarding creating and allocating development incentives (financial and non financial). • Increase code compliance by dedicating an enforcement officer to the target area and apply a more uniform, rigorous approach. • Apply new tools for redevelopment including New Market Tax Credits, Tax Increment Financing, condominium incentive, vacant property registration ordinance, and fast tracking permits, etc. • Create a continuous funding source(s) for downtown development from public and private sources for low interest loans, “soft second loans,” and a revolving loan fund for residential project gap financing.
<p><i>Communicate the benefits of downtown for live, work, play activities to attract more private investment into downtown</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize BUDC staff capacity to advocate for downtown projects, funding and programs. • Communicate benefits and “lifestyle” of downtown living and working; i.e. no property tax increase, live-work environment, transit access, etc. • Provide web based “concierge-like” service for prospective tenants and developers to assist them through incentives, identifying available space and development opportunities, and market downtown. • Partner and collaborate with other downtown interests and stakeholders for marketing and promotion. • Increase the visibility of City of Buffalo economic development programs and efforts