

CITY OF BUFFALO
2007 FEDERAL AGENDA



BYRON W. BROWN
MAYOR

INTRODUCTION

Mayor Byron W. Brown has established clear federal legislative priorities that support his goal of reviving the City of Buffalo's economy.

Since taking office on January 1, 2006, Mayor Brown has aggressively implemented a reorganization of city government, including creating two deputy mayor positions and a new Commissioner of Economic Development, Permits and Inspection Services, which encompasses the city's Office of Strategic Planning.

Mayor Brown has made economic development the highest priority of his administration, along with developing and implementing best practice initiatives like CitiStat (computer-based management tracking program), which will lead to greater efficiency in the delivery of city services, greater accountability for all city employees and streamlining city government.

This document outlines major economic development projects that have been chosen as federal legislative priorities for the City of Buffalo in Fiscal Year 2007. In addition, the city has included additional policy priorities and added to those items that will improve the daily quality of life in the City of Buffalo and its neighborhoods.

The City is thankful of past efforts by our federal legislative delegation on behalf of Buffalo and Mayor Brown and his administration look forward to collaborating with the federal legislative delegation members and their staff on these agenda priorities.

CAPITAL FUNDING PRIORITIES

Project Description: Cars Sharing Main Street

For years the initiative to Return Cars to Main Street has had the support of and is a collaborative effort shared by the City of Buffalo, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), the County of Erie and Buffalo Place, Inc. The intended result of this initiative is to return vibrancy and provide significant economic turn-around to a major central business district thoroughfare that has languished for many years/decades.

Momentum is building in the city's downtown core, with residential and commercial development occurring along the Main Street corridor. We need to continue that momentum and build from the support the Congressional delegation provided in the Transportation Reauthorization bill last session.

Amount of funding requested in FY07: \$17million

Complete Phase I, which is the Theater District portion of the project, and begin Phase IV, which would compliment the lower Main Street/ BassPro project and ongoing waterfront development on the city's Inner and Outer Harbors. BassPro will bring its Outdoor World superstore to the mothballed Memorial Auditorium and contribute to the continuing revitalization of the city's lower Main Street/waterfront region.

Project Description: Fruit Belt Redevelopment Project

The City of Buffalo and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus have worked collaboratively with leaders of the Fruit Belt Redevelopment Project to develop a comprehensive proposal to revitalize the Fruit Belt neighborhood, located on Buffalo's East Side and in one of the city's oldest residential areas.

The Fruit Belt Redevelopment Project (FBRP) will provide for much needed residential development and health care services, including the first-ever collaboration with The Center for Hospice and Palliative Care for inner-city hospice-related care, in the neighborhood adjacent to the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) – the city's burgeoning life-sciences research and treatment hub. We plan to pursue federal dollars to make critical infrastructure and streetscape improvements in the neighborhood. These community enhancements are all necessary to create an accessible neighborhood, encourage community development and sustain growth.

New homes in the Fruit Belt, coupled with infrastructure improvements, will create an accessible neighborhood that provides housing opportunities for BNMC employees and interns while at the same time opening the medical campus and employment opportunities to neighborhood residents.

The City of Buffalo, the BNMC and the FBRP have a shared vision for how neighborhood-based residential development will be strategically integrated with their infrastructure and streetscape plan.

Amount of funding requested in FY07: \$3 million

Seeking \$3 million of a total \$8 million, three-year project for roadway, streetscape, pedestrian access and other infrastructure improvements necessary for the development of a viable, sustainable neighborhood.

Project Description: Main Street Buffalo River Bridge Project

As you are aware, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) has been tasked with transforming our waterfront by reenergizing projects that have lacked direction for some time. The ECHDC hired a nationally recognized planning firm – Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects of New York, to develop a New Buffalo Erie Canal Harbor Area design that calls for mixed use development at lower Main Street and in the Cobblestone District, and builds on the anticipated Bass Pro development, the HSBC Arena and other improvements. The city of Buffalo supports the design of a lift bridge or series of lift bridges to connect Buffalo's inner and outer harbors, an important component in the waterfront development plan unveiled by the ECHDC.

Amount of funding requested in FY07: \$1.5 million

Seeking \$1.5 million for preliminary study work including the funding needed to engage in the environmental review process.

EDI NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT PRIORITIES

Project Description: City of Buffalo Micro and Small Business Loan Program

The Micro and Small Business Loan Program will provide loans ranging from \$1,500-\$50,000 for operating capital, Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E) acquisition, construction and rehabilitation for start-up and existing small business in the City of Buffalo. Applicants will be required to have a business plan and certificate from the Entrepreneurial Assistance Program operated by the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation. The Micro and Small Business Loan Program will provide much needed capital to start-up micro and existing small business in the City of Buffalo leveraging private sector financing and applicant's equity.

Amount of funding requested for FY07: \$500,000

Project Description: The Buffalo Way-Finding Program

The City of Buffalo will develop a way-finding system through the creation and implementation of a way-finding manual for the City of Buffalo. The way-finding manual will clearly identify a way finding hierarchy for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicular traffic that includes major destinations, routes, decision points and a location plan for new way finding elements that could include banners, signage, kiosks or art installations.

Amount of funding requested for FY07: \$300,000

Project Description: The Buffalo Home Choice Program

The Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency's (BURA) Home Choice Program will provide qualified, potential homebuyers with a zero-interest forgivable loan to assist with purchasing a home located within the limits of the City of Buffalo. The program offers a maximum amount of up to \$5,000 in assistance, based on need. Assistance may be increased by an additional \$1,000 for those applicants using a Mortgage Credit Certificate. The assistance is used to cover the down payment and closing costs for those eligible for the FHA loan program.

Amount of funding requested for FY07: \$500,000

Project Description: The City of Buffalo Targeted Demolitions Program

The City of Buffalo Targeted Demolition Program will enhance investments made by the public sector in school rehabilitation, park renovation, and new housing developments. The City of Buffalo is proposing an aggressive demolitions program that will target neighborhoods surrounding these valuable assets.

Amount of funding requested for FY07: \$500,000

Project Description: Buffalo Urban Arts Center

Buffalo possesses a rich and diverse urban cultural community, but changing economic conditions and budget belt-tightening has adversely affected the city's smaller, neighborhood-based cultural organizations. The creation of a Buffalo Urban Arts Center is proposed to house the following cultural and arts groups: African American Cultural Center, Langston Hughes Institute, Ujima Theatre Company, Buffalo Inner City Ballet, and Love Supreme School of Music.

This funding request would help with the development of a business plan and pre-design concept for the Buffalo Urban Arts Center, which would be located in the Michigan Avenue Cultural Corridor. Home to the several significant city African American Landmarks, including the Michigan Avenue Baptist Church, which played an active role in the Underground Railroad, the Michigan Avenue Cultural Corridor will add to Buffalo's cultural tourism attractions, drawing out-of-town and regional visitors.

Amount of funding requested for FY07: \$500,000

POLICY PRIORITIES

The City of Buffalo and this entire region depend on the efficient flow of people and commerce across our border with Canada. As you are well aware, there are currently policy changes being discussed that would hinder the strong open relationship we enjoy with Canada, that would have a serious and negative impact on the local economy, that would slow and delay the efficient flow of people and commerce across our border and could delay construction of the long-awaited Peace Bridge Project.

Shared Border Management

Obtain a final decision on Shared Border Management between the United States and Canadian Governments that moves Peace Bridge customs facilities from both countries to the Canadian side of the border.

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

The Departments of Homeland Security and State should implement the WHTI to accept the new driver's license required by the Real ID Act or other ID that is inexpensive, easily attainable and has more than one use as appropriate identification. More specifically, reconcile the WHTI with the REAL ID act and fully fund state implementation of the Real ID Act.