

Community Engagement Plan

2021 River Rock Connections Project

City of Buffalo, New York

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This document was prepared by Fisher Associates for the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency and City of Buffalo Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning with funds provided through the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency.

1. Purpose + Objectives

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Community Engagement Plan is to outline the methods the City of Buffalo Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning (“OSP”), Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency (“BURA”), and consultant team (Fisher Associates with support from Joy Kuebler LA, PC and Mustard Seed World Consulting Group) will use to ensure that adequate opportunities are afforded to the community in the development of the 2021 River Rock Connections Project.

Throughout this project, the Riverside and Black Rock neighborhood stakeholders will be our partners in envisioning their connected future. Through this community engagement process, our team seeks to place the power to affect the physical design of the key streets and trails into the hands of the community. The project team will ensure that the outreach process is inclusive of all residents and stakeholders – regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, ability, or any other factor – to provide the framework for future project investments. In addition, the team will ensure all engagement activities follow NYS and CDC COVID-19 safety regulations and protocols.

While the Community Engagement Plan for this planning process is intended to provide a framework for public participation, it is also intended to be a dynamic and flexible tool. As such, the Plan was developed with the flexibility to adapt, as necessary, to any changing needs that may occur over the course of the planning process.

1.2. Community Engagement Plan Objectives

The following five objectives guided the development and content of this Community Engagement Plan:

1. Document a community engagement plan/process that provides interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the planning process.
2. Document methods to seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underrepresented in community planning.
3. Provide contact information for project team members and the location of project information.
4. Document the general outline/plan for public meetings including meeting notifications.
5. Document other outreach methods that will be used beyond the traditional methods.

2. Project Contact Information

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

Hailey Whitney, Project Lead

City of Buffalo, Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning

65 Niagara Square, Room 901, Buffalo, NY 14202

Office: 716-851-4063

Email: hwhitney@city-buffalo.com

Project website:

www.buffalony.gov/1403/River-Rock-Connections

3. Stakeholder Advisory Group

3.1. Overview

The Stakeholder Advisory Group is comprised of members of the local community that have been actively involved and engaged in the Riverside and Black Rock communities. Their responsibilities include providing critical input and reviewing key decision documents and materials before public meetings.

3.2. Advisory Group Members

Contact Name	Affiliation
Council Member Golombek	City of Buffalo Common Council, North District
Evelyn Vossler	Rediscover Riverside
Mary Ann Kedron & Ann McCooey	Black Rock Riverside Alliance
James Wangelin	Grant Amherst Business Association
Rich Guarino & Amy Weymouth	Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council
James Morrell	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
Mike Finn & Nolan Skipper	City of Buffalo DPW
Andy Rabb	City of Buffalo Parks
Nadine Marrero	Bridges Development
TBD	Buffalo Public Schools - Riverside High School
Sarah Gatti	Erie County Planning
Laura Barnum	Buffalo State College
Margaret Szczepanec	St. Florian/Pavonia Block Club, Black Rock

4. Meeting Plans

4.1. Stakeholder Advisory Group Meetings

As described above, the Stakeholder Advisory Group is comprised of members of the local community that have been actively involved and engaged in the Riverside and Black Rock communities. Their responsibilities include providing critical input and reviewing key decision documents and materials before public meetings. Through the group's guidance and feedback, the project team will ensure the planning process meets the goals and objectives of the project.

Participation

Members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group were chosen by the City of Buffalo OSP, BURA, consultant team, and by recommendation from community groups. See member list and contact information on page 3.

Notification

Notification of the date, time, and agenda for each meeting will be provided by Fisher Associates via e-mail to the identified stakeholders listed on page 3. In addition, meetings will be open to members of the public and advertised on the City's project website.

Meetings

This project includes four (4) Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings to be held at key points/milestones during the project. Approximate dates for each meeting are included in the project schedule found on page 8. Meetings will be held digitally using online platforms that are easily accessible to members of the community.

Documentation

Documentation of each meeting will be the responsibility of Fisher Associates which includes meeting minutes that will be made publicly available on the project website. Meeting recordings will also be provided on the project website.

4.2. Community Meetings

Three (3) community meetings are included as part of the 2021 River Rock Connections Project. Details for these meetings are described below with specific dates, locations, times, objectives and formats described on page 6.

Participation

Public meetings can be attended by anyone including members of the public and any member of the stakeholder advisory group.

Accommodations

The project team will ensure that any reasonable accommodation that allows participation in a public meeting will be honored provided a request to do so is made in advance. Anyone seeking accommodation is requested to contact Hailey Whitney (contact information on Page 2) at least 48 hours before the meeting.

Notifications

Notification will be provided by the City of Buffalo through newspaper advertisements, press releases, postings on the City of Buffalo website, social media posting, and/or postings on Stakeholder Advisory Group websites (as appropriate). This broad range of mediums seeks to encourage participation by those typically underrepresented in the transportation planning process. All notifications will provide necessary information about the public meeting, contact information to enable access to more project information, and contact information to request meeting accommodations.

Meeting Materials

Meeting materials will be created by the consultant team including agenda, handouts, presentation, boards, comment cards, etc.

Documentation

Documentation of the public meeting will be the responsibility of the consultant team. Documentation provided will be in the form of a meeting summary which will include a summary of the presentation and the comments/questions and feedback received. The meeting summary and all meeting material used during the public meetings will be made publicly available on the project website.

Community Meeting Outline

	Meeting	Date/Location	Topics	General Format
#1	Public Information Meeting	September 22, 2021 6:00 PM Online/Digital	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study Background 2. Current initiatives 3. Goals and Objectives 4. Study Area 5. Scope and Schedule 6. Next Steps and Q&A 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short presentation 2. Time for Q&A
#2	Public Workshop	October 13, 2021 6:00 PM Location TBD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tour, workshop #1, and interviews summary 2. Inventory and analysis key findings 3. Next steps and Q&A 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short presentation 2. Time for Q&A 3. Workshop-style discussion of inventory including issue identification 4. Team members will circulate the room to help facilitate and document discussion
#3	Open House	December 14, 2021 6:00 PM Location TBD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Key findings from Public Meeting #1 2. Workshop #2 summary 3. Draft opportunities 4. Share next steps. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short presentation 2. Time for Q&A 3. Open house-style forum for meeting attendees to provide feedback on poster boards 4. Poster boards arranged in stations that have team members to facilitate and document discussion

5. Other Outreach Tools

Several tools will be employed to organize information, document input, and evaluate the stakeholder and community engagement process. Additional outreach tools are described below.

5.1. Project Website

The project team will provide the City of Buffalo with project-related materials to host on its website. Web information will include, at minimum, information related to the scope and planning process, meeting announcements, and the project schedule.

<http://www.buffalony.gov/1403/River-Rock-Connections>

5.2. Stakeholder List

A stakeholder list will be developed and maintained that includes the name, affiliation, and contact information for identified stakeholders and for each person that provides information during public meetings. The list will track the involvement of each stakeholder and will be used for meeting notifications.

5.3. Interviews

Stakeholder interviews will be completed by the consultant team. The City of Buffalo, BURA, Stakeholder Advisory Group, and consultant team will identify at most 10 stakeholders to be interviewed.

5.4. Focus Group Meetings

Two focus group meetings will be held for stakeholders. These meetings will provide a forum for discussion of opportunities and constraints in the neighborhoods.

5.5. Site Analysis Tours

City of Buffalo and BURA staff, the consultant team, and members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group, will be invited to participate in interactive site analysis tours aligned with the three key components of the project.

5.6. Traditional and Social Media

Content for traditional media posts such as newspaper articles and press releases will be provided by Fisher Associates and the City of Buffalo.

6. Community Engagement Schedule

	2021						2021	2022
	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Public Meetings				9/22	10/13		12/14	
Site Analysis Tours				9/29				
Focus Group Meetings				9/29		11/10		
Stakeholder Advisory Group Meetings			8/12	9/8	10/6		12/1	1/12