



2019 DRI Application

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) must be received by the appropriate Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) by **4:00 PM on May 31, 2019** at the email address provided at the end of this application.

In **New York City**, the Borough Presidents' offices will be the official applicants to the REDC and organizations interested in proposing an area for DRI funding should contact the respective Borough President's office as soon as possible. Based on these proposals, each Borough President's office will develop and submit no more than two formal applications for consideration by the New York City REDC. Applications to the offices of the Borough President must be received by email no later than **4:00 PM on May 10, 2019**. The subject heading on the email must be "Downtown Revitalization Round 4."

Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Additional information is available in the 2019 DRI Guidebook, available at www.ny.gov/DRI.

Applicants in the **Mid-Hudson region** must limit their application to a total of 15 pages, and no attachments will be accepted. The map of the DRI Area requested in question number 1 must be part of the 15-page limit.

Applicants should make every effort to engage the community in the development of the application. Prior to submission, applicants must have held a minimum of one meeting or event to solicit public input on the community vision and potential projects and should demonstrate that any input received was considered in the final application.

BASIC INFORMATION

- REDC Region – **Western New York**
- Municipality Name – **Town of Amherst**
- Downtown Name – **Boulevard Mall Opportunity Zone**
- County Name - **Erie**
- Applicant Contact(s) Name, Title, Email Address

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VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

Provide a brief statement of the municipality's vision for downtown revitalization.

The vision of the Town of Amherst is to **catalyze a retrofit of the Boulevard Mall property to recreate a thriving downtown for the community**. The Town envisions this 60-acre property redeveloped with a **sustainable mix of uses** that will **create jobs, reverse the trend of disinvestment and falling property values**, provide a means to **retain students and young professionals** in the area, offer a **greater array of services and amenities** for residents (including housing) and **re-establish the area as a community and regional destination**. The Boulevard Mall presents an exciting opportunity to transform an obsolete, outdated, enclosed shopping mall into a new, authentic community with a strong sense of place. Transformation of this property into a **vibrant, walkable environment that supports economic development**, with a wider range of uses and amenities, will enhance the fabric of the surrounding neighborhood and attract new businesses and users to the site; this is the key objective and vision for this project. The auto-dominant mall property is failing; disinvestment, declining property values and loss of tenants and jobs has led to foreclosure and an indistinct future; without intervention, this trend is likely to continue. But there is hope. The Boulevard Mall site is **prominently located** along Niagara Falls Blvd., one of the most significant thoroughfares in Erie County, and has **ready access to transportation** (bus service and major arterials) and a large supply of stable residential housing in the surrounding area. It is also situated between the two New York State University at Buffalo (SUNYAB) educational centers of excellence (north and south campuses). This setting empowers the site to be redesigned and redeveloped to **establish a new type of living experience** for the emerging population of the Town. The creation of an interior **street network with smaller, walkable blocks** throughout the site and a complete streets design will allow for **connectivity and enhanced mobility options** to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit and automobiles. Through the implementation of new zoning provisions, building form and design will induce a traditional, human-scale “Main Street” environment, activate street life, provide for walkability, and generate increased use and interest. The potential for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority's (NFTA) Metro Rail expansion, which includes the construction of a station at the Boulevard Mall, promotes transit-oriented design and strengthens the linkage between the SUNYAB north and south campuses, enhancing the site as a location for collaborative uses and activities. The design of enticing public corridors with **greenspace and gathering places** will also help to create an attractive, dynamic and engaging community environment. Additionally, investment in the development of new businesses will create a **wider range of job opportunities**, and development of multi-family **housing will provide options** for lower income families and students, as well as other sectors of the population.

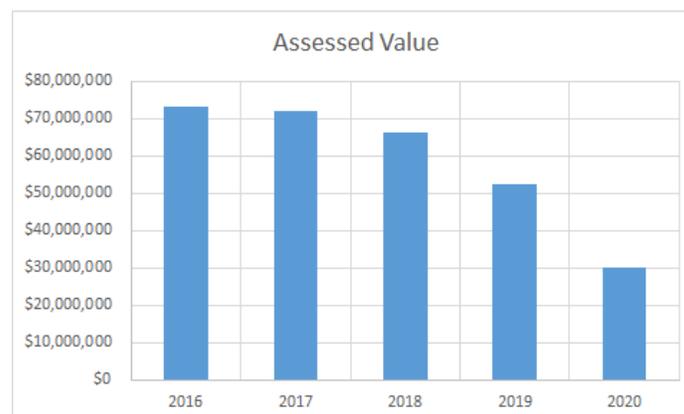
The retrofit and reinvention of the Boulevard Mall property is a regionally significant project that seeks to evoke the ambiance of an old town center in form and function with the modern amenities, uses and services that are desired in today's changing market. A mixed-use project of this nature will appeal to future generations, who have shown that they value pedestrian and bicycle access and public transit over automobiles. Through the installation of foundational roadway, grid-pattern

infrastructure and other public streetscape amenities, the Town will establish shovel-ready sites and set the stage for private investment to stem the tide of decline and job loss. This action will **foster the development of a denser mix of land uses and amenities to meet the current and future needs of residents, businesses and others in the area**. This vision includes the establishment of office, financial, medical, educational, retail, lodging, entertainment, multi-family residential, community and recreational uses, as well as a strong, collaborative relationship with the University at Buffalo. Combined, this development initiative will provide for a modern, innovative and welcoming public realm and context for all age and income groups - a vision for **a renewed Downtown in the Town of Amherst** for longtime, new and future residents and others. All that is needed is the DRI funding to get this project started.

JUSTIFICATION

Provide an overview of the downtown area nominated for the DRI program, highlighting the area's defining characteristics and the reasons for its selection. Explain why the downtown is ready for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment, and how that investment would serve as a catalyst to bring about revitalization.

Where We've Been and Where We Are Now: The Boulevard Mall first opened in 1962, at the corner of Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road, as the region's first enclosed shopping center. The mall was the first foray of commerce in the Town of Amherst, functioning as the traditional "downtown" center for retail and entertainment that was supported and dominated by automobile usage. It was a wildly successful center of activity. However, this is a platform that is no longer functional in today's economic market and society. While functioning as a downtown for the Town, it lacked the necessary elements for long-term prosperity, such as office space and other related uses. Today, **the mall is in a precarious financial situation**. The longtime owner of the mall handed the property over to the mortgage holder through foreclosure in 2017. While the mall sits at the epicenter of western New York geographically, it lost its edge and has suffered disinvestment, lack of maintenance and tenant/job loss over the past several years. In response, the Town of Amherst **lowered the property assessment** for the mall to **\$52.2 million in 2019, a decrease of about \$14 million from 2018 figures**. **The anticipated 2020 assessment figure is \$30 million**, indicating that the value of this property continues to decline significantly.



Today, the mall is approximately 75% leased, having **lost two major anchor stores and several smaller, higher-quality retail outlets** as a result of changing economic conditions, obsolete buildings, new technology or other market characteristics. The retail corridor from the I-290 to Sheridan Drive supports over 12,000 retail/service sector jobs; the decline of the Boulevard Mall has adversely affected this statistic. The potential for prolonged loss of mall tenants, tax revenue and jobs will continue to significantly impact the surrounding community and Town as a whole. If the Town continues to follow national trends in declining retail, (recently Western New York has seen worse declines than the national averages), we are on track to lose 1/3 of these service sector jobs by 2025. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall is located within U.S. Census Tract 92, which has a high number of low to moderate income families. Data from the American Community Survey 2017 census (attached) indicates that 21.2% of the population in census tract 92 is living below the poverty line, which is 1.4 times the rate in Erie County. The median household income was reported at \$37,244 (also lower than the income estimate for Erie County). The mall is located within the Sweet Home Central School District, which provides free or reduced-cost lunches to 60% of the student population. These conditions led to the designation of census tract 92 as part of a Federal Opportunity Zone, which provides tax incentives for the development of businesses and housing in this area. As outlined in the Town of Amherst Bi-Centennial Comprehensive Plan, sustaining the economic viability and value of the Town's large commercial properties is critical to maintaining the high quality of life in the community, as well as for reducing pressure for new greenfield development in areas outside the urban center. Therefore, redevelopment of the Boulevard Mall property through reinvestment, adaptive reuse and retrofit is necessary to maintain and enhance economic benefits to the surrounding community through increased tax revenue generation, job opportunities and a greater range of goods and services. If left as is, without intervention, decline and disinvestment at the mall will likely continue as a financial drag on the economic prosperity and quality of life in this area.

Where We Want to Be: The Boulevard Mall property was selected as the DRI project site because it has a great deal to offer, huge **potential for private investment and redevelopment**, and needs renewal. The mall is located at a prominent location and remains a key destination for the greater Buffalo area, as well as a significant asset for the community. This 60-acre property is a fully disturbed and developed site in an urban area that is well served by public infrastructure. It is located along Niagara Falls Blvd. (Route 62), which is a major thoroughfare in Erie County that supports extensive commercial development (it should be noted that Route 62 is the only U.S. roadway that extends from the Canadian border all the way to the Mexican border). The site also has **access to public transportation** and is within easy reach of the interstate highway system (I-290). The mall property is **surrounded by well-established residential development** within the Town of Amherst (east of Niagara Falls Blvd.) and the Town of Tonawanda (west of Niagara Falls Blvd.); these stable and desirable neighborhoods are well supported by the goods and services offered at the Boulevard Mall, as well as other commercial development along Niagara Falls Boulevard and nearby Sheridan Drive. The prominent location of the mall and the availability of public services warrants its **redevelopment with a denser array of uses to increase benefits to the surrounding area**. In keeping with Western New York Regional Economic Development Council priorities, proposed **redevelopment of the**

Boulevard Mall property will “create, retain and fill jobs; maximize the return on investment; and is ready for implementation”. The DRI award will enable the Town of Amherst to commence its objective to retrofit the mall property with public roadway infrastructure that will promote investment in a better way. Establishing a grid-pattern, street network of smaller, walkable blocks, with streetscape amenities (lighting, landscaping, public space, etc.) will entice private investment and enable the revitalization of the Boulevard Mall as a **more vibrant, functional Downtown Center** that will offer a wider range of uses, services and job opportunities (well beyond that of an enclosed shopping mall) and **improved public realm** for the surrounding community that do not currently exist. The proposed DRI investment will also strengthen this property as a **regional destination for commerce and economic development** and **strengthen its connection with the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNYAB)**. The University of Buffalo Business and Entrepreneur Partnership stated that redevelopment of the Boulevard Mall property can encourage recent graduates and young professionals to stay in Buffalo by appealing to their current needs: career advancement, affordable living, entertainment and an active, diverse community. This development will be an addition to SUNYAB’s thriving start-up scene and entertainment industry, which can assure a work-play balance that the next generation of workforce participants desires. A pedestrian-friendly focus will make it easier to navigate the area, allowing more time for shopping, eating, socializing and enjoyment of what the Downtown Center has to offer, which is something millennials and generation Z wants as an aside to work.

The mall property will also benefit from the future implementation of the NFTA’s preferred alternative to extend the Metro Rail public transportation service to the SUNYAB north campus, which includes building a station at the Boulevard Mall. This NFTA project will pave the way for collaborative partnering between the University and future investors in the mall property, providing opportunities for the development of bio-medical and engineering research facilities and services, as well as student housing, as desired by the SUNYAB. Such collaboration is well supported by the Town of Amherst Bi-Centennial Comprehensive Plan. The Boulevard Mall property represents an opportunity to recreate an auto-oriented, suburban style development into a live, work, play mixed-use center that is built around public transit and has ties to the SUNYAB. There is no other location in the Town that can accommodate a development of this nature. This is the future for this area and what the Town want’s this property to be. Building a welcoming, accessible and sustainable urban environment will foster a sense of community and networking between new and old residents, strengthening their sentimental and professional ties to Buffalo. The creation of job opportunities, the promise of career advancement with long-term success and the redevelopment and renewal of the Boulevard Mall as a Downtown Center will attract and retain young people to the area and provide enhanced benefits for existing residents.

How Do We Get There: In early 2019, **the Boulevard Mall was purchased at auction** by an investment team currently being led by **Doug Jamal of Douglas Development** to redevelop the mall property and take advantage of the Federal Opportunity Zone designation of this site. They are expected to close on the property the second week of June. Although a large undertaking, it is viewed by the new owner as a **rare opportunity for development because of all the property has to offer**. In addition to the

opportunity zone tax benefits, the property provides the ability to build a walkable campus that will draw from Amherst, Tonawanda, the City of Buffalo, and beyond. The Town of Amherst is committed to working with these private interests to invest in this effort to facilitate the renewal of the Boulevard Mall property. The Town will initiate this project by constructing the first phase (foundation) of public infrastructure to incentivize private investment and development. **By establishing a grid-pattern network of public streets and streetscape amenities (lighting, landscaping, public spaces, etc.), the Town will create a shovel-ready base of small blocks, making it easier for the new owners to implement their plans for future capital investment.** The new owners have embraced the Town of Amherst’s vision to redefine the site by adding housing and creating a lifestyle center-type experience that will revitalize the mall property. The new owners of the mall, and Benderson Development, an existing owner of several tax parcels within the Mall’s property, are committed to working with the Town of Amherst and the Amherst Industrial Development Agency (AIDA) to retrofit the site as a vibrant center of commerce in the community, and have indicated their commitment to invest up to \$75 million in the property over the next two years and up to \$250 million over five years (**see letters of intent from Douglas Development and Benderson Development**). They anticipate beginning construction on this project in 2020 in order to best utilize their opportunity zone funding incentives. The AIDA has partnered on several analyses and studies that point to the economic importance of the mall property and the Niagara Falls Blvd. corridor, which indicate how retrofit that if focused on dense, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development will add employment and housing opportunities for current and future residents. To further assist with the success of this project, the AIDA has the discretion to offer additional tax incentives. The Town has also revised the zoning for this area to provide flexibility in design, enable a more functional layout of buildings within the public realm and ensure a more effective mix of land uses, all of which is aimed at achieving the vision of revitalizing the Boulevard Mall property and creating a sustainable, economically viable and walkable Downtown Center. All told, the Town of Amherst sees the Boulevard Mall as a regionally significant economic engine that is deserving of the DRI award. This DRI grant request is critical to jumpstarting the construction of public infrastructure necessary to secure tens of millions of dollars in private sector investment for smart growth development that will transform the Boulevard Mall “grey field” into a Downtown Center that is modern, prosperous, green and attractive.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

- 1) Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted downtown area or neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the area should be concentrated and well-defined. Neighborhoods beyond traditional central business districts are eligible if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment. Include a map that clearly delineates the area to be included in the downtown revitalization area.

The DRI project area encompasses the 60-acre Boulevard Mall property in the Town of Amherst, Erie County, New York. The boundaries of the targeted area include Maple Road to the north, Niagara Falls Boulevard to the west, Alberta Drive to the east and Almeda Drive to the south (see attached site map). The DRI area is part of Census Tract 92, which is part of a designated Federal Opportunity Zone,

and has the potential for reinvestment and renewal with a mix of uses to create a sustainable area for commerce and prosperity.

- 2) Past investment, future investment potential.** Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment and catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas. Describe recent planning efforts that support public and private investment in the proposed DRI area.

The Boulevard Mall opened in 1962 as first enclosed shopping center in Buffalo, offering over 950,000 gross leasable space, and creating a downtown center of retail commerce in the Town of Amherst. Development of the mall fostered additional commercial and residential development in the surrounding area. Since the mall was built, **the population in the two-mile radius of the site has grown to over 57,000 residents** that benefit from the surrounding commercial development. Data from the American Community Survey 2017 census (see attached) indicates that the estimated population density in census tract 92 is 1,936.4 persons per square mile. This demonstrates that population growth in the neighborhoods around the Boulevard Mall has increased and is sufficient to support redevelopment of the mall property. However, over the years, as marketing characteristics and technological changes have advanced, the mall's suburban-style model for retail enterprise **no longer satisfies public needs and future desires**. The Boulevard Mall and other retail properties in the surrounding area have experienced decline. Although the mall property is experiencing disinvestment, like the nearby Northtown Plaza property (where a Whole Foods grocery store has newly located), **the commitment of new ownership and the Town of Amherst to revitalize the Boulevard Mall will turn things around**. The investment of the DRI funding to construct the Phase 1 public street network with streetscape amenities will create more contemporary spaces for new investment and induce development of a greater mix of land uses, services and amenities. The ownership team and other entities involved with the Boulevard Mall property have indicated that they are committed and eager to invest significant sums of money to transform the mall into a thriving center of economic activity (see attached letters of intent).

To help the Town envision the potential for redevelopment of the Boulevard Mall property, the consultant that the Town hired to develop the revised zoning regulations created a series of archetypal illustrations that depict the potential phases of future site redevelopment (see attached Phasing Plan). As shown in this example for potential site renewal and retrofit, early phases would include demolition of certain parts of the existing mall structure to facilitate the first phase of public road and streetscape construction. This is followed by the first phases of site development with multi-family housing, structures to accommodate office or retail uses and greenspace. **Site redevelopment would continue in phases**, with additional demolition and road construction followed with more building construction until the site reaches full build out. These examples portray a realistic view of how the property could be revitalized to create a vital Downtown Center for the Town of Amherst. The early phases of site redevelopment would start with demolition and the installation of public roadway infrastructure that would be funded with DRI funding. Phasing site development allows the mall owners and other investors to leverage costs with revenue generation from new development,

all the while providing benefits to the surrounding community. The phasing plan also shows the inclusion of the proposed Metro Rail station within the mall property rather than at the corner of Niagara Falls Blvd. and Maple Road, which is an option as the planning for this proposed project has not been finalized.

Regionally, the Boulevard Mall originally drew shoppers and workers from across northern Erie County and southern Niagara County. The proposed Boulevard Mall redevelopment effort, coupled with the potential **NFTA Metro Rail expansion** through the area and the development of a rail station at the mall property, could increase the future regional catchment area even further to include southern Erie County and downtown Buffalo. Planning for the NFTA's preferred alternative for rail extension is being finalized and funding is needed to proceed. According to the GBNRTC's 2018 *Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan* (see attached excerpts), future development resulting from the **Metro Rail extension is expected to add approximately 8.4 million square feet of commercial (office and retail) and residential space** throughout the corridor, connecting residents with new employment opportunities and enhancing accessibility to existing places of employment. **The assessed value of this new development is estimated at \$1.7 billion.** Existing properties where current buildings are expected to remain through adaptive reuse are expected to see their cumulative assessed value increase by upwards of \$310 million as a result of their proximity to the Metro Rail. Design amenities added into redevelopment, like a dynamic park with green-infrastructure water features, outdoor events space and entertainment center, or a boutique hotel and conference center, could expand the catchment area further to include a greater portion of Upstate New York and Southern Ontario, particularly if supported by public transit.

In addition, there are several **recent and ongoing efforts** that are providing support and direction for the future of the Boulevard Mall property:

(1) *Federal Opportunity Zone* - The Boulevard Mall lies within the boundaries of a newly created Federal Opportunity Zone. At the Town's request, Governor Cuomo designated census tract 92, which includes the Boulevard Mall, as an Opportunity Zone. This designation allows money to be sheltered from capital gains tax in an Opportunity Fund, which must be spent in the next decade. This Opportunity Zone is a transformational tool that will greatly advance the revitalization of the Boulevard Mall property. The new owners of the mall property will submit a plan that details how they will spend this funding for capital construction efforts to redevelop the site. It is their intention to commence construction for this project in 2020 to best utilize their opportunity zone funding incentives.

(2) *Public Infrastructure Improvements* – Currently there are sanitary and storm sewer capacity issues along and adjacent to the Niagara Falls Blvd. corridor causing drainage issues. Understanding that these issues are a constraint to redevelopment, the Town of Amherst is undertaking or has proposed several necessary sewer and drainage remediation projects (most of which include green infrastructure) in the neighborhoods located south of the Boulevard Mall. These improvements are necessary to address inflow and infiltration problems that result in localized flooding in these

neighborhoods, as well as along Niagara Falls Blvd., due to heavy rain and spring thaw, and are essential to the redevelopment of the Boulevard Mall. They are designed to reduce localized flooding and related surcharging issues in the mall area.

(3) *Niagara Falls Boulevard Streetscape and Safety Improvements* – On May 16, 2018, the Amherst Town Board unanimously approved a resolution to institute improvements to redevelop of the streetscape of Niagara Falls Boulevard to enhance public safety. The street, unfortunately, has a history of both vehicular and pedestrian fatalities. According to the resolution, the project will involve representation from both the Town of Amherst and the Town of Tonawanda, as well as State officials, council members, chambers of commerce, industrial development agencies and police departments. Some of the proposed measures to increase safety for Niagara Falls Boulevard include improved sight lines for motorists and lowering of the speed limit on some portions of this roadway. The planning project was scheduled to begin in July 2018, with a tentative completion in July 2019. Stakeholders’ meetings were conducted and an event to discuss new urbanism aspects for Niagara Falls Boulevard was held in October 2018. Currently, a \$2.3 million dollar federally funded upgrade project is being undertaken by the Town in partnership with the DOT and Town of Tonawanda.

(4) *Senior Affordable Housing Complex* – Belmont Housing Resources for Western NY is constructing a 3-story, 40-unit senior/disabled housing complex for a cluster of properties at the corner of Alberta Drive and Amsterdam Avenue, immediately adjacent to the Boulevard Mall property. This \$13.5 million project involves the redevelopment of a former fire station and three vacant and underutilized properties. Belmont’s project is the perfect catalyst for the area to ramp up density and transition to taller buildings leading into the mall property. It is a welcome project in a neighborhood that has limited senior housing options, despite the existence of walkable amenities. The Town of Amherst is contributing \$200,000 of HOME Investment Partnership funding to further support this effort.

(5) *The Town of Amherst Department of Community Development* has invested approximately \$4 Million in Community Development Block Grant funds in the Eggertsville neighborhood in the last decade to support safe and healthy housing. Community Development’s continued focus for this neighborhood, which is located south of the Boulevard Mall, is to expand reinvestment beyond housing stock to small commercial spaces through a facade improvement program, as well as to generate affordable in-fill housing development on vacant lots via partnerships with the Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation and the non-profit development community.

(6) *Amherst Development Corporation (ADC)*, a part of the AIDA, has been a passive entity for the past several decades. The Town and the AIDA are working together to revive the ADC and use it to redevelop blighted and vacant commercial properties in the Town of Amherst, beginning in the Eggertsville neighborhood. The AIDA is creatively incentivizing quality infill residential development in this area, like the \$3.5 million dollar 9-unit townhome development on a vacant lot at 3980 Bailey, which was just approved in May of 2019.

- 3) **Recent or impending job growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within or near the DRI area will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

According to American Community Survey census data (2017), there are 14,615 people coming to work daily within the two-mile radius of the DRI project site. Fifty-four percent of these jobs are based in the retail sector. It is imperative that new development that occurs as part of the Boulevard Mall **retrofit evolves beyond the retail identity** that has established along the Niagara Falls Blvd. corridor. This will **allow the proposed project to keep pace with consumer demand and to stay relevant as a Downtown Center and regional destination.** The Boulevard Mall is failing because the concentration of single-use retail stores cannot compete with changing market and societal forces and technology; the mall continues to decline, losing tenants and jobs. To continue to proliferate a large extent of retail uses on this site could put new jobs at risk.

The vision for the retrofit of the Boulevard is to **create a mixed-use center that moves beyond consumer shopping and offers a wider range of job opportunities.** This will benefit existing residents and SUNYAB students seeking employment, existing businesses and new businesses and start-ups (including collaborative partnering efforts with the University- see **Orsi Letter of Support**) seeking an attractive location to operate. The location of the mall property between the SUNYAB north and south campuses is critical to workforce development efforts. Workers, especially millennials and generation Z are increasing choosing where to live and then seeking employment opportunities or starting their own businesses. This is a huge paradigm shift from previous generations that sought work before housing. These important cohorts of the population are the key to stemming regional population loss and continued business growth. The REDC reports that the population of 20-34 year olds in the region grew by 2,680 per year on average between 2010 and 2016, and that young adults are returning to the area after decades of population decline. The proposed project will establish a catchment area to help advance this trend through job creation and business opportunities.

Additionally, the 2016 Economic Study conducted by the Town of Amherst, calls for the **redevelopment of sites, such as the Boulevard Mall, to meet the demand for new, modern office space in a mixed-use, walkable environment.** According to that study, “the Town of Amherst is forecasted to add between 9,000 and 16,500 jobs between 2015 and 2040. Most job growth will be concentrated in businesses that will need retail and office space, with little new demand for industrial spaces in most of the Town. **In order to meet this job growth, the Town will need to increase its supply of commercial space by 4.1 to 5.9 million square feet.** Most of this development is expected to be achieved by redeveloping existing commercial sites.” The retrofit of the Boulevard Mall will create opportunities for new office and commercial business growth that meets the needs of the market and the region. The vision for this site is to **create a Downtown Center that offers contemporary space for businesses and jobs of the future**, including finance, trade, bio-medical and engineering research or other related activities, as well as housing, community services and business start-ups. This vision moves the mall property beyond its retail roots and will help to move economic

development in the Town into the future. It has been statistically proven, that “high-growth firms cluster in employment centers that are more dense, diverse, walkable, and connected.” (*Emil Malizia & Yasuyuki Motoyama (2018) Vibrant Centers as Locations for High-Growth Firms: An Analysis of Thirty U.S. Metropolitan Areas, The Professional Geographer*). This vision will be initiated through the construction of public roadway and streetscaping infrastructure that would be funded by the DRI award; this will set the stage for private investment and the achievement of a thriving Downtown Center that will provide job opportunities.

It is also important to note that the retrofit of the Boulevard Mall property will generate numerous construction jobs. It is estimated up to 2,000 construction jobs could be created, based on recommendations from the building trades industry, in the first two years of this project’s implementation.

- 4) **Attractiveness of physical environment.** Identify the properties or characteristics that the DRI area possesses that contribute, or could contribute if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender identity, ability, mobility, and cultural background. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, varied housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and bikeability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.

The 60-acre **Boulevard Mall property is a fully disturbed and developed site** that is serviced by public roadway, water and sewer infrastructure. It has the capacity to be reshaped and retrofitted with a grid pattern of roads to lay the foundation for future investment and development with a greater mix of uses and public spaces. The site is a **prime location to implement smart growth policies** to create a more densely developed, walkable community that will be a destination for business, working, living and public enjoyment for a diversity of age and income groups. The goal of this project is to **transform the mall property as an attractive Downtown Center** that will offer a wider range of land uses, services, amenities, housing options and job opportunities. The realigned/recreated street network will include smaller, walkable blocks for new development and/or redevelopment (adaptive reuse) of existing structures, as certain uses and structures on the site may remain viable.

At present, the Boulevard Mall site is vastly overdeveloped with asphalt paving and tall outdoor lighting infrastructure, lacks greenspace and public spaces, has not been well maintained and, overall, is short on visual appeal. Renewal of the Boulevard Mall property will not only improve the usability of this site, but it will **transform its attractiveness and livability as an inviting and aesthetically pleasing center of dynamic activity and economic vitality**. Redevelopment of the Boulevard Mall property will **encourage recent graduates and young professionals to stay in Buffalo** by appealing to their current needs: career advancement, affordable living, entertainment and an active, diverse community. This development will be an attractive addition to State University’s thriving business start-up and entertainment industry efforts, which can assure a work-play balance that the next generation of workforce participants desires. A pedestrian-friendly focus as part of the mall retrofit will create improved mobility and gather places on the site, allowing more time for shopping, eating,

socializing and enjoyment of what the Downtown Center has to offer, which is something millennials and generation Z wants as an aside to work. That is the goal of this effort, to foster renewal of the property to create a Downtown Center for business and other activity, to attract new activity, address the needs and desires of future generations and benefit the community as a whole. Retrofit of the Boulevard Mall will be an advantage to the surrounding neighborhoods through its **transformation into a destination for more than just retail shopping**. The installation of the foundational public roadway infrastructure and streetscape amenities will **create shovel-ready blocks for new investment**. This will induce redevelopment with a greater variety of uses, public greenspace and amenities, opportunities for improved mobility (walking and biking) and healthy living that will satisfy and enhance the current and future needs of residents on the site and in the nearby community. The availability of a wider range of jobs and goods and services, as well as a more enticing public realm, will contribute to the overall attractiveness, sense of place and vibrancy of this area. It is intended to become a new and more vital Downtown Center for Amherst.

Additionally, the Town of Amherst has a growing Asian population and a thriving Asian Chamber of Commerce. Data from the American Community Survey 2017 census (attached) indicate that **17.3% of the population in Amherst is foreign born**; of that figure, **87% is estimated to be of Asian origin**. Part of the vision for the retrofitted Boulevard Mall is to create opportunities for this culture. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce has approached the Town with the idea to spend \$15 million dollars and create a modern, walkable “Chinatown” here in Amherst, close to UB. This may be accommodated in the first phase of this redevelopment project. There are a large number of Asian students that attend SUNY Buffalo. In a new report from business first, Buffalo has the lowest retention rate of foreign born students when compared to MSA’s of a similar size and GDP. **(see graphic, attached)**

By providing job and other opportunities as part of the mall redevelopment, the potential exists to **welcome and retain these students in the area and create an environment in which they can assimilate, live, work and conduct business**.

- 5) Quality of Life policies.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, comprehensive plans, complete streets plan, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies that support livability and quality of life in downtown are not currently in place, describe near-term efforts by the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The Town of Amherst has included the Boulevard Mall property in its long-range planning efforts for many years. A recent amendment to the Town’s Bi-centennial Comprehensive Plan has been focused on the revision of policies and zoning provisions that would **promote investment in more sustainable forms of commercial development to improve quality of life in the Town** (see attached excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan). The Town is revising the commercial district zoning regulations (see attached draft zoning code) to **enable greater flexibility in design and focus on form to promote mixed-use development, active streetscapes and increased density**. The Town of Amherst is also

working in concert with the ongoing planning by the NFTA to redefine this area of the Town with transit-oriented development and meet the economic opportunities of the future. This means supporting the NFTA's preferred alternative to establish a Metro Rail transit service station at the Boulevard Mall site as part of the rail extension plan, which will enhance mobility and provide improved access for the region's workforce, link regional education institutions and support the transportation on Niagara Falls Boulevard (see attached excerpts from the Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan Report and associated news article). The Town has also authorized the development of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the entire Amherst Opportunity Zone, including the scope of this DRI project. On May 20th, 2019, the Town adopted the GEIS scope, named the Town the lead agency, and set a public hearing. Additionally, the proposed introduction of multi-family housing as part of the Boulevard Mall retrofit will create opportunities for a variety of income and age groups. As previously noted, the Belmont Housing Resources for Western NY is constructing a 40-unit senior/disabled housing complex directly south of the Boulevard Mall. This project will provide much needed housing for a segment of the population (seniors and the disabled) that is not currently being served in the project area. People, Inc. indicates that their market studies clearly demonstrate the need for additional housing opportunities, that they believe can be provided as a part of the mall redevelopment effort. The retrofit of the Boulevard Mall and the potential for future investment to create new housing on the property will compliment and expand such housing opportunities to ensure that there is diversity in the housing options offered as a part of site revitalization.

Town of Amherst Bi-Centennial Comprehensive Plan

The vision statement in the Town of Amherst Bi-Centennial Comprehensive Plan defines the desired characteristics of future commercial development for the Town, including: **pedestrian-friendly, interconnected, mixed-use development patterns; balancing economic growth and livability; and revitalizing older commercial corridors**. The Plan established goals to support this vision and policies for land use and development and economic development that influence the future retrofit of the Boulevard Mall. The land use policies envision an interconnected mix of land uses that includes revitalized commercial corridors, quality new development, vibrant activity centers and greenspaces throughout the community. Promoting the development/redevelopment of walkable, high density, mixed-use centers; targeting capital improvements to leverage private investment; coordinating with other planned strategies, such as public transportation and the location of community facilities; and enhancing community appearance are key land use objectives in the Plan that fully support the mall retrofit. The Plan calls for expanding provisions and incentives for mixed-use development in designated activity centers and promoting compact, pedestrian-friendly development. **The proposed retrofit of the Boulevard Mall property as a walkable, densely developed, mixed-use Downtown Center fully complies with these objectives**. This vision would be initiated through the construction of public roadway and streetscaping infrastructure that would be funded by the DRI award.

The goal for economic development in the Bi-Centennial Comprehensive Plan envisions a Town with a strong tax based and ample economic opportunities for a diverse base of employers and employees, housed in attractive, state-of-the-art commercial developments in convenient and accessible

locations. A primary objective for economic development is to **advance the redevelopment and revitalization of underutilized, obsolete and vacant properties for economically viable uses**; here again the mall project complies. The Comprehensive Plan recognized that some developed properties in the Town may no longer be economically viable as a result of changing economic conditions and market characteristics and that sustaining these properties is critical to maintaining the Town's high quality of life, as well as for reducing pressure for greenfield development outside of urban areas. The Plan recommends **reinvestment, adaptive reuse and partial to full redevelopment where market conditions, site location and other factors warrant it**. The Boulevard Mall retrofit project will be designed to achieve this goal and corresponding objectives, as the property is situated in a key location and is well suited for redevelopment, starting with the construction of the base roadway infrastructure and streetscaping elements.

A priority action for economic development in the Comprehensive Plan is the **establishment of a collaborative planning structure with the State University at Buffalo to address issues such as business, employment growth, land use planning and social/cultural ties**. Pursuing collaboration with educational institutions, private businesses and other partners is recommended as a key objective for economic development in the Town. The University is a major community asset and the Town desires to work with the school to establish mixed-use activity centers in the vicinity of the north campus to enable collaboration. This includes leveraging development opportunities for off-campus student and faculty housing and activities, small-scale commercial retail and services oriented toward the SUNYAB community, and incubator and research-related employment facilities. These objectives can be achieved as part of the retrofit of the Boulevard Mall property, which is envisioned to include office space and other business-related space for collaboration with the University. Additionally, part of the vision for the Boulevard Mall project is to provide opportunities that will encourage the retention of students and other young professionals.

Imagine Amherst - Commercial and Mixed-Use Center Plan and Zoning Framework

The land use objectives in the Bi-Centennial Comprehensive Plan recommended improvements to the Town's zoning regulations to encourage mixed-use development and flexibility in design. This resulted in the 2017 amendment of the Comprehensive Plan to include modest revisions to the original goals and objectives to support **updates to the zoning regulations to improve the design of commercial development**. The proposed zoning revisions, which are currently being finalized by the Town offer an **overhaul of the commercial districts to promote form-based design and mixed use**. At present, the majority of the Town's commercial centers (including the Boulevard Mall) are zoned using a single zoning district (General Business-GB). This district for buildings up to five stories in height on any lands zoned GB and was originally crafted to promote growth of properties located along large commercial corridors. While the GB zoning may have generated suitable results in that setting, it is not appropriate for use in areas embedded in neighborhoods or located along smaller streets. Over time it became clear that **the "one-size fits all" approach was ineffective and new zoning tools were needed to manage new development and keep pace with current and future development trends**. The Comprehensive Plan amendment and revised zoning provisions provide guidance and mapping to

enable the application of new zoning in the Town's commercial areas and allow for the development/redevelopment of mixed-use centers.

The proposed zoning strategy for commercial and mixed-use activity is a new concept, which will be a National model for suburban retrofit, emphasizes the following to ensure livability and better-quality development:

- Replacing existing districts with form-based classifications that incorporate form and type characteristics.
- Improve existing transitions between land uses.
- Allow for a variety of complementary uses in close proximity to promote vibrant, walkable places.
- Encourage a vertical mixed-use development to provide opportunities for diverse investments more aligned to today's markets.
- Revisit development standards to reflect the need to break up the bulk of large buildings and large parcels and screen parking areas/garages.
- Update parking regulations to reflected mixed-use character of areas and signage regulations to reflect pedestrian elements in the design.
- Allow for low impact development options for stormwater management.
- Provide block standards (Core and Local Streets) and access requirements to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access, which are based on a Harvard study indicating the "perfect" walkable block dimensions.
- Establish open space and amenity standards as a part of future development.

Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) Board recently authorized moving forward with the **extension of the Metro Rail to enhance mobility and connectivity between key activity centers in Buffalo and those located in the Northtowns**. This project will extend service from the existing terminus of the rail line at the University of Buffalo south campus to the north campus in the Town of Amherst. The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) prepared a plan for this project that demonstrates that the proposed transit investment will not only have the ability to **enhance mobility options** for the community but also serve to **support broader social and economic goals by promoting transit-oriented development (TOD)**. The Metro Rail extension is part of a larger regional investment strategy that will leverage economic and community development opportunities association with transit investment. The study found that:

- The **young adult population** (ages 20-34) IN THE Buffalo-Niagara region has **increased by 8.3% between 2010 and 2015** and will drive the demand for TOD.
- The Metro Rail corridor is expected to experience faster population and employment growth than the balance of the region (5.8% vs. 1.3% and 13/3% vs. 12.5%, respectively).
- An estimated 28% of all regional jobs will be located within the Metro Rail corridor.

- Future development resulting from the Metro Rail extension is expected to add approximately 8.4 million square feet of commercial (office and retail) and residential space throughout the corridor.
- Existing properties where current buildings are expected to remain through adaptive reuse could see their cumulative assessed value increase considerably as a result of proximity to the Metro Rail.
- The Metro Rail extension **will result in significant property tax revenue increases** for the City of Buffalo and Town of Amherst (32% more than in a scenario where the extension is not constructed).
- The Metro Rail extension would provide upwards of 9,950 employed residents with rail access to their jobs, and would connect many residents with new employment opportunities, thus enhancing job accessibility and reducing vehicles miles traveled.

The Boulevard Mall was selected as a site for the location of a transit station along the Metro Rail extension. This fact, and the extension of the Metro Rail line itself, is supported by the Town of Amherst Bi-Centennial Comprehensive Plan, the Imagine Amherst zoning revisions, as well as other prominent regional planning efforts. The TOD study found that the Boulevard Mall site and surrounding area is a major destination for SUNYAB students. **The mall site represents an opportunity to recreate auto-oriented, suburban-type development into a live, work, play mixed-use center built around transit.** It is an ideal location for transit-oriented development that would improve the pedestrian environment, replace buildings devoted to single use, accommodate greater development density, and provide public amenities and greenspace that do not exist under present conditions. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall area is surrounded by stable residential neighborhoods that will benefit from redevelopment of the mall property and improved quality of life.

Town of Amherst Opportunity Zone Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS)

The Town of Amherst authorized this GEIS to evaluate the cumulative impacts of the Towns preferred redevelopment scenario, including the scope of this DRI project, for the designated opportunity zone, which encompasses census tract 92 and extends beyond the Boulevard Mall property. This preferred redevelopment scenario portrays the potential buildout of underutilized properties, including the Boulevard Mall property, that could be realistically redeveloped in the opportunity zone. This GEIS will be used to evaluate the potential cumulative impacts of the preferred redevelopment scenario with respect to land use, infrastructure and environmental issues. This GEIS will establish development projections for the study area over a 20-30 year planning period, which will serve as the basis for the evaluation of cumulative growth impacts and **establish the mitigation measures necessary to accommodate this growth and avoid significant adverse impacts to the environment and quality of life in the community.** On May 20th, 2019, the Town adopted the GEIS scope, named the Town the lead agency, and set a public hearing.

- 6) Public support.** Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown

revitalization. Characterize the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan.

The Town of Amherst has been focusing on the Boulevard Mall property for several years. As the mall started to decline and lost major tenants, as jobs were being lost and tax revenue was decreasing, and as the property went into foreclosure proceedings, the Town oriented public participation and other outreach efforts associated with the Comprehensive Plan amendment on the potential revitalization of this area. In the spring of 2018, the Town of Amherst conducted an **award-winning series of Neighborhood Visioning Forums**¹ in 10 communities throughout the Town. These forums enabled the Town to gather neighborhood level input on current issues and opportunities and future vision for each of the 10 communities. The forum that was held in the Boulevard Mall neighborhood allowed the Town to solicit comments on the mall site, its importance to the community and the vision for its future. Residents and property owners understand the important and benefits of a revitalized mall property in terms of the goods and services, quality of life, jobs and economic prosperity it could offer. They indicated that they want more mixed-use development in the area, improved quality of life and mobility, as well as walkability, and they want to see vacant and abandoned properties filled or redeveloped to revitalize declining commercial areas, particularly the Boulevard Mall.

Additionally, working with the NY State and National Chapters of the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU), the Town organized a **CNU conference in October 2018 that was centered on the potential for a retrofit of the Boulevard Mall property**. This conference included workshops that generated input from stakeholders, professionals and the public that was specific to site reuse and redevelopment of the mall. Comments included reusing big box structures for community space, indoor gardens and parks, and retail; connecting the street network to create walkable blocks, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, on-street parking and public space; offering improved housing options for students, seniors, the disabled and those in financial need; creating a large park space for outdoor programming and enjoyment and stormwater management; routing transit through the site to create a destination and improve mobility; Including neighborhood amenities such as daycare and pre-school services, medical office and wellness space, pop-ups and small spaces that offer personal services and shops; and embedding parking into the blocks to eliminate vast areas of pavement. This information was instrumental for shaping a vision for the area and for the development of new form-based zoning provisions for this part of the Town (which the Town is currently finalizing).

As evidenced by the **letters of support** attached to this application, reinvestment and renewal of the Boulevard Mall is viewed as significant for the Town and region, and is supported by local leaders and other stakeholders, for a number of reasons, including job creation, business opportunities and other amenities that are geared toward the retention of students and young professionals, and increased housing opportunities. Letters of intent from the new ownership team demonstrate their commitment to redevelopment of the Boulevard Mall property that will result in increased property

¹ The Town of Amherst was the recipient of the *Public Outreach Award* in May 2019 for the Neighborhood Visioning Forums by the Western New York Section of the New York Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association.

value and tax assessments, which will be a significant benefit to the Town and surrounding community.

- 7) **Transformative opportunities.** Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that could be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project). Identify potential development opportunities, such as municipally-owned property that may be appropriate for redevelopment. Projects may be public or private, and could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. It should be recognized that if a DRI award is made to the downtown, the projects identified here, along with any others that may arise during the DRI planning process, will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State to determine which projects receive DRI grants.

As noted above, the vision of the Town of Amherst is to **catalyze a retrofit of the Boulevard Mall property to recreate a thriving downtown for the community**. The Town envisions this 60-acre property transformed with a sustainable mix of uses that will create jobs, reverse the trend of disinvestment and falling property values, provide a means to attract and retain students and young professionals in the area, offer a greater array of services and amenities for residents (including housing) and re-establish the area as a community and regional destination. The mall property is a significant asset to the community and has the potential to support investment and renewal. DRI grant funding will be utilized to achieve the early phases of retrofit activity at the Boulevard Mall site. The Town of Amherst will undertake construction of a grid-pattern street network of smaller, walkable blocks, with streetscape amenities (lighting, landscaping, public space, green infrastructure for stormwater management, etc.) to entice private investment and enable the revitalization of the Boulevard Mall as a **more vibrant, functional Downtown Center** that will offer a wider range of uses, services and job opportunities (well beyond that of an enclosed shopping mall) and an **improved public realm** for the surrounding community. The proposed DRI investment will help to transform and strengthen this property as a **regional destination for a variety of business activity and economic development** and **strengthen its connection with the State University** of New York at Buffalo. Significant phases of the retrofit can be achieved in the first one to two years of the project. Additional phases of site development, as exemplified on the attached Phasing Plan, will continue the transformation of the site into a renewed Downtown Center for the Town.

By establishing a grid-pattern network of public streets and streetscape amenities, **the Town will create a shovel-ready base of small blocks, making it easier for the new owners to implement their plans for future capital investment**. Douglas Development and their partners, have embraced the Town of Amherst's vision to redefine the site by adding housing and creating a lifestyle center-type experience that will revitalize the mall property. The new owner group for the mall is committed to working with the Town of Amherst and the Amherst Industrial Development Agency (AIDA) to retrofit the site as a vibrant center of commerce and business activity in the community, and have indicated their commitment to invest up to \$75 million in the property over the next two years and up to \$250

million over five years (see letter of intent). They anticipate beginning construction on this project in 2020 in order to best utilize their opportunity zone funding.

Future investment (beyond 5 years) is certain to occur once the NFTA finalizes and commences construction of their Metro Rail expansion project. This project will include the construction of a rail station at the Boulevard Mall, which will promote transit-oriented development in the vicinity. **The mall site represents an opportunity to transform an auto-oriented, suburban-type development into a live, work, play mixed-use center built around transit.** It is an ideal location for transit-oriented development that would improve the pedestrian environment, replace buildings devoted to single use activity, accommodate greater development density, and provide public amenities and greenspace that do not exist under present conditions. This DRI grant request is critical to jumpstarting the construction of public infrastructure necessary to secure tens of millions of dollars in private sector investment for smart growth development that will transform the Boulevard Mall “grey field” into a Downtown Center that is modern, prosperous, green and attractive.

- 8) Administrative Capacity.** Describe the existing local administrative capacity to manage this planning and implementation initiative, including the ability to oversee contracts for awarded municipal projects using existing staff and resources.

The team for this effort will include the Amherst Town Supervisor, the Planning Director, the Highway Superintendent, the Town Engineer, the Executive Director of the Amherst Industrial Development Agency, and other relevant Town staff. The Executive bios are as follows:

Brian J. Kulpa, AIA, Amherst Town Supervisor

Brian Kulpa was elected as Supervisor of the Town of Amherst in November 2017, taking office at the beginning of this year. Prior to this role, Brian served as the Mayor of the Village of Williamsville, NY. He was elected Mayor in 2011 after four years serving as a Village Trustee. He was re-elected in 2015. During his time at the Village, Kulpa led American Public Works Association and American Planning Association award winning projects. During his tenure at the Village of Williamsville, the Village was the recipient of over \$11 million dollars in state and federal grants to invest in community planning and infrastructure on Picture Main Street, South Long Street, and Spring Street. He is a registered architect and an urban planner with the firm Clark Patterson Lee design firm in Buffalo. He is also a graduate of the University at Buffalo with a Bachelor of Professional Studies degree in Architecture and Master of Arts degrees in Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning. With Clark Patterson Lee, Brian led American Public Works Association and American Planning Association in the City of Tonawanda, the Town of Tonawanda, and West Seneca. Brian has served as the President of the Association of Erie County Governments and is currently a Board Member of the Erie County IDA.

Lynda L. Juul, MBA, Chief Finance Officer

Lynda Juul is an accomplished financial and operations executive with a successful track record overseeing multi-million dollar budgets, managing departments to work cohesively together, and successfully administering grants and capital projects. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance and Master of Business Administration, Lynda started her career in the Village of Williamsville Clerk's office as Deputy Treasurer in 1999, and was appointed to the position of Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer in 2007. She has been a key asset to the progression of the Village until 2019, at which time she was hired as Director of Finance at the Town of Amherst. In her current role, Lynda works most closely with the Comptroller and Contract Compliance offices but has financial oversight with each department within the Town of Amherst, resulting in better overall communication and improved responsiveness and service to constituents. Lynda has been a member of numerous professional organizations, which include: International City/County Management Association (ICMA), NYS City/County Management Association (NYSCMA), NY Government Finance Officers' Association (NYGFOA) – current Western Region Council Member, NYS Society of Municipal Finance Officers, NYS Association of City/Village Clerks. She continues to educate herself in her field.

Daniel C. Howard, AICP, Director of Planning

Daniel C. Howard has been employed with the Town of Amherst Planning Department since 1984 and currently serves as Planning Director. He directs and supervises a staff of 11, including planners and a design professional who provides community planning, landscape design, and community development services. Mr. Howard has extensive planning experience, successfully managing comprehensive planning projects, zoning code development, public engagement processes, and transportation planning. He also serves as adjunct faculty in the Department of Geography and Planning at Buffalo State College. Mr. Howard earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Urban and Regional Planning and a Master of Arts degree in Geography with a specialization in Urban and Regional Planning. He also holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Geography from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Mr. Howard is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and the American Planning Association. In addition to his planning experience, Mr. Howard holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army Reserve and presently serves as Plans and Operations Officer for the Army Reserve Medical Command.

Patrick Lucey, Highway Superintendent

Patrick Lucey started his employment with the Town of Amherst in 1975 at the Amherst Highway Department, where he was elevated to a Motor Equipment Operator. In 1986, Mr. Lucey left the Amherst Highway Department as he was appointed to the Amherst Police Department. During his career as a police officer Mr. Lucey attended numerous training courses, which included Accident Investigation Courses, and in 2004 he was certified as an Accident Reconstructionist. In 2008, Mr. Lucey was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant where he directly supervised police officers under his command, trained police officers and directly supervised Public Safety Dispatchers and Town of Amherst crossing guards. Mr. Lucey has a B.A. degree from the University of Buffalo in Legal Studies. He was also certified as a Police Instructor from Erie County CPS academy. In 2015, Mr. Lucey retired

from the Amherst Police Department after he was elected to the position of Superintendent of Highways for the Town of Amherst On January 1, 2016, Mr. Lucey became the Superintendent of Highways, a position he currently holds today.

Jeffery S. Burroughs, P.E., Town Engineer

Jeffrey S. Burroughs has been practicing municipal engineering since his graduation with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1993. In 1994, Mr. Burroughs joined the Town of Amherst Engineering Department as a junior engineer where he focused on infrastructure project design and construction. In 1996, Mr. Burroughs transitioned into management in the Engineering Department overseeing the Environmental Control Division at the Town's Water Pollution Control Facility and in May 2000, Mr. Burroughs earned an MBA from the State University of New York at Buffalo. In 2001, Mr. Burroughs became a NYS licensed professional engineer and in 2006 Mr. Burroughs was promoted to Town Engineer. In February 2008, Mr. Burroughs left the Town of Amherst to work as a senior project manager for URS, a national architecture and engineering services consulting firm. In his private consulting work, Mr. Burroughs worked for various public and private local clients including the Town of Amherst, Erie County, the City of Buffalo, the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission and Chautauqua County. In 2016, Mr. Burroughs was brought back to the Town of Amherst as the Town Engineer. Mr. Burroughs' experience is in infrastructure and wastewater treatment plant design.

Maggie Hamilton Winship, MPA, Director of Strategic Planning

Maggie Hamilton Winship has a Master's degree in Public Administration from George Washington University. In her shared role at the Village of Williamsville and Town of Amherst, she works with department heads to coordinate and manage all special projects, economic development initiatives, and numerous grant applications. Previously, Winship worked for the Village of Williamsville as Director of Community Development and has coordinated Village events, special projects, economic development initiatives and grants, and managed all external communication and public relations. Additionally, Maggie is a Broker and Co-Founder of Build Up Buffalo, a boutique property brokerage firm that specializes in finding real estate for nonprofit organizations and up-and-coming businesses. As a licensed Real Estate Broker in New York State, she has a decade of experience coordinating projects in both the public and private sector. Maggie is a member of numerous professional organizations, which include: International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Urban Land Institute (ULI), and Western New York's Urban Land Institute's Women's Leadership Initiative (ULI WLI) – co-founder and current Executive Committee Member.

David S. Mingoia, Executive Director/CEO, Amherst Industrial Development Agency

David is the Executive Director/CEO/CFO for the Amherst Industrial Development Agency (AIDA) and Amherst Development Corporation (ADC) since December 2016. Previously he served as the Deputy Director since 2005. Before joining the AIDA, David was the Director of Business Development for Empire State Development (ESD), managing staff working with companies on retention/attraction activities covering five counties in Western New York. During his over 20 years of working in economic development in Western New York, David has overseen and actively worked

on nearly \$1 billion in private investment leading to over 10,000 direct jobs. Work activities throughout his career are varied, ranging from working on Buffalo Waterfront projects to helping secure the GEICO investment in Amherst to fostering redevelopment activities in older commercial districts. David holds a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning, specializing in Economic Development, from the State University New York at Buffalo. Currently, he is serving on the Board of Directors for the Upstate Chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, Amherst Chamber of Commerce and Invest Buffalo Niagara.

9) Other. Provide any other information that informs the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

- Catchment Area
- Certified Town Board Resolution
- Comprehensive Plan Excerpts, Zoning Documents, & Additional back-up
- Letters of Intent from property owners
- Letters of Support from the community and key stakeholders
- Presentation
- Project Budget Estimate
- Project Phasing
- Site Map

(Please see attachments)

SUBMISSION

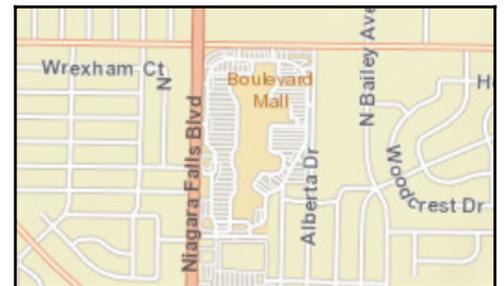
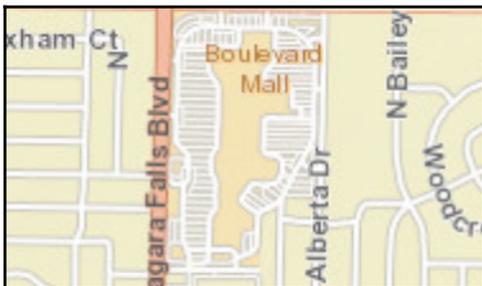
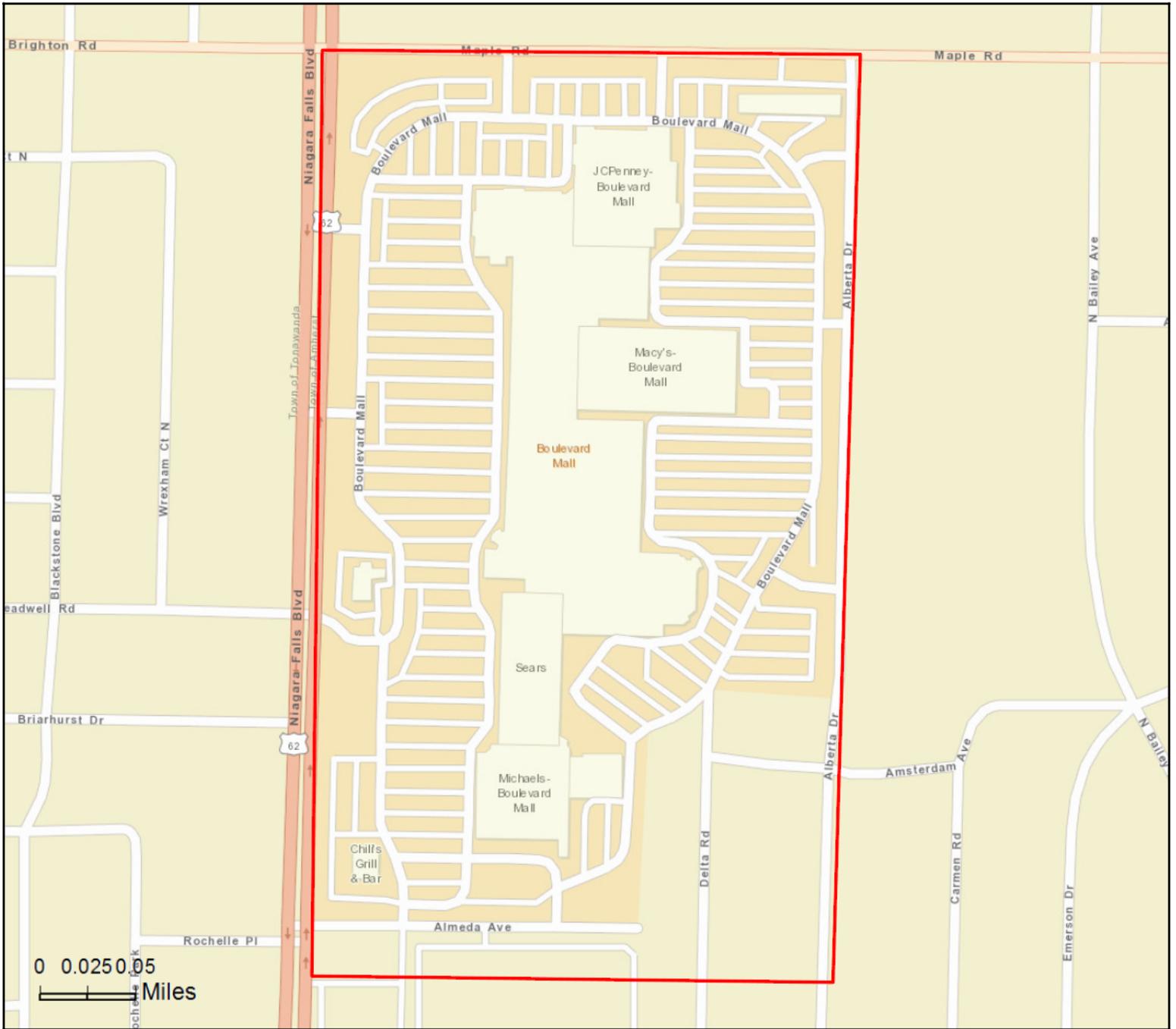
Applications from interested communities must be submitted electronically to the relevant Regional Economic Development Council at the email address in the table below. Proposals for areas within New York City must be sent to the relevant Office of the Borough President, which will select two applications for submission to the NYC Regional Economic Development Council.

- Capital Region NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington
- Central New York NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
- Finger Lakes NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
- Long Island LIREDC@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Nassau, Suffolk
- Mid-Hudson NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
- Mohawk Valley NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie

- North Country NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
- Southern Tier NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
- Western New York NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov
Counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara
- New York City - Submit to the appropriate office below.
 - Bronx: James Rausse at JRausse@bronxbp.nyc.gov
 - Brooklyn: Josh Levin at JoshuaLevin@brooklynbp.nyc.gov
 - Manhattan: Elka Morety at EMorety@manhattanbp.nyc.gov
 - Queens: Shurn Anderson at SAnderson@queensbp.org
 - Staten Island: Lashay S. Young at LYoung@statenilandusa.com

Polygon
Area: 0.13 square miles

Prepared by Esri



“The”
Town of Amherst

Brian J. Kulpa, Supervisor
2019

125,659

Population

188,076

Daytime Population

POPULATION CHANGES (WESTERN NEW YORK)

Amherst (town)

April 2010 population: 122,375

July 2018 population: 125,659

Rate of change: Gaining 33.17 persons
per month

County: Erie County

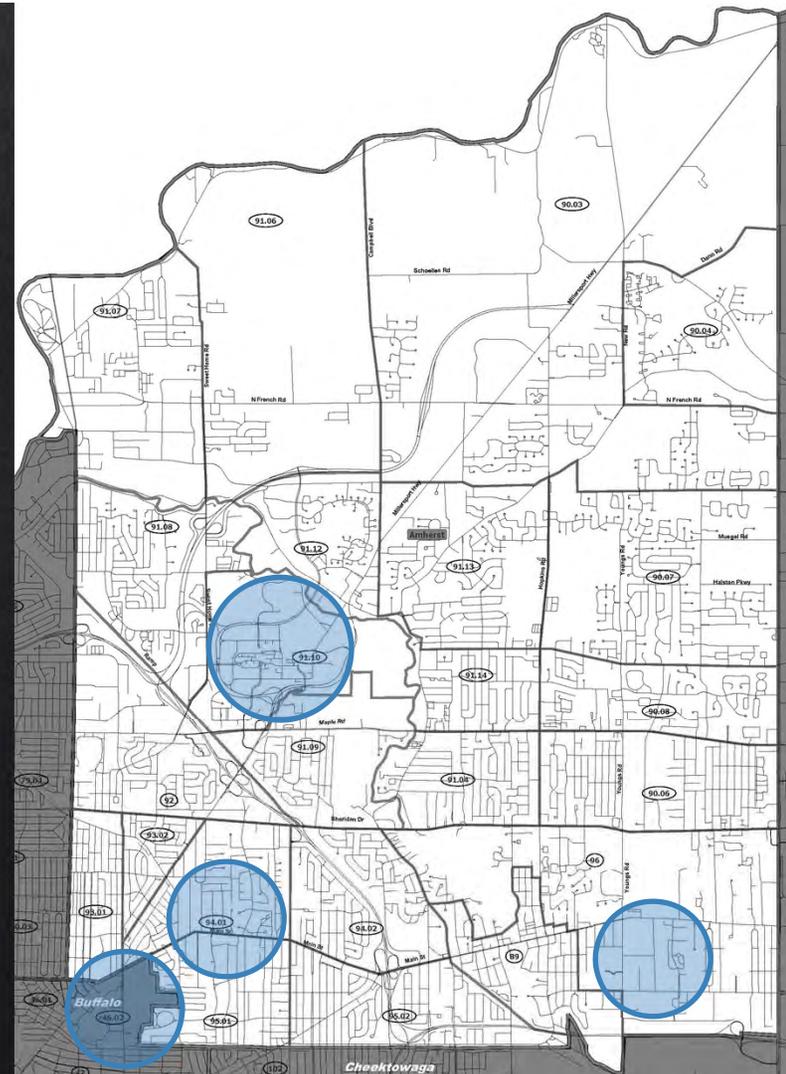


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Our Story

Higher Education

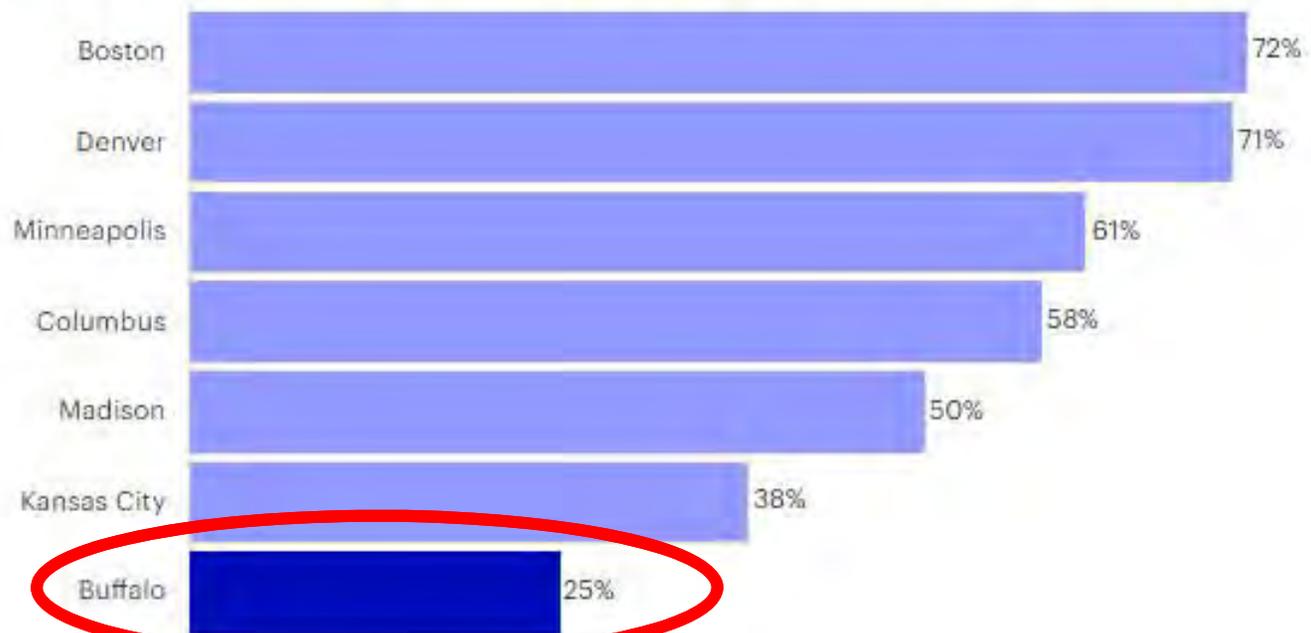
- (4) Major Higher Education Campuses
1. UB South Campus
 2. UB North Campus
 3. Daemen College
 4. SUNY Erie North



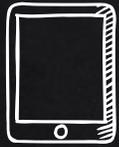


-  **Information Based Economy**
-  **Research Based Landuse Plan**
-  **Creating a Creative Class**

FOREIGN STUDENTS WHO STAYED IN AREA (2004-2016)



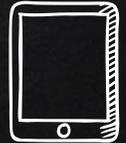
SOURCE: Pew Research Center



Generation Z

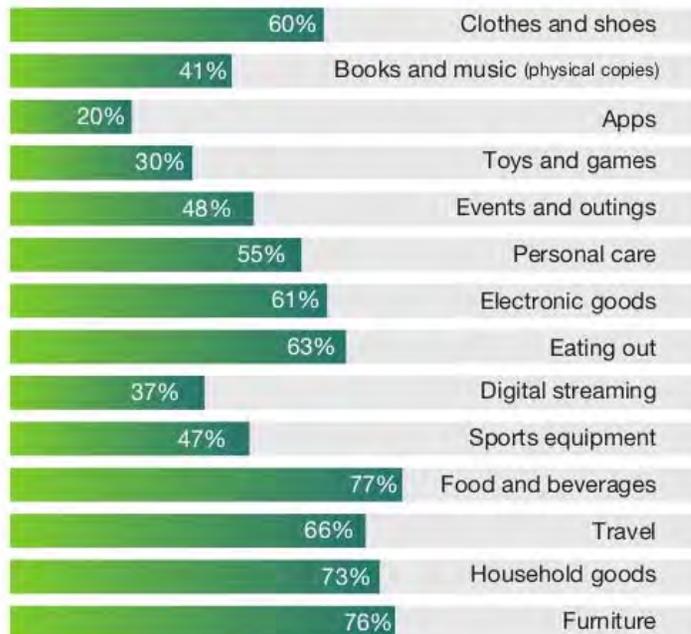
“their valuable characteristics are their ***acceptance of new ideas and a different conception of freedom*** from the previous generations. Despite the technological proficiency they possess, members of Generation Z ***actually prefer person-to-person contact*** as opposed to online interaction. Another important note to point out is Generation Z ***no longer wants just a job: they seek more than that***. They want a ***feeling of fulfillment and excitement*** in their job that helps move the world forward. Generation Z is eager to be ***involved in their community and their futures.***”

Generation Z



GEN Z'S INFLUENCE ON HOUSEHOLD SPENDING

Gen Zers have significant influence on family spending.

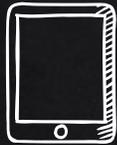


In the U.S. alone, consumer spending on Gen Zers totaled a whopping **USD \$829.6 billion** in 2015.*



77% of Gen Zers say they influence their families' food and beverage purchases.

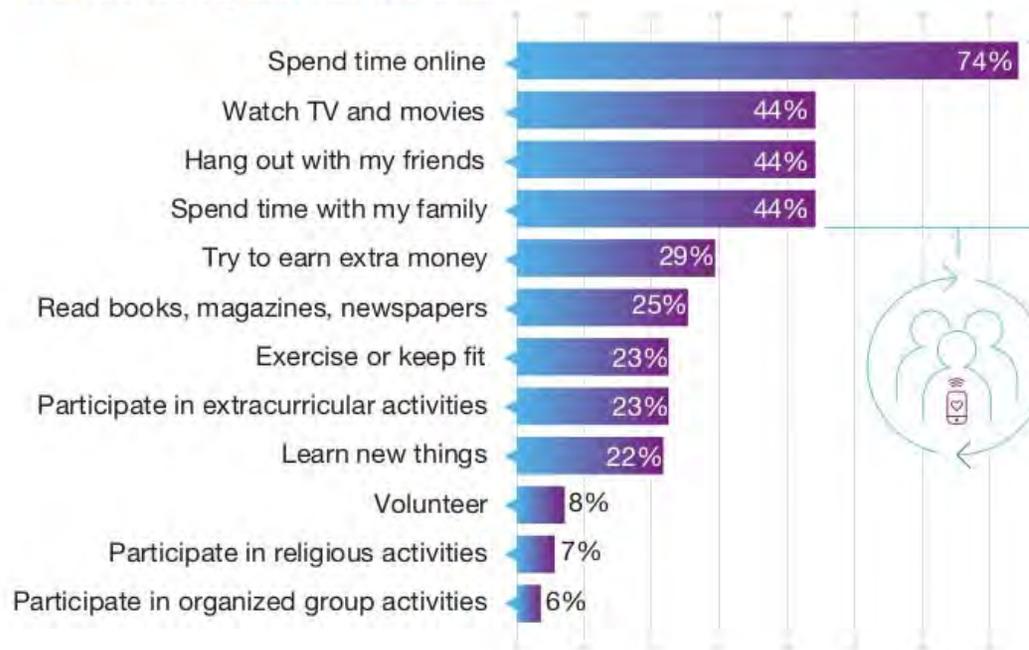
* *Gen Z: Get Ready for the Most Self-Conscious, Demanding Consumer Segment.*
Fung Global Retail & Technology, August 29, 2016.
<https://fungglobalretailtech.com/research/gen-z/>



Generation Z

TECHNOLOGY IS SECOND NATURE TO GEN Z

How Gen Zers spend their free time.



As the **first true digital natives**, Gen Zers have never known a world without the Internet and mobile devices.

Gen Zers expect to move seamlessly between physical and digital worlds, and are less tolerant of technical glitches than Millennials.



Generation Z

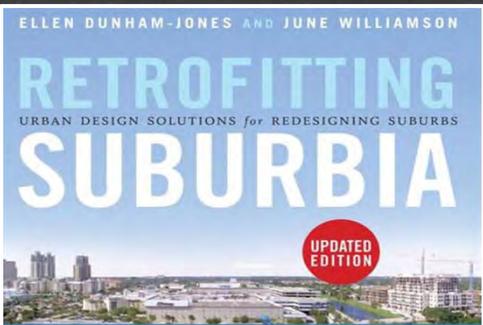


Retrofitting & Redevelopment



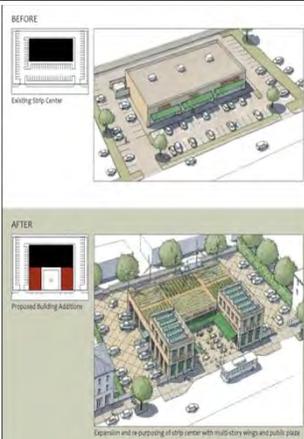
A Future to Avoid

Like a dystopian vision of the future, big-box retail and food typically has a location-less lack of charm and character that needs to be avoided.



Retrofitting Suburbia

Ellen Dunham Jones is a go to resource and her book envisions infill and redefinition of Village values.



Sprawl Repair Manual

Amherst's Westside

Amherst West Side

- **9** Low-Mod Income Census Tracts
- Sweethome Central School District operates at **60%** free & reduced lunch
- **2nd** Highest Density in all of WNY
- **2** environmental justice zones
- **2** Active Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO's)



Opportunity Zone

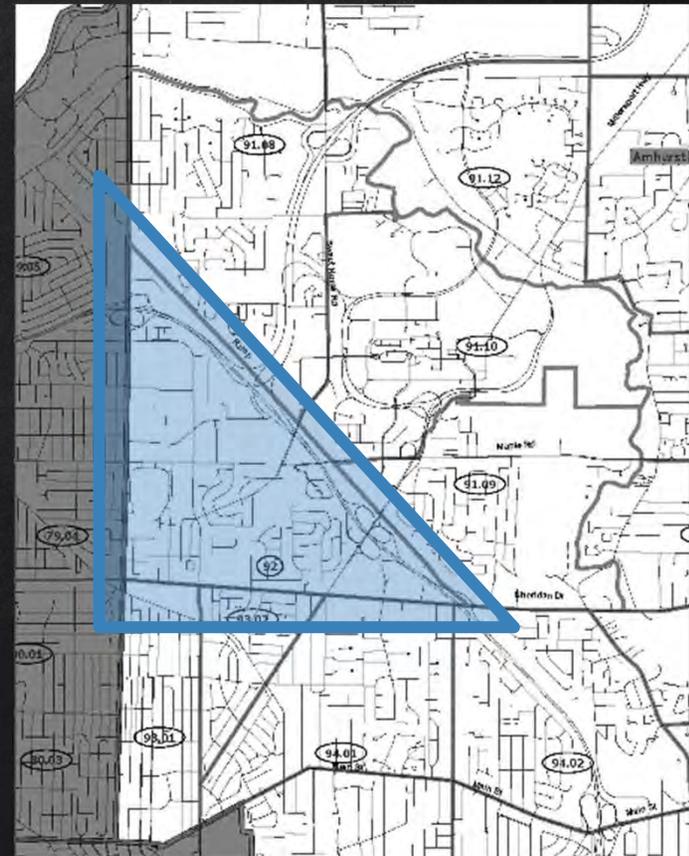
Comprehensive Planning Process

Landuse, Public Capital Investment, Policy, Governance

Opportunity Zone

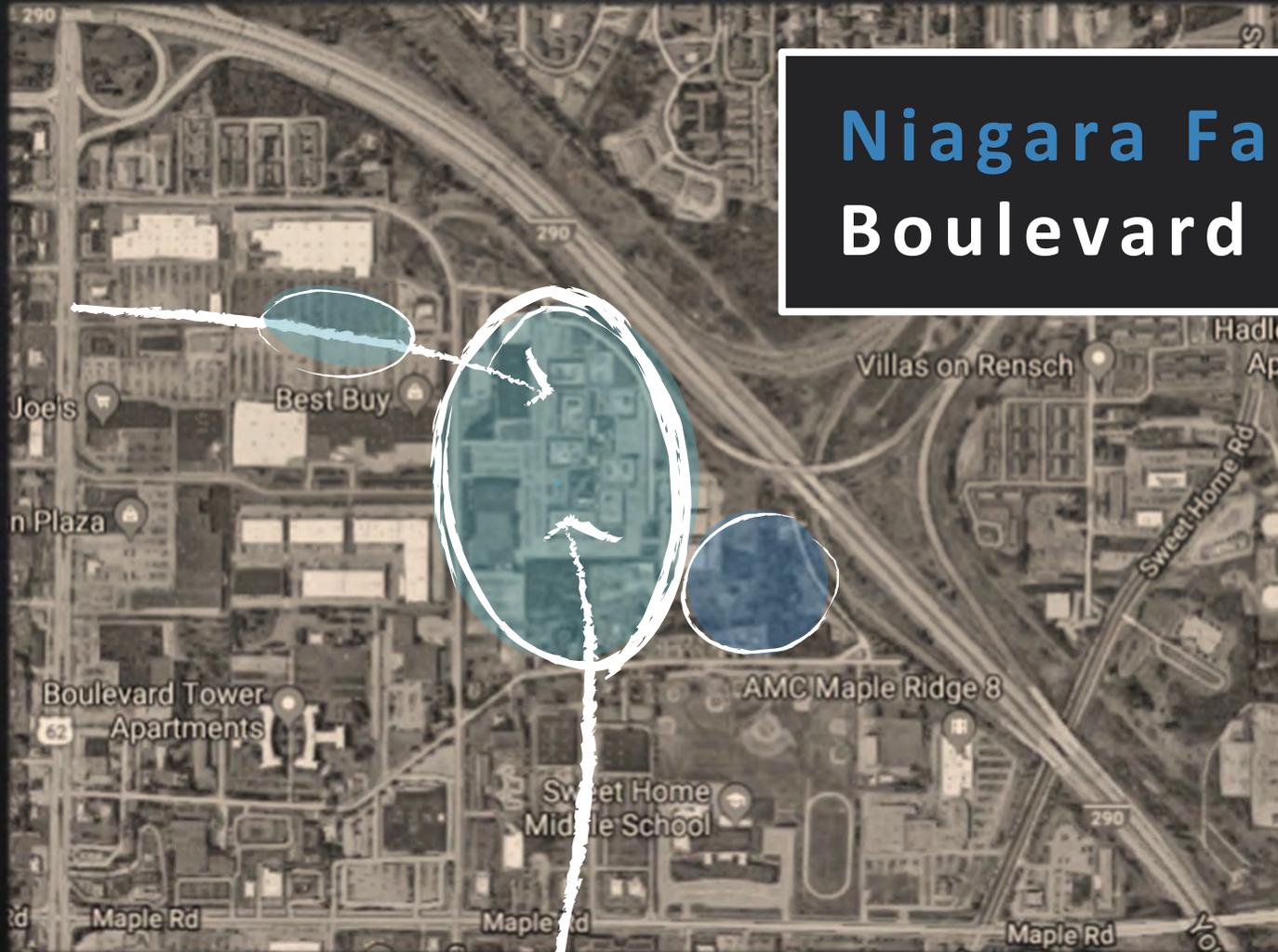
NYS Designated Census Tract
92 along Niagara Falls Blvd.,
including Boulevard Mall

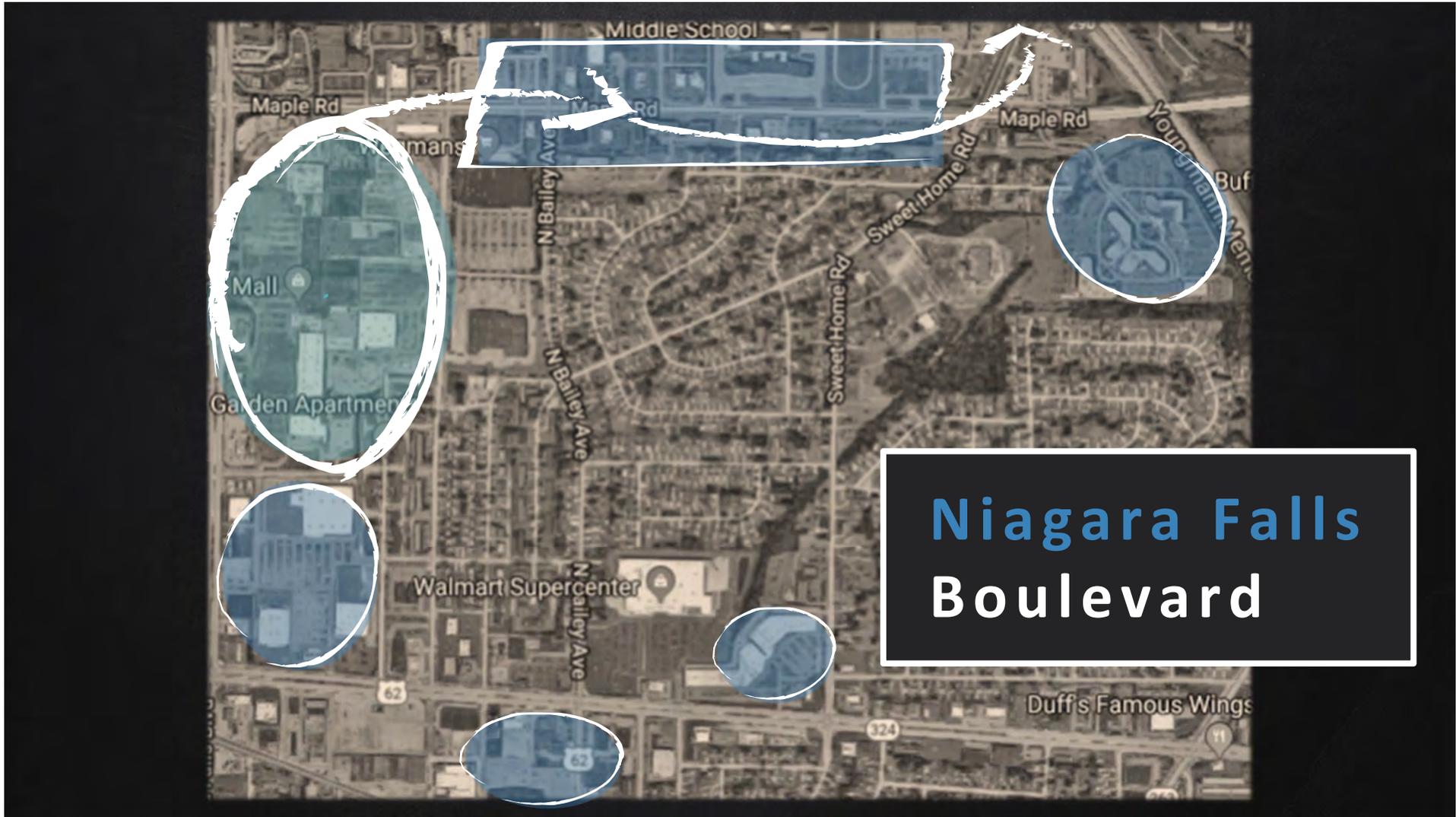
Any entity facing capital gains
tax can avoid paying the tax
by investing in a designated
Opportunity Zone





Niagara Falls Boulevard





**Niagara Falls
Boulevard**



DRI – Create Street Grid & Public Infrastructure



DRI – Create Street Grid & Public Infrastructure

Sec. 2.9.5. **Local Street**



STREETSCAPE

- Ⓐ Clear pedestrian zone See Frontage
- Ⓑ Curb zone See Frontage

STREET

- Ⓒ Gutter pan 12" min
- Ⓓ Curb lane 8" min
- Parking 8" min
- Bike lane 5' min*
- Bike buffer 2' min
- Ⓔ Travel lane 9' min/10' max
- Turn lane 10' min/12' max

*must not include gutter pan

STREET CONFIGURATION

	No Bike Lane			
	Min	Max		
				34' min
				44' min
				48' min
				58' min

Draft

Sec. 2.9.3. **Core Street**



STREETSCAPE

- Ⓐ Clear pedestrian zone See Frontage
- Ⓑ Curb zone See Frontage

STREET

- Ⓒ Bike lane 5' min
- Ⓓ Bike Buffer 2' min
- Ⓔ Gutter pan 12" min
- Ⓕ Curb lane 8" min
- Parking Required
- Bulb outs Required
- Ⓖ Travel lane 9' min/10' max
- Turn lane 10' min/12' max

STREET CONFIGURATION

	No Bike Lane			
	Min	Max		
				34' min
				44' min
				48' min
				58' min

BOULEVARD MALL EXAMPLE

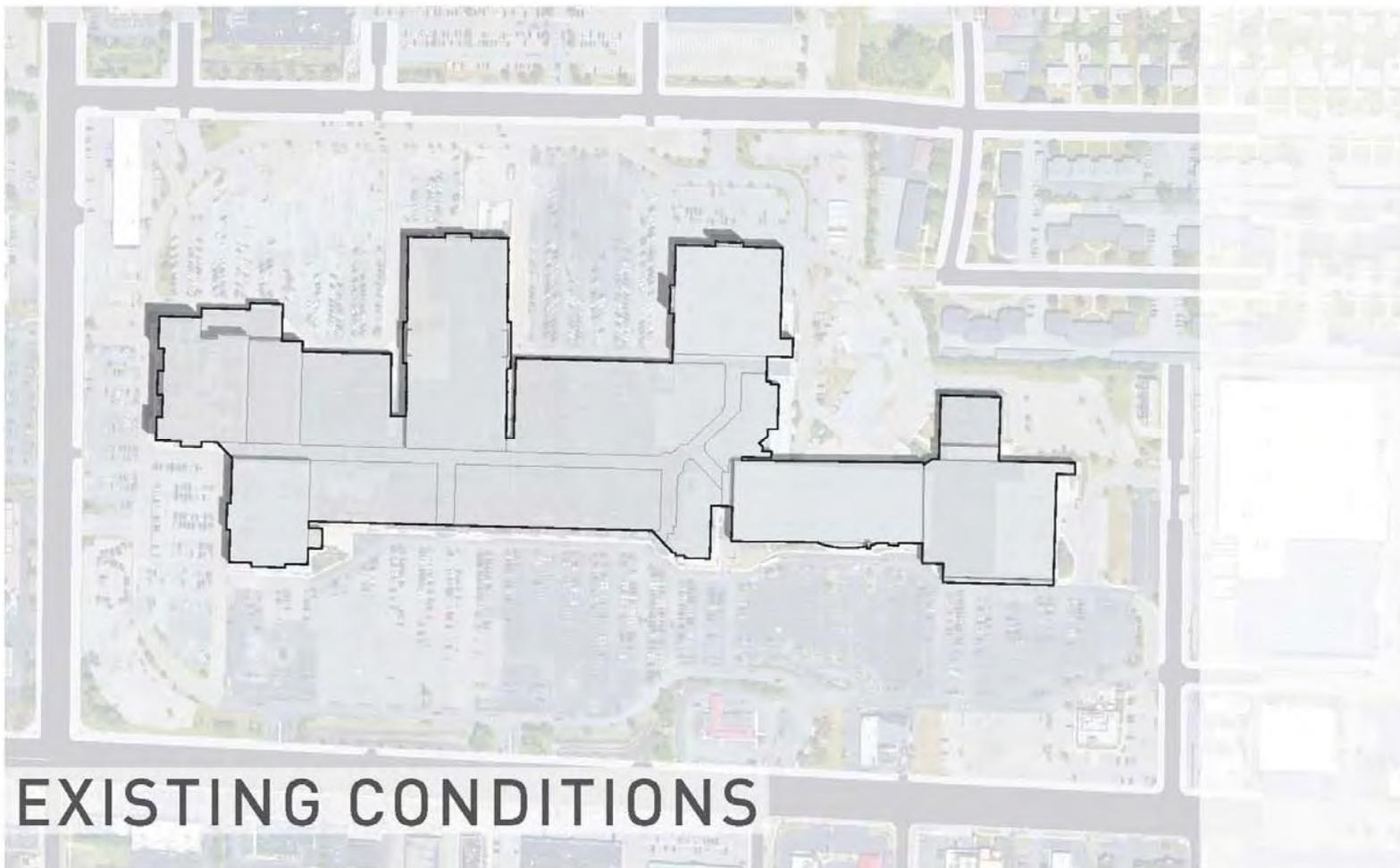
NIAGARA FALLS BLVD & MAPLE RD



April 16, 2019

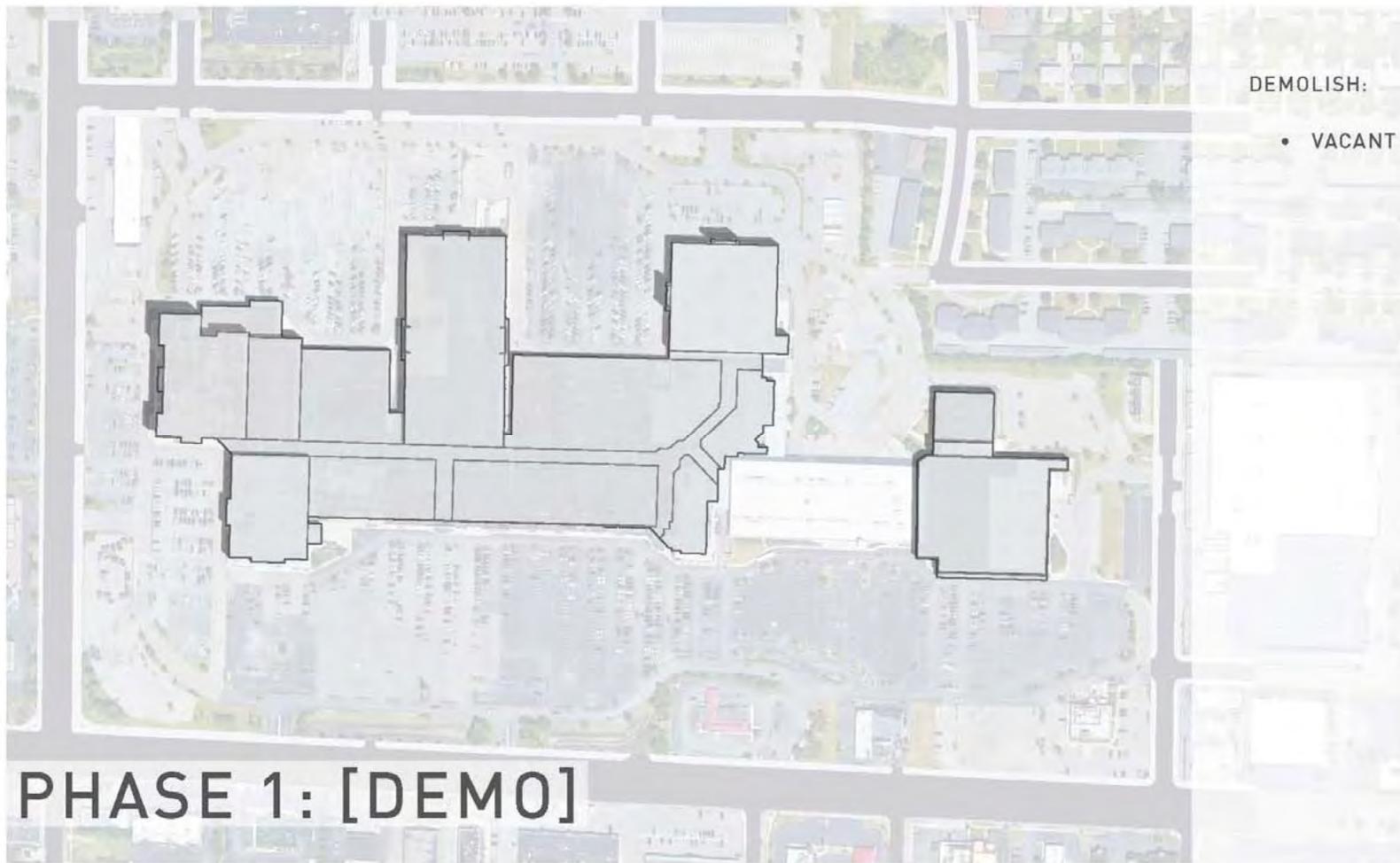
CODE STUDIO

PHASING



EXISTING CONDITIONS

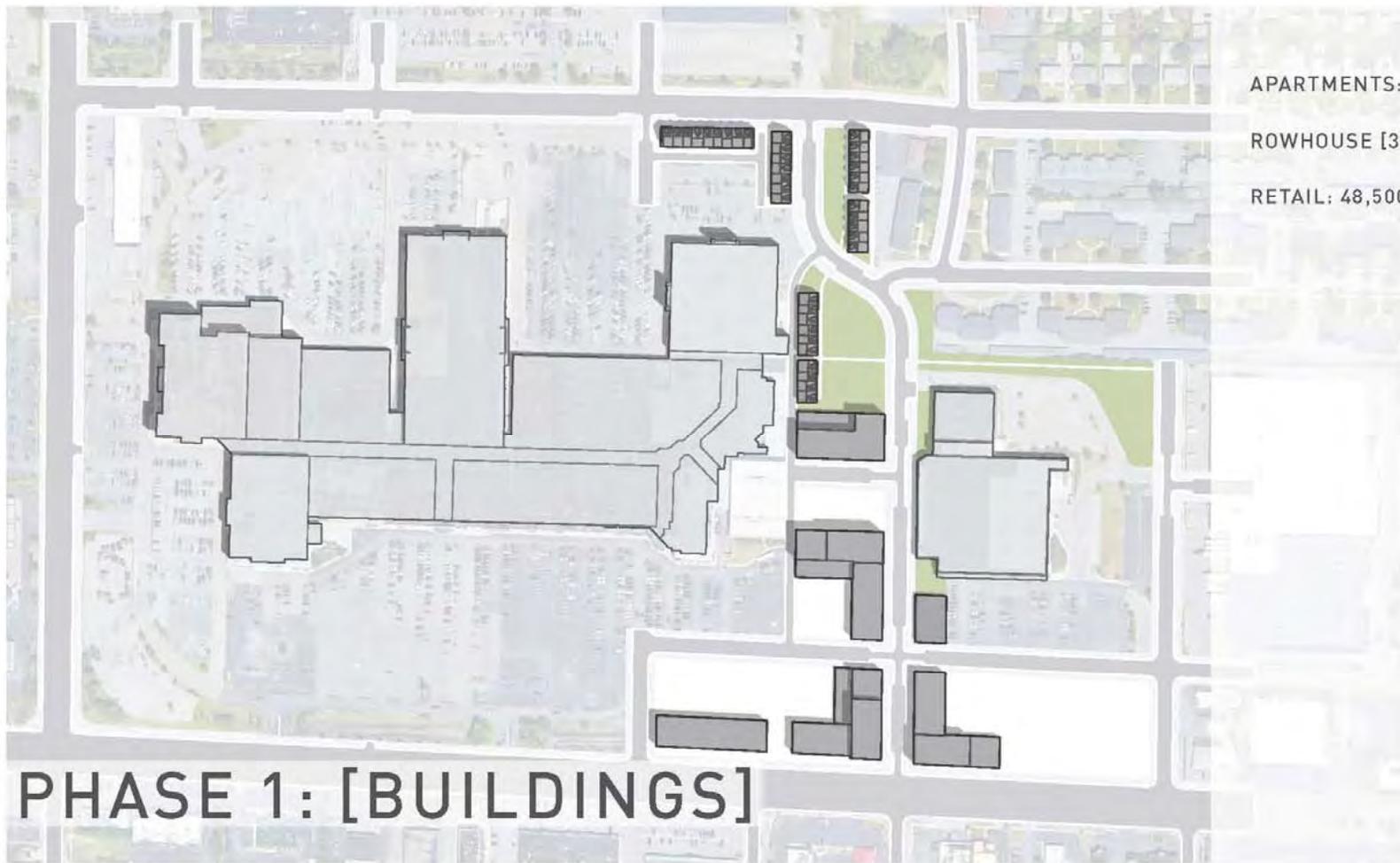
April 25, 2019



DEMOLISH:

- VACANT SEARS

PHASE 1: [DEMO]

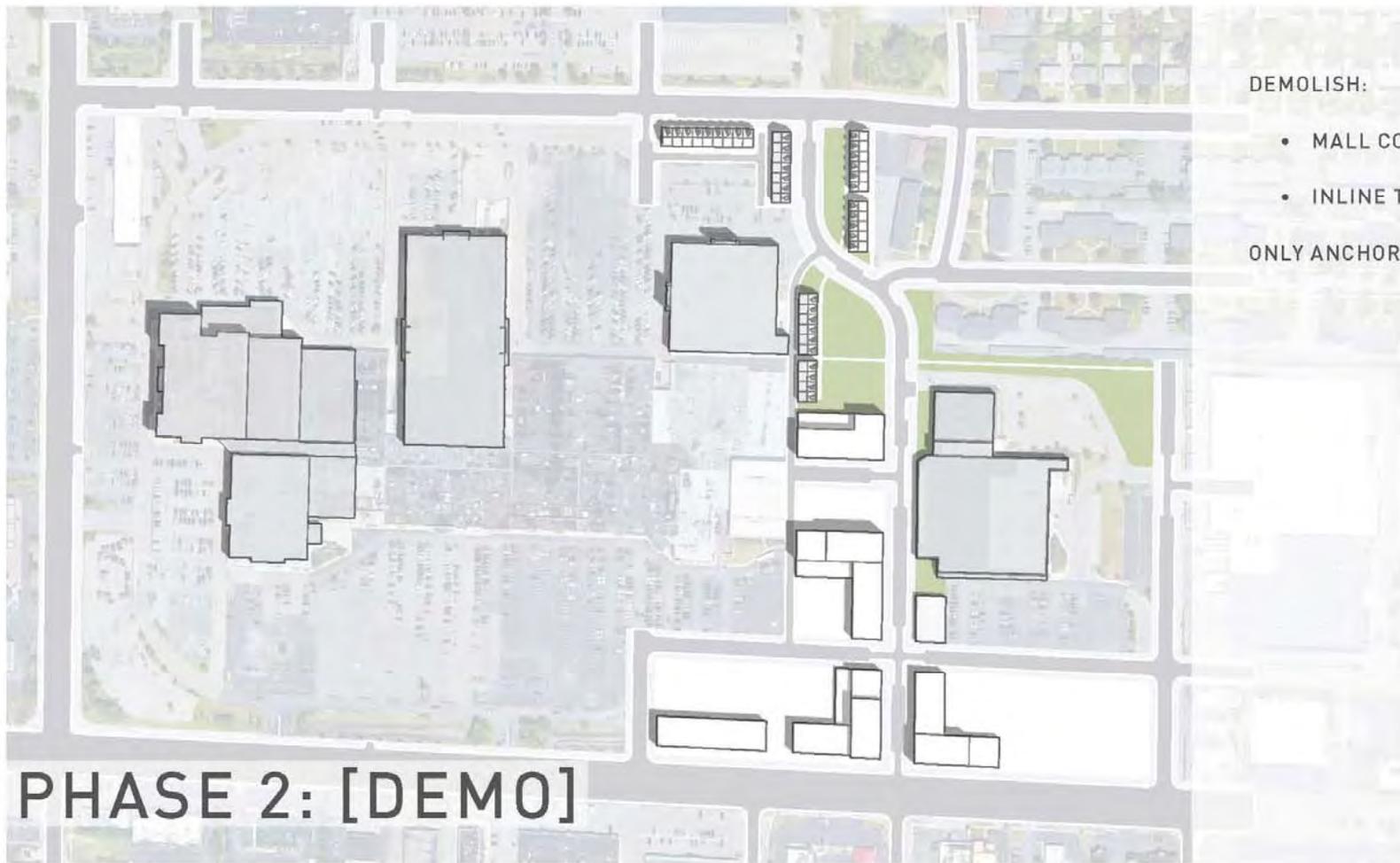


APARTMENTS: 255,532 SF

ROWHOUSE [37] - 1800 SF EA.

RETAIL: 48,500 SF

PHASE 1: [BUILDINGS]



DEMOLISH:

- MALL CORRIDOR
- INLINE TENANTS

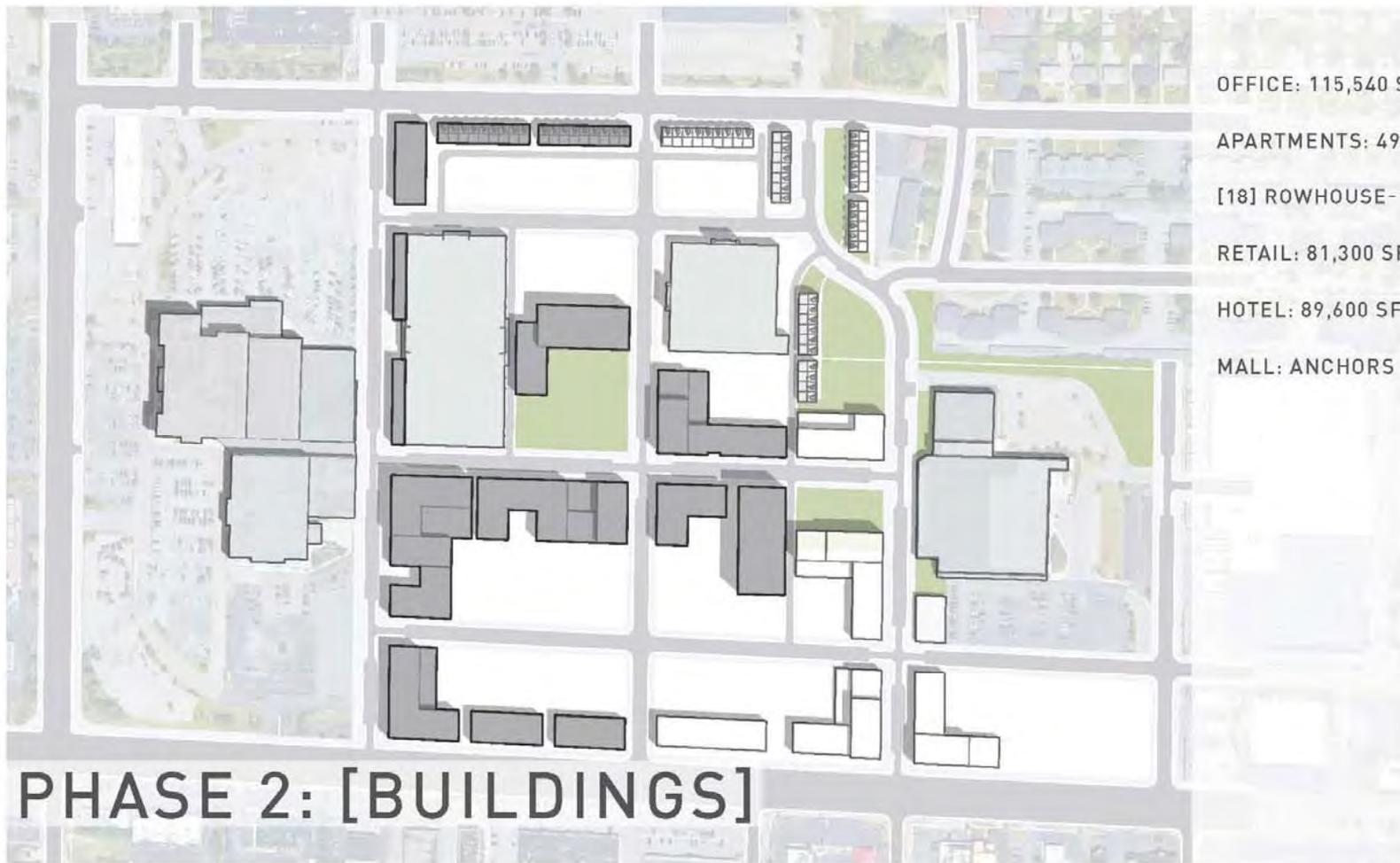
ONLY ANCHOR BOXES REMAIN

PHASE 2: [DEMO]



CORE ST: 915 LF
CORE 1/2 ST: 1460 LF
LOCAL ST: 2790 LF
ALLEY: 530 LF

PHASE 2: [STREETS]



OFFICE: 115,540 SF

APARTMENTS: 492,000 SF

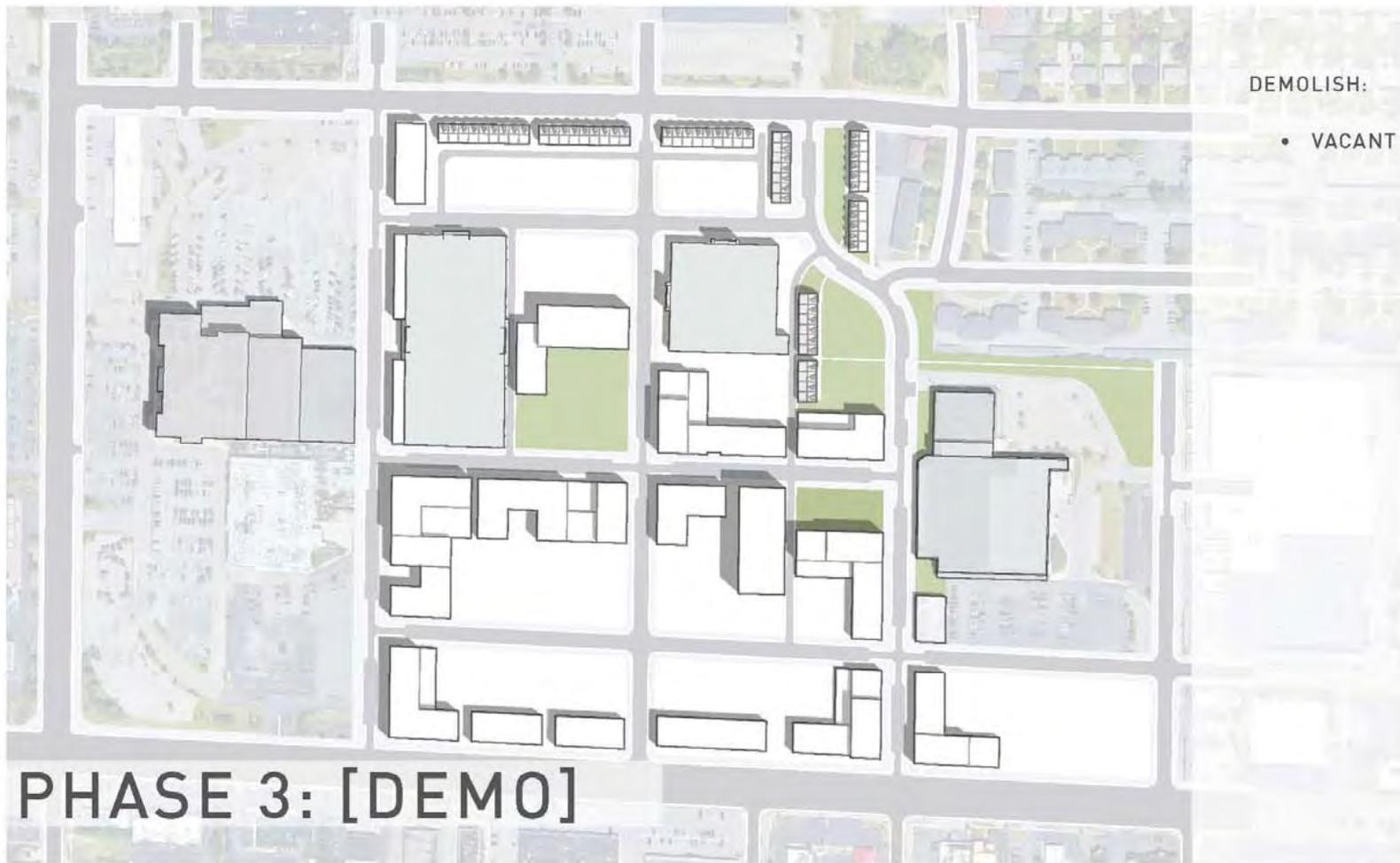
[18] ROWHOUSE- 1800 SF EA.

RETAIL: 81,300 SF

HOTEL: 89,600 SF

MALL: ANCHORS REMAIN

PHASE 2: [BUILDINGS]



DEMOLISH:

- VACANT MACY'S

PHASE 3: [DEMO]



CORE ST: 686 LF
CORE 1/2 ST: 1463 LF
LOCAL ST: 1634 LF
ALLEY: 490 LF

PHASE 3: [STREETS]



OFFICE: 550,000 SF
APARTMENTS: 248,750 SF
RETAIL: 42,100 SF
MALL: VACANT MACY'S REMOVED

PHASE 3: [BUILDINGS]



DEMOLISH:

- J.C. PENNY
- DICK SPORTING GOODS
- BUY BUY BABY
- MICHAELS

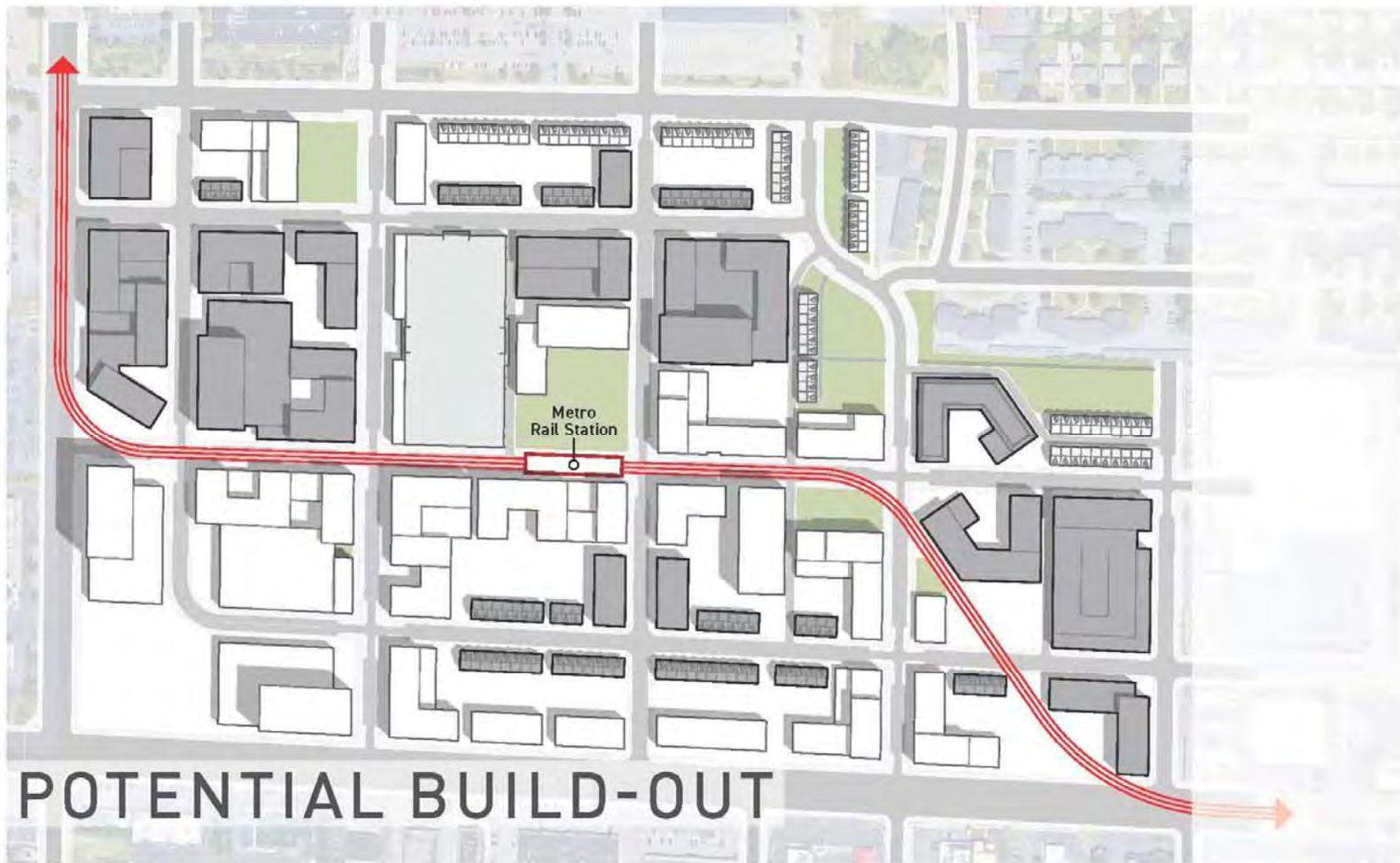
ONLY MACY'S BOX REMAINS

PHASE 4: [DEMO]



PHASE 4: [STREETS]

April 25, 2019



POTENTIAL BUILD-OUT

Niagara Falls Boulevard





Niagara Falls Boulevard



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Higher Education
Libraries and Education Technology
Local Governments
Tourism, Parks, Arts and
Sports Development
Transportation

KAREN MCMAHON
Assemblymember 146th District

5500 Main Street, Suite 216
Williamsville, New York 14221
716-634-1895
FAX: 716-634-1250

May 20, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

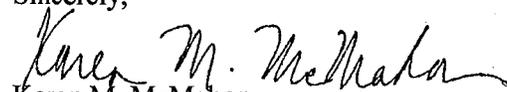
Dear Ms. Mays,

As a member of the New York State Assembly I am writing in support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The Town of Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92, containing over 1,400 parcels. Through Amherst's careful planning, this prime area can be re-invigorated into the premier retail corridor it was historically, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area. Incorporating mixed-use, mixed age and income housing, and a walkable street grid will provide an anchor for Amherst and the University at Buffalo. This investment will serve as a catalyst for future light-rail development, and a smart growth opportunity for the Buffalo-Niagara region. Adding additional housing products in Amherst's Opportunity Zone makes living in Amherst accessible to everyone and gives seniors an opportunity to stay in their communities as they age. Additionally, it will create a vibrant Town Center adjacent to the University at Buffalo's two campuses (North and South), which will help to retain young professional graduating from the University.

The Town of Amherst has been working diligently to rezone this area from suburban big box retail to dense, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land with the focus of making this area an economic development hub. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall is currently under contract after being purchased out of foreclosure at auction. The new owner is embracing the Town of Amherst's vision to redefine the site of adding housing and creating a lifestyle plaza retail experience. The new owner of the Mall is committed to working with the Town of Amherst and plans to invest over \$70 million.

The Town's Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant request is critical to facilitate public benefit within the project including affordable housing, added greenspace, and trade jobs.

Sincerely,


Karen M. McMahon
Member of Assembly



Central Office
1195 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14209
716-884-7791
Fax: 716-884-8026

Niagara County Office
33 Spruce Street
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
716-213-2784
Fax: 716-213-2787



May 24, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

Dear Ms. Mays,

I am writing in support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The Town of Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92, containing over 1,400 parcels. Through Amherst's careful planning, this prime area can be re-invigorated into the premier retail corridor it was historically, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area. Incorporating mixed-use, mixed age and income housing, and a walkable street grid will provide an anchor for Amherst and the University at Buffalo. This investment will serve as a catalyst for future light-rail development, and a smart growth opportunity for the Buffalo-Niagara region. Adding additional housing products in Amherst's Opportunity Zone makes living in Amherst accessible to everyone and gives seniors an opportunity to stay in their communities as they age. Additionally, it will create a vibrant Town Center adjacent to the University at Buffalo's two campuses (North and South), which will help to retain young professional graduating from the University.

The Town of Amherst has been working diligently to rezone this area from suburban big box retail to dense, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land with the focus of making this area an economic development hub. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall is currently under contract after being purchased out of foreclosure at auction. The new owner is embracing the Town of Amherst's vision to redefine the site of adding housing and creating a lifestyle plaza retail experience. The new owner of the Mall is committed to working with the Town of Amherst and plans to invest over \$70 million.

The Town's Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant request is critical to facilitate public benefit within the project including affordable housing, added greenspace, and trade jobs. Please contact my office if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Riegel".

Michael Riegel
President



CHAI

(Council of Heritage and Arts of India, Inc)

113 Bramble Rd, Williamsville, NY 14221

May 31, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203
RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

Dear Ms. Mays,

I am writing in support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The Town of Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92, containing over 1,400 parcels. Through Amherst's careful planning, this prime area can be re-invigorated into the premier retail corridor it was historically, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area. Incorporating mixed-use, mixed age and income housing, and a walkable street grid will provide an anchor for Amherst and the University at Buffalo. This investment will serve as a catalyst for future light-rail development, and a smart growth opportunity for the Buffalo-Niagara region. Adding additional housing products in Amherst's Opportunity Zone makes living in Amherst accessible to everyone and gives seniors an opportunity to stay in their communities as they age. Additionally, it will create a vibrant Town Center adjacent to the University at Buffalo's two campuses (North and South), which will help to retain young professional graduating from the University.

The Town of Amherst has been working diligently to rezone this area from suburban big box retail to dense, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land with the focus of making this area an economic development hub. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall is currently under contract after being purchased out of foreclosure at auction. The new owner is embracing the Town of Amherst's vision to redefine the site of adding housing and creating a lifestyle plaza retail experience. The new owner of the Mall is committed to working with the Town of Amherst and plans to invest over \$70 million.

The Town's Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant request is critical to facilitate public benefit within the project including affordable housing, added greenspace, and trade jobs.

Respectfully,

Sibu Nair - Executive Director

CHAI is a 'Not for Profit' Organization

Federal Tax ID: 82-5158322

www.wnychai.org



May 20, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

Dear Ms. Mays,

On behalf of the Amherst Chamber of Commerce, I am writing in support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. As an organization that serves as a steward to the business community, we see a great need for an infusion of funding if this area is to thrive economically into the 21st century.

After tremendous growth in the 80's and 90's, the Town of Amherst is now left with an outdated infrastructure: empty big box real estate, vacant plazas and an expansive mall with dwindling customers.

The good news is that Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone that is attractive to developers and businesses. With backing from this generous Initiative and careful planning by our stellar leaders, we can re-invigorate the town into the premier retail corridor it was historically, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area.

The plan is to incorporate mixed-use, mixed age and income housing, and a walkable street grid. This will spur even more growth with the extension of the light rail connecting University at Buffalo's two campuses (North and South), which is critical to helping retain young graduates.

We see great benefits from this well-thought-out plan, including a robust ripple effect for the entire region and a proud investment for the state.

Respectfully,

A.J. Baynes
President/CEO

BRIAN HIGGINS
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
VICE RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

CO-CHAIR, CANCER CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR, NORTHERN BORDER CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR, REVITALIZING OLDER CITIES
TASK FORCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3226

2459 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3306
(202) 226-0347 (FAX)

726 EXCHANGE STREET
SUITE 601
BUFFALO, NY 14210
(716) 852-3501
(716) 852-3929 (FAX)

800 MAIN STREET
SUITE 3C
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14301
(716) 282-1274
(716) 282-2479 (FAX)

higgins.house.gov

May 30, 2019

Amanda Mays, Regional Director
Western New York Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

Dear Ms. Mays,

I write in strong support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) that will serve as a catalyst for transformative development and a viable smart growth opportunity for the Buffalo-Niagara region.

As selected by Empire State Development Corporation for inclusion in the state-wide designated federal Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92 represents a 900-acre site containing more than 1,400 parcels. The Town of Amherst has been working diligently to rezone this area from suburban big box retail to dense, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land with the focus of making this area an economic development hub. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall is currently under contract after being purchased out of foreclosure at auction. This new owner brings a private sector investment plan of \$70 million and is committed to working with the Town of Amherst to realize its shared concept.

This prime area is envisioned as a re-invigorated premier retail corridor, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area. Incorporating mixed-use development for live, work and play space that maximizes intergenerational inclusion and a walkable street grid, this initiative will provide an anchor for Amherst and the University at Buffalo (UB). Additional housing products in this targeted area will encourage seniors to age in place in their community. It is also noteworthy that a vibrant Town Center adjacent to the University's North and South campuses will boost the retention of young professionals graduating from UB, the largest campus in the State University of New York system.

The Town of Amherst's leadership is to be commended for its collaborative outreach, inclusive planning process and ability to engage the public and private sectors to better leverage all applicable resources and support. Thank you for your careful consideration and review of this worthy application as it captures the intent of Governor Cuomo's DRI program to "implement key catalytic projects the advance the community's vision for revitalization."

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress



May 29, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

Dear Ms. Mays,

I am writing in support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The Town of Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92, containing over 1,400 parcels. Through Amherst's careful planning, this prime area can be re-invigorated into the premier retail corridor it was historically, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area. Incorporating mixed-use, mixed age and income housing, and a walkable street grid will provide an anchor for Amherst and the University at Buffalo. This investment will serve as a catalyst for future light-rail development, and a smart growth opportunity for the Buffalo-Niagara region. Adding additional housing products in Amherst's Opportunity Zone makes living in Amherst accessible to everyone and gives seniors an opportunity to stay in their communities as they age. Additionally, it will create a vibrant Town Center adjacent to the University at Buffalo's two campuses (North and South), which will help to retain young professionals graduating from the University. Our market studies clearly indicate the need for additional housing opportunities and we believe this Town center will assist in just that.

The Town of Amherst has been working diligently to rezone this area from suburban big box retail to dense, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land with the focus of making this area an economic development hub. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall is currently under contract after being purchased out of foreclosure at auction. The new owner is embracing the Town of Amherst's vision to redefine the site of adding housing and creating a lifestyle plaza retail experience. The new owner of the Mall is committed to working with the Town of Amherst and plans to invest over \$70 million.

The Town's Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant request is critical to facilitate public benefit within the project including affordable housing, added greenspace, and trade jobs.

Respectfully,

Rhonda Frederick
President & CEO



MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER
SENATOR, 61ST DISTRICT

CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON CORPORATIONS,
AUTHORITIES AND COMMISSIONS
DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER
FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

1203 MAIN STREET
SUITE 4
WILLIAMSVILLE, NEW YORK 14221
(716) 631-8695
(585) 454-0322
(716) 634-4321 FAX
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 609
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
(518) 455-3161
(518) 426-6963 FAX
778 GENESEE STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611
E-MAIL: RANZ@NYSENATE.GOV

May 28, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

Dear Ms. Mays,

It is my understanding that the Town of Amherst is applying for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. I strongly support this application.

The Town of Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92, containing over 1,400 parcels. Amherst is proposing, through careful planning, to reinvigorate this prime area into the premier retail corridor it was historically, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area. Their proposal to incorporate mixed-use, mixed age and income housing, and a walkable street grid will provide an anchor for Amherst and the University at Buffalo, as well as the neighboring Town of Tonawanda. This investment will serve as a catalyst for future smart growth opportunities for the Buffalo-Niagara region. Adding additional housing products in Amherst's Opportunity Zone makes living in Amherst accessible to everyone and gives seniors an opportunity to stay in their communities as they age. Additionally, it will create a vibrant Town Center adjacent to the University at Buffalo's two campuses (North and South), which will help to retain young professionals graduating from the University.

The Town of Amherst has been working diligently to rezone this area from suburban big box retail to pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land with the focus of making this area an economic development hub. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall is currently under contract after being purchased out of foreclosure at auction. The new owner is embracing the vision of the Town of Amherst to redefine the site by adding housing and creating a lifestyle plaza retail experience

and plans to invest over \$70 million. The Town's Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant request is critical to facilitate public benefit within the project including affordable housing, added greenspace, and trade jobs.

As the Senator representing the Town of Amherst, I strongly support this project. If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER
State Senator

MHR/mrh

W.N.Y.

TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL NO. 46

AFFILIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

**2175 William Street
Buffalo, New York 14206**

(716) 874-2200 Fax: (716) 874-8322

May 29, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

Dear Ms. Mays,

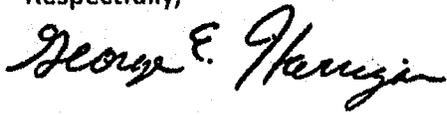
As President of Teamsters Joint Council No 46, representing over 12,000 working men and woman in WNY, I am writing in support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

The Town of Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92, containing over 1,400 parcels. Through Amherst's careful planning, this prime area can be re-invigorated into the premier retail corridor it was historically, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area. Incorporating mixed-use, mixed age and income housing, and a walkable street grid will provide an anchor for Amherst and the University at Buffalo. This investment will serve as a catalyst for future light-rail development, and a smart growth opportunity for the Buffalo-Niagara region. Adding additional housing products in Amherst's Opportunity Zone makes living in Amherst accessible to everyone and gives seniors an opportunity to stay in their communities as they age. Additionally, it will create a vibrant Town Center adjacent to the University at Buffalo's two campuses (North and South), which will help to retain young professional graduating from the University.

The Town of Amherst has been working diligently to rezone this area from suburban big box retail to dense, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land with the focus of making this area an economic development hub. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall is currently under contract after being purchased out of foreclosure at auction. The new owner is embracing the Town of Amherst's vision to redefine the site of adding housing and creating a lifestyle plaza retail experience. The new owner of the Mall is committed to working with the Town of Amherst and plans to invest over \$70 million.

The Town's Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant request is critical to facilitate public benefit within the project including affordable housing, added greenspace, and trade jobs.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George E. Harrigan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G".

George E. Harrigan
President
Joint Council No. 46

May 24, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

Dear Amanda,

I am writing in support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The Town of Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92, containing over 1,400 parcels. Through Amherst's careful planning, this prime area can be re-invigorated into a premier mixed use corridor. Incorporating mixed-use, mixed age and income housing, and a walkable street grid will provide an anchor for Amherst and the University at Buffalo. This investment will serve as a catalyst for future light-rail development, and a smart growth opportunity for the Buffalo-Niagara region. Adding additional housing products in Amherst's Opportunity Zone makes living in Amherst accessible to everyone and gives seniors an opportunity to stay in their communities as they age. Additionally, it will create a vibrant Town Center adjacent to the University at Buffalo's two campuses (North and South), which will help to retain young professionals graduating from the University.

The area can encourage recent graduates and young professionals to stay in Buffalo by appealing to their current needs: career advancement, affordable living, entertainment, and an active, diverse community. The development is an addition to our thriving start-up scene and entertainment industry, which can assure a work-play balance the next generation of workforce craves. A pedestrian-friendly focus makes it easier to roam the area; allowing more time to be spent shopping, eating, socializing, and otherwise enjoying what the neighborhood has to offer. Building a welcoming, accessible, and a sustainable urban environment fosters community and networking between new and old residents, strengthening their sentimental and professional ties to Buffalo. The creation of job opportunities, the promise of career progression with long term success, and the development and preservation of this service sector will attract and retain young professionals.

The Town of Amherst has been working diligently to rezone this area from suburban big box retail to dense, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land with the focus of making this area an economic development hub. Additionally, the Boulevard Mall is currently under contract after being purchased out of foreclosure at auction. The new owner is embracing the Town of Amherst's vision to redefine the site of adding housing and creating a lifestyle plaza retail experience. The new owner of the Mall is committed to working with the Town of Amherst and plans to invest over \$70 million.

The Town's Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant request is critical to facilitate public benefit within the project including affordable housing, added greenspace, and trade jobs.

Respectfully,



Christina P. Orsi

Business and Entrepreneur Partnerships

701 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY 14203-1101
716.881.8900

buffalo.edu/partnerships



DOUGLAS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

May 24, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

Dear Ms. Mays,

I am writing in support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and to express our intent to work with the Town of Amherst in the implementation of this project.

The Town of Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92, containing over 1,400 parcels. Through Amherst's careful planning, this prime area can be re-invigorated into the premier retail corridor it was historically, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area. Incorporating mixed-use, mixed age and income housing, and a walkable street grid will provide an anchor for Amherst and the University at Buffalo.

Currently, our investment team has the Boulevard Mall under contract. In the next two years, we plan to invest \$75 Million dollars into redevelopment at the Mall. The next five years will see \$250 Million dollars of investment. We plan to begin construction on this project in 2020, in order to best utilize our Opportunity Fund.

This letter represents our intention to work with the Town in planning new public infrastructure on site. This includes sidewalks, streets, roadways, lighting, and utilities. We intend to coordinate with the Town, under their new Suburban Retrofit zoning code, where on the site this infrastructure will be, and how it will be phased.

Receiving this funding from New York State will be critical to facilitate these first, transformative phases of the project.

Respectfully,

702 H STREET, NW, SUITE 400
WASHINGTON, DC 20001 • (202) 638-6300 • FAX (202) 638-0303
www.douglasdevelopment.com



May 30, 2019

Amanda Mays
Regional Director, Western New York
Empire State Development
95 Perry Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

RE: Town of Amherst DRI Application Projects

Dear Ms. Mays,

I am writing in support of the Town of Amherst's application for funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and to express our intent to work with the Town of Amherst in the implementation of this project.

The Town of Amherst has a 900-acre Opportunity Zone, Erie County Census Tract 92, containing over 1,400 parcels. Through Amherst's careful planning, this prime area can be re-invigorated into the premier retail corridor it was historically, preserving about 12,000 service sector jobs in the area. Incorporating a mix of uses, including retail, office, residential, hospitality, entertainment and public gathering spaces to help create new and unique amenities for the Town, the nearby University at Buffalo, and the greater community.

Currently, our company has over 1.65 million square feet of commercial property under our ownership or control in this Opportunity Zone corridor in Amherst. Our holdings in this area include 19 properties currently housing more than 150 tenants and employing over 1000 workers. It is our intention to privately invest in excess of \$100 million in the area as we develop, redevelop and refresh properties in the Opportunity Zone. We are currently working with our counsel, architects, engineers, and the Town to facilitate entitlements which would allow us to commence construction next year.



BENDERSON
DEVELOPMENT

570 DELAWARE AVENUE
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202
716.886.1100.P 716.886.2269.F

This letter represents our intention to work with the Town in planning new public infrastructure on our sites, as appropriate. This includes sidewalks, streets, roadways, lighting, and utilities. We intend to coordinate with the Town, under their new Suburban Retrofit zoning code, where on any sites this infrastructure will be located, and how it will be phased.

Receiving this funding from New York State will be critical to facilitate these first, transformative phases of the future projects.

Respectfully,
BENDERSON DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, LLC.

Eric L. Retoon

Vice President – Development & Leasing