



SESSION ONE

Innovative Tools & Approaches to Transportation Investment Prioritization—Looking Through the Non-mobility Lens—the Scajaquada Expressway

PRESENTERS

Hal Morse (GBNRTC)

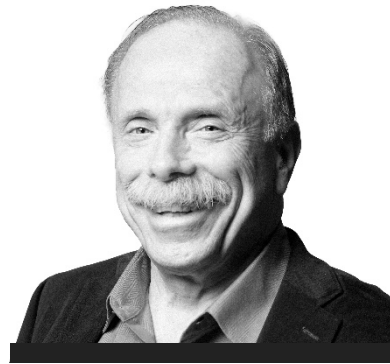
David Dixon, FAIA (Stantec)

Ralph DeNisco (Stantec)

Presenting



Hal Morse
Project Director
(GBNRTC)



David Dixon, FAIA
Urban Places Fellow
(Stantec)

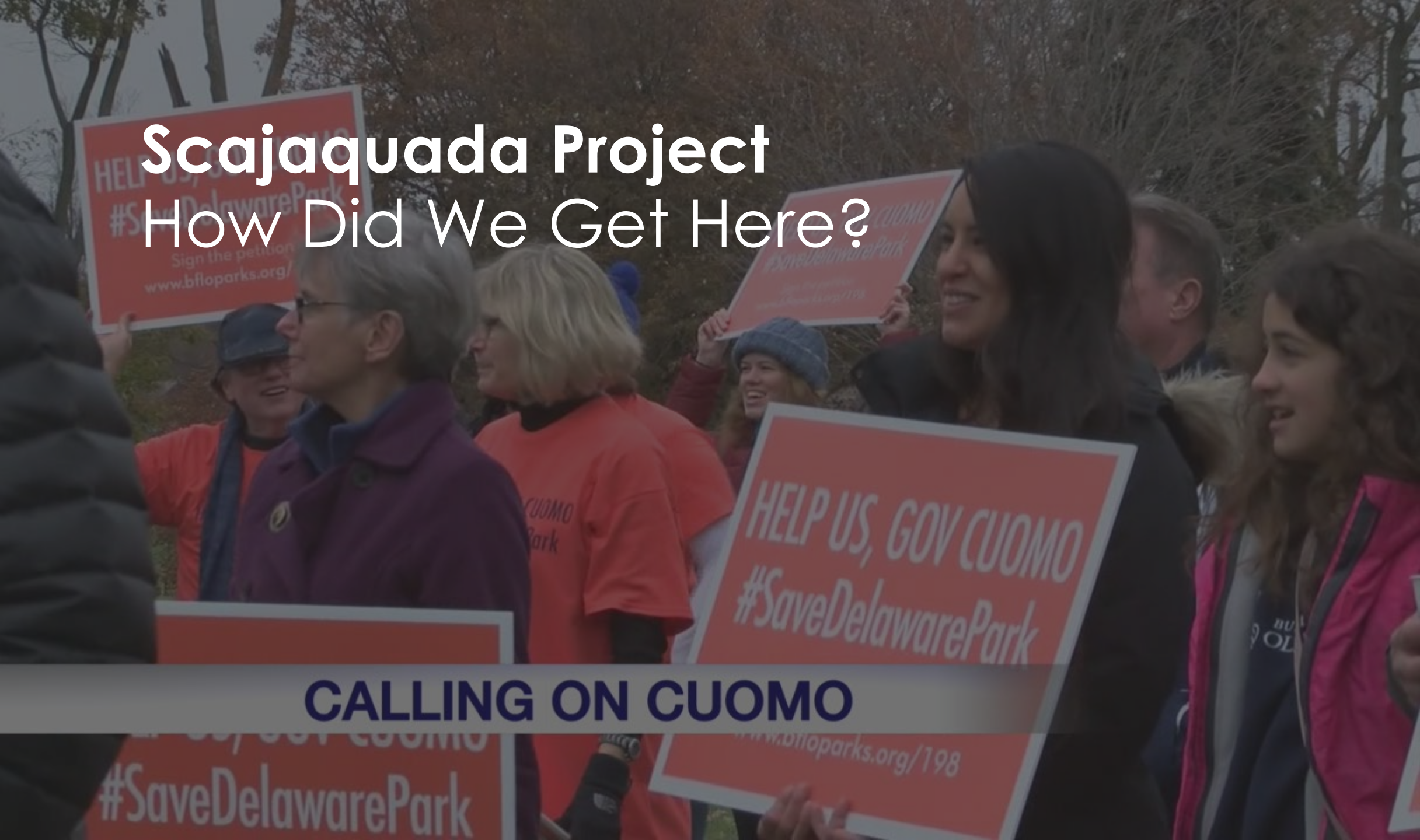


Ralph DeNisco
Urban Mobility Senior
Principal (Stantec)



Scajaquada Project How Did We Get Here?

CALLING ON CUOMO





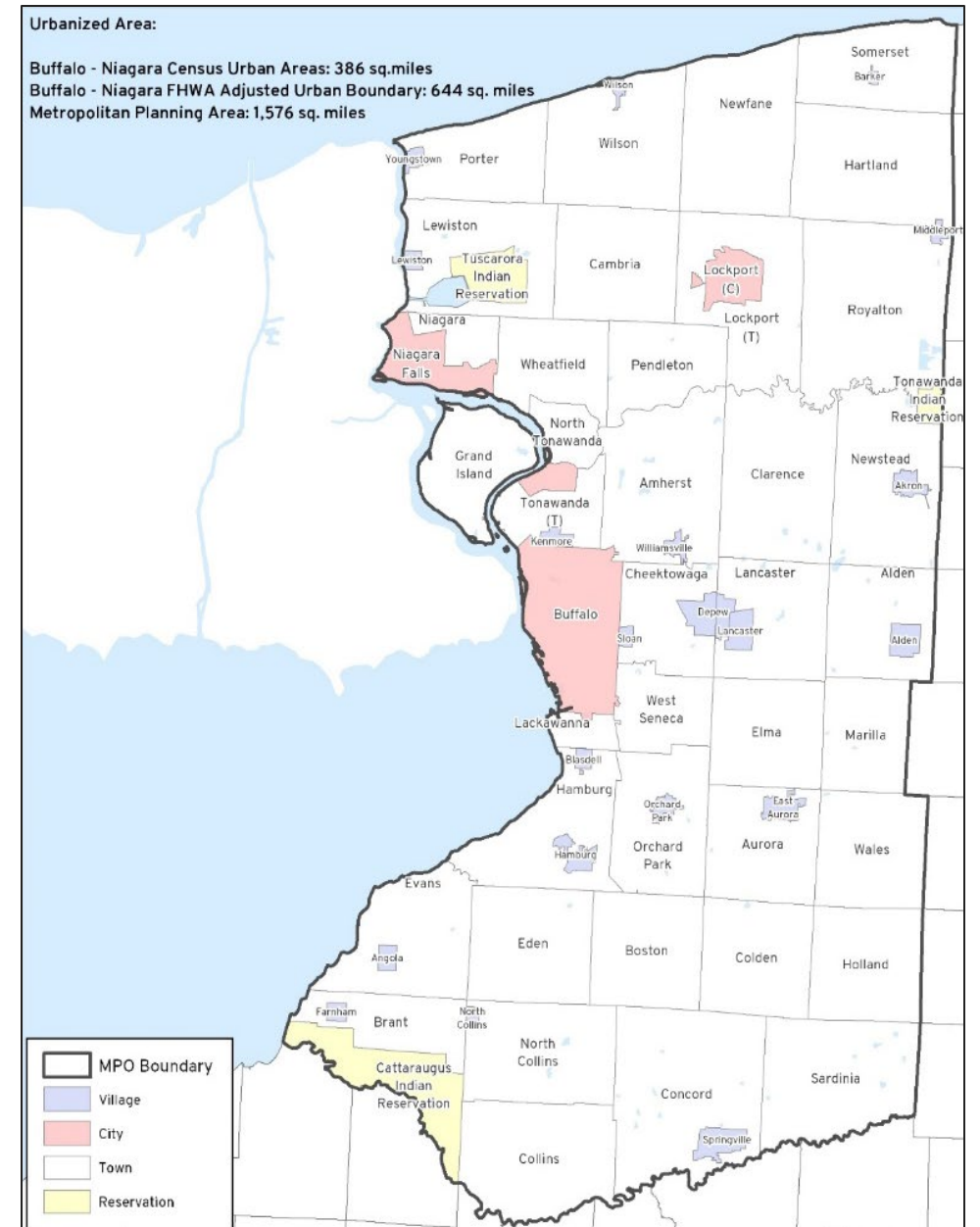
Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)

Erie and Niagara County's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
A Cooperative Association of Area Governments and Agencies



Regional Characteristics

- Major Upstate Region of New York
- Two County Population of 1.25 Million
- Modest Population and Economic Growth
- Rich Cultural, Institutional, and Environmental Assets
- Significant Influence of Border and Canadian Economy
- Mature Regional Planning Processes in Place



History of the Scajaquada Project

Early 1960s

Scajaquada Expressway was built in the early 1960's amidst the protests of the people, communities and institutions it infringed upon.

Over 15 Years

In initial efforts for Scajaquada Corridor redesign, New York State conducted more than 50 public and stakeholder meetings over 15 years.

In 2005

The Expanded Project Proposal (EEP) documented the history of Scajaquada Expressway. The report called for many interim traffic calming measures and lowered the speed limit to 30 MPH.

By 2010

By the 2010 public meeting, however, the project focused less on interim traffic calming measures recommended in the 2005 EPP.

May 2015

In May of 2015 NYS Governor Cuomo requested lowering the speed limit to 30 MPH due to the death of a child in Delaware Park.

January 2018

In January 2018, after an extensive effort to create a plan that transforms the Scajaquada Corridor, a reset button was hit to begin a fresh dialogue with stakeholders.

GBNRTC Asked to Guide Plan for Scajaquada Expressway—Route 198

- The state DOT draft plan for the project was withdrawn in January 2018. Two-thirds of the public comments received by the DOT opposed it. That left the process in limbo until the decision to change course.
- Gov. Andrew Cuomo turned to the Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council to guide the planning process. Fresh thinking could expand options for the Scajaquada.
- State DOT Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez said the new planning process would engage the public to “define the future of the area and the optimal transportation system for it.”
- “We look forward to working with the community on a transformational vision, identifying the multimodal transportation access and mobility solutions.
- Excellent cooperation with NYSDOT has been a huge benefit to this project.

Work Your Plans!



Smarter, aligned planning

How we are implementing One Region Forward





Region Central

- Historical Context
- World Class Cultural Crescent
- Distinct Neighborhoods
- Environmental and Infrastructure Features

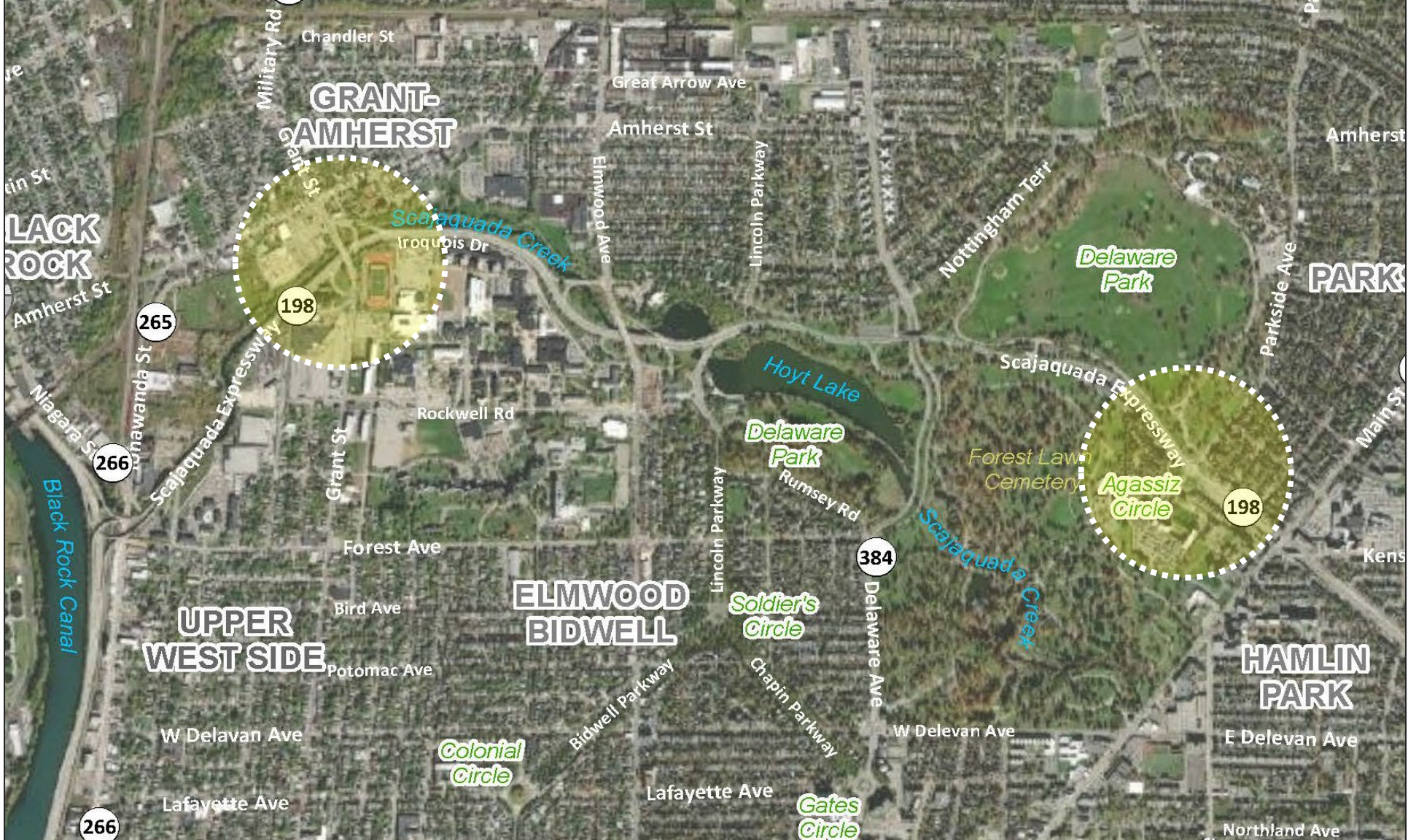


**REGION
CENTRAL**

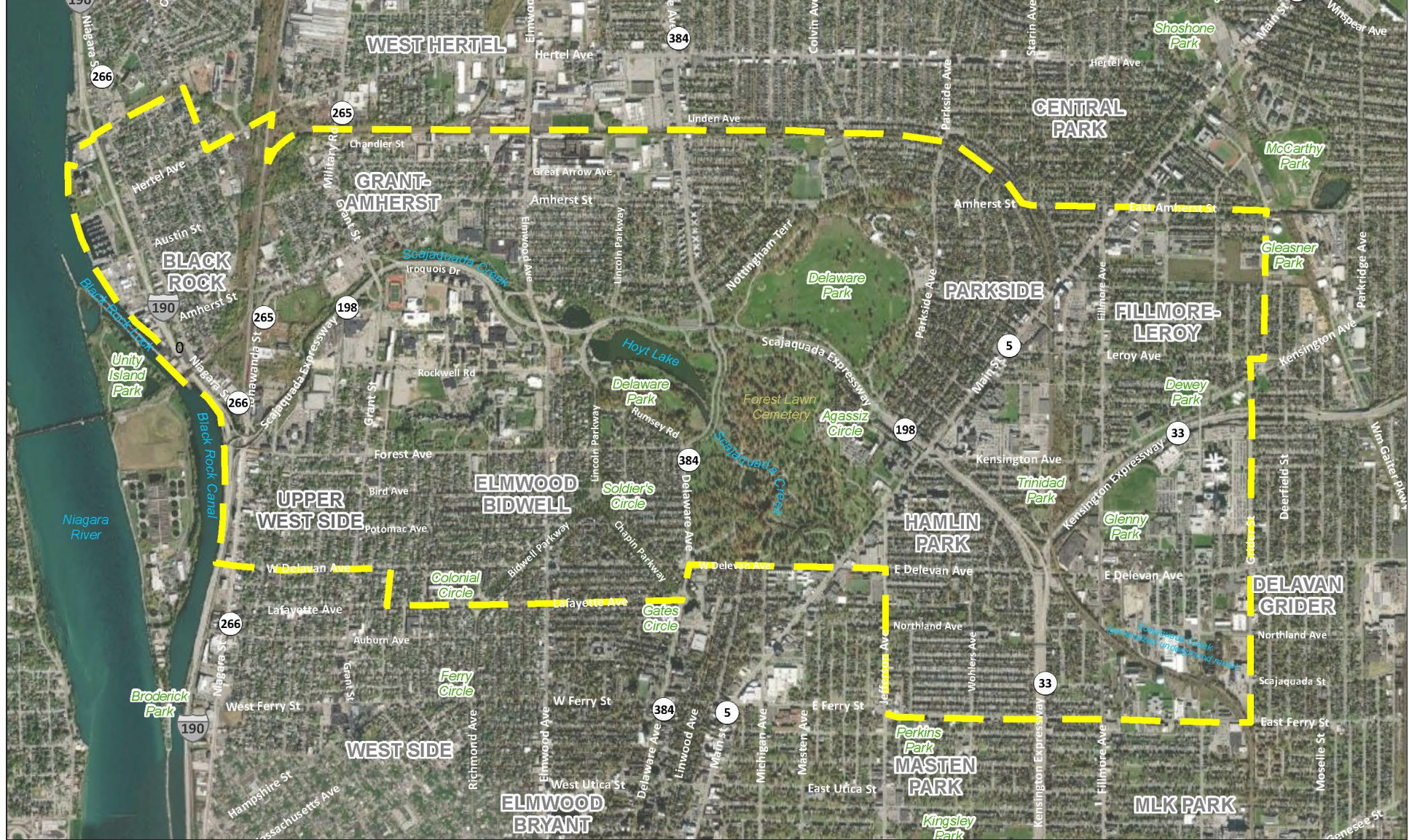
Historical Context

- Over the past two decades, efforts to address transportation and access needs in Region Central have focused on the Scajaquada Expressway (Route 198).
- Much more than the subject of a roadway study, Region Central has a significant array of assets and neighborhoods.
- Hundreds of millions of investment dollars are now directed to many of these assets in Region Central.
- It is a critical time to optimally serve this community with the right elements of safe and efficient transportation access to leverage the transformation.





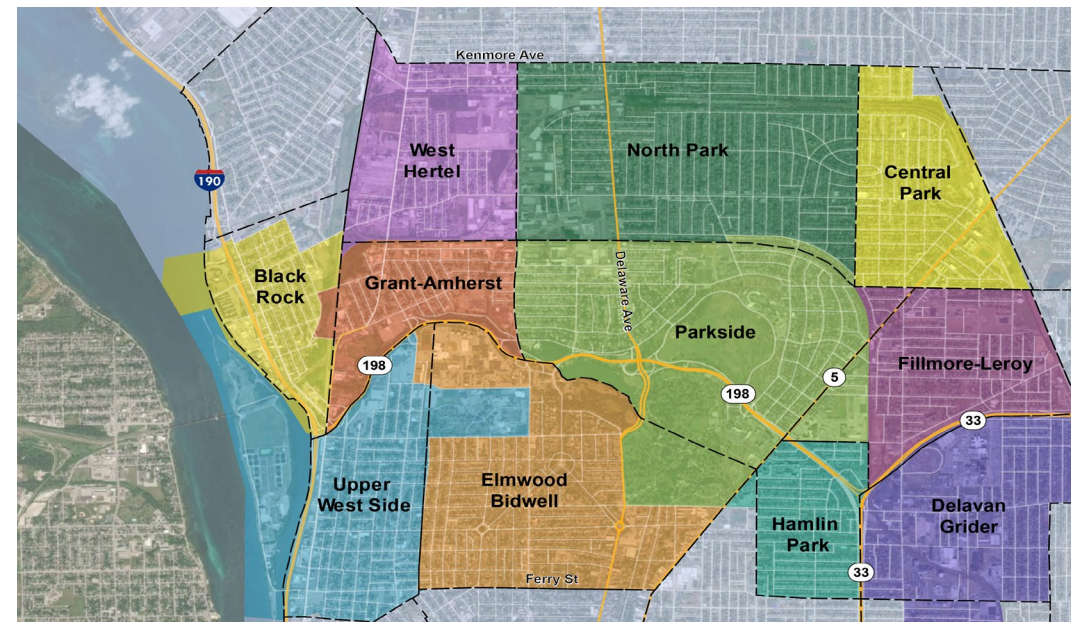
Previous Area of Focus
Scajaquada Expressway Study



Region Central Mobility Focus

Why this Impact Area?

- The Scajaquada Expressway facilitates people moving into and out of neighborhoods and commercial areas to its north and south. Therefore, this analysis considers population, employment and real estate investment trends for the neighborhoods shown below. These neighborhoods were constructed to match both the City of Buffalo's designated neighborhoods and with census block groups. For purposes of this analysis, these neighborhoods are referred to as "Region Central".
- Extensive analysis was performed to document the land use and neighborhood dynamics and how they are affected by the current transportation system.



How we strengthen these community assets to create a safe, healthy, and prosperous city and region for all needs to be the new starting point.



REGION CENTRAL

A New Approach

A planning process to reimagine the future for the central portion of the Buffalo Niagara Region.

A different approach that is impartial, methodical, and fact based with next generation technical analyses



REGION CENTRAL



**BUFFALO NIAGARA'S REGION CENTRAL:
UTILIZING THE SCAJAQUADA CORRIDOR
TO CREATE VIBRANT AND HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES**



Establishing Neighborhood Identity

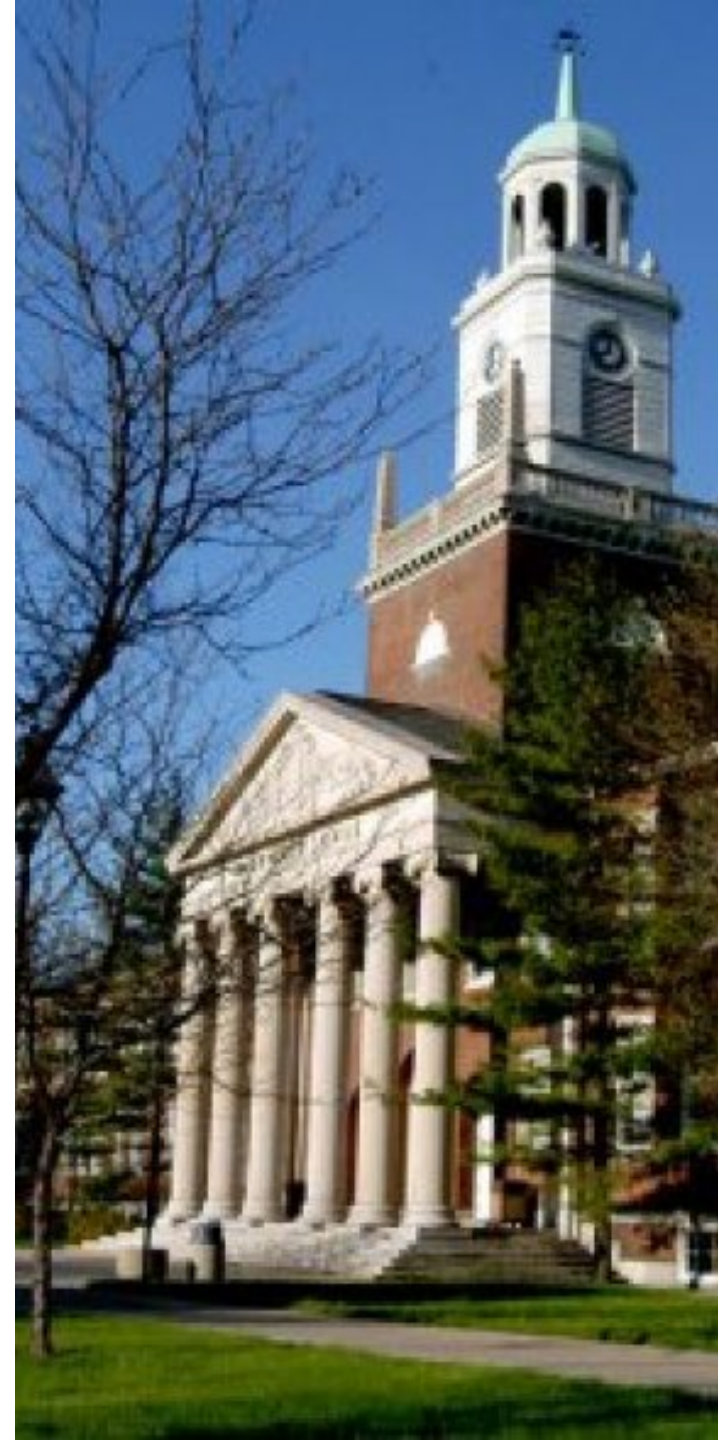
People Live Here!

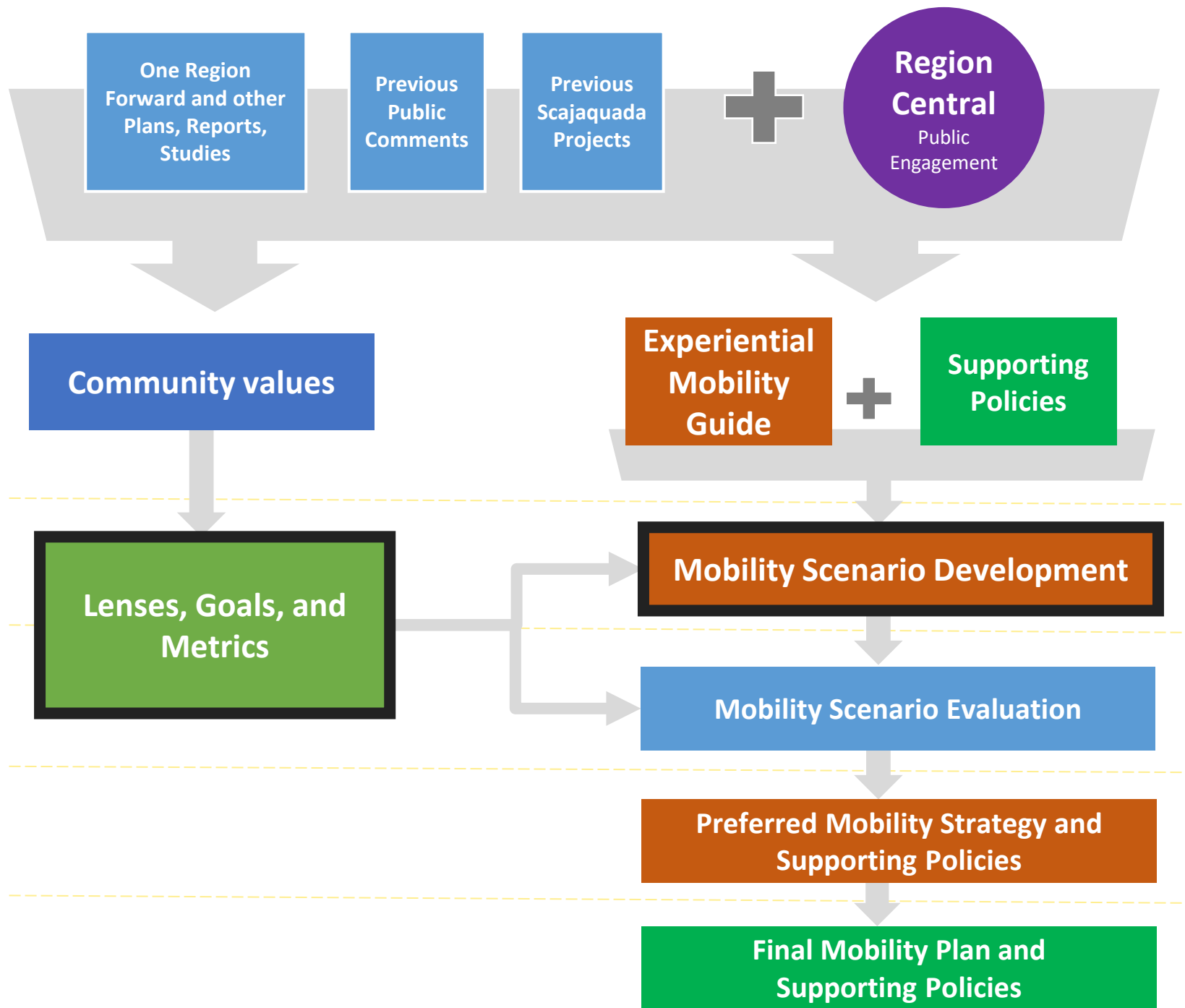




Building a Sense of Place

Public Recognition of Importance



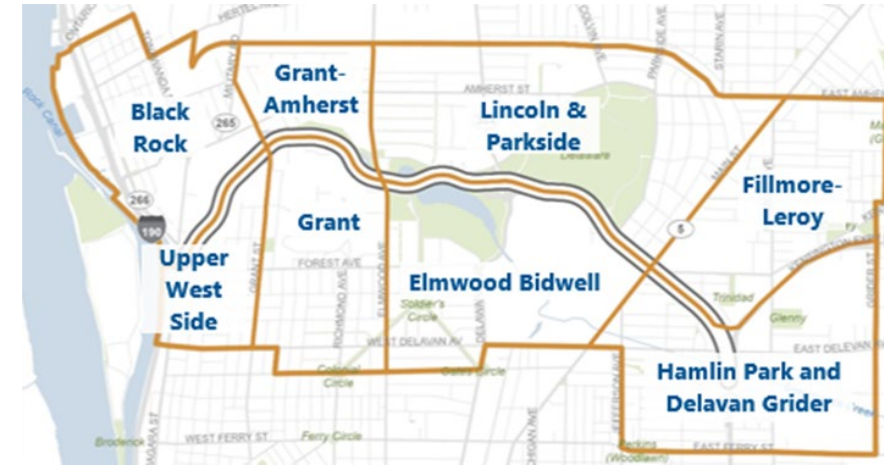


Inclusive Development Lens

Will future mobility investments in Region Central support...

1. Job growth...and the ability to connect residents and commuters to these jobs both physically and through their skill levels.
2. Housing that is good quality and affordable so that vulnerable households will not be displaced by future investments.
3. Neighborhoods that are healthy and safe.
4. Productive land use patterns that leverage existing and planned public investments and provide tax revenues to support city services.

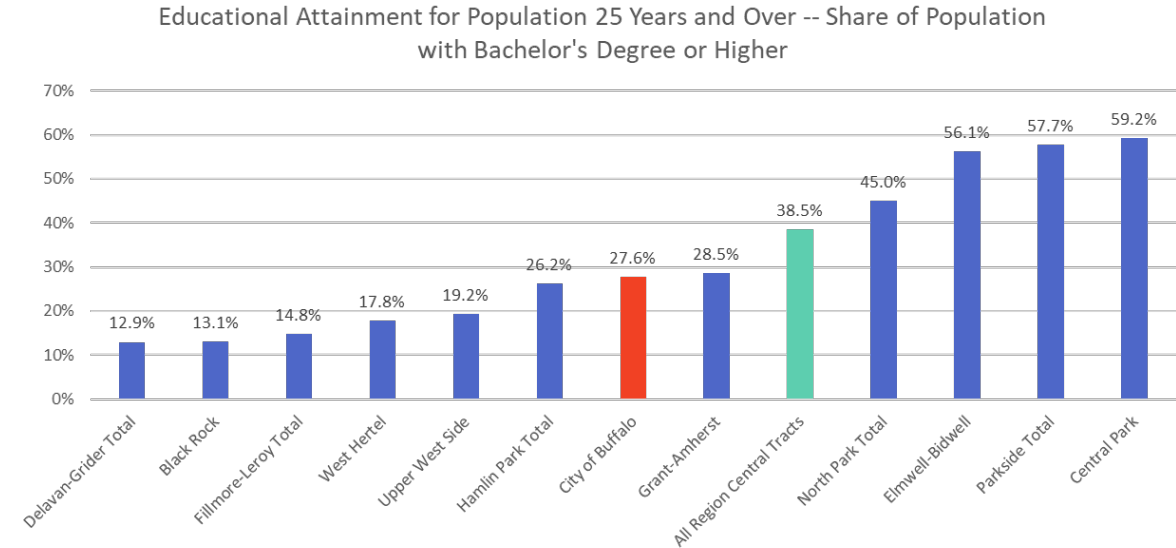
...and what additional City and other initiatives would enhance the effectiveness of these investments?



Jobs

Residents in some Region Central neighborhoods lack the education necessary to compete jobs in a growing knowledge economy.

- Most net new jobs over the next 2 decades will require some higher education.
- The City of Buffalo is below both the regional and the national average for workers with more than a high school degree.
- Region Central has an unusual mix of people with both very low and very high levels of educational attainment.
- The City projects that each new knowledge industry jobs generates 5 additional jobs for folks with a wide range of skills and education.



Source

American Community Survey 2019 (5 Year Estimates), Strategic Economics, 2021.

Housing

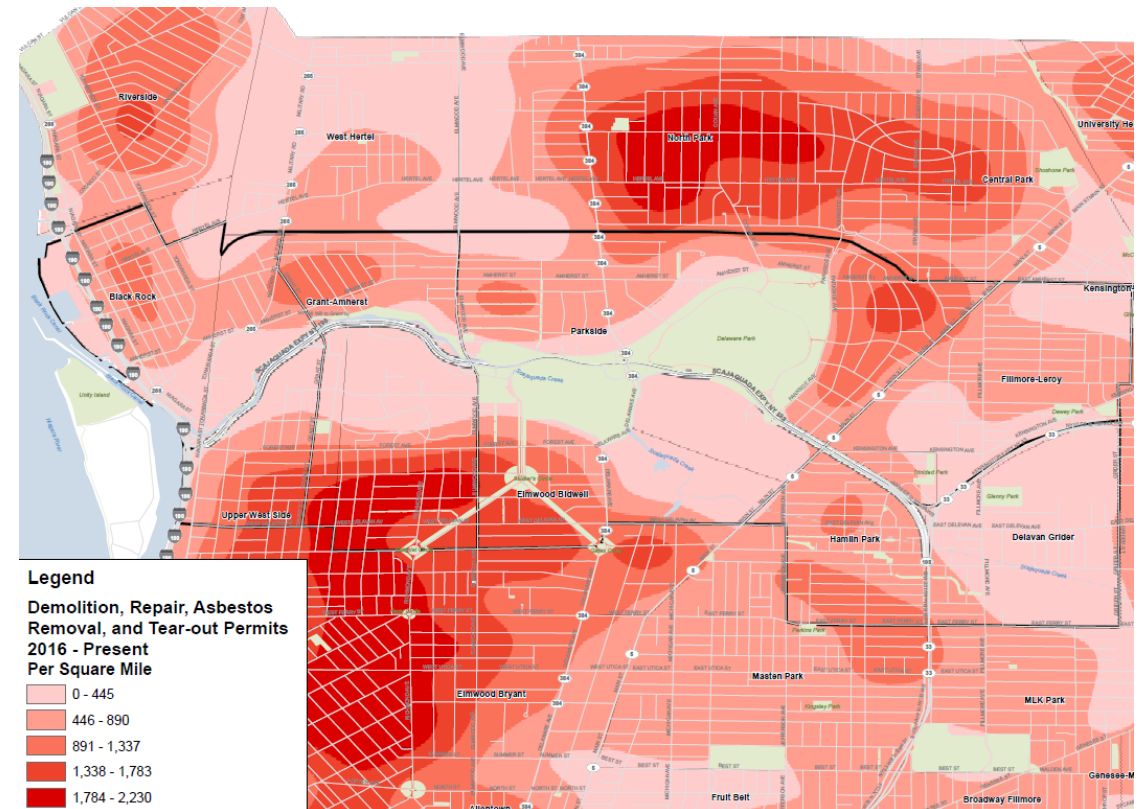
Expanding and maintaining meaningful economic diversity.

- Who lives in Region Central?
- In 2020, Region Central had 78,000 people.
- During the past ten years, Region Central overall has lost population while Buffalo has gained population.
- Most of this variation comes from shrinking household size rather than an overall decline in households.
- Overall, the percentage of African American and White populations have declined overall, but these groups are also moving around. While there were fewer African Americans in Fillmore-Leroy in 2020, there were many more in Upper West Side.



New investment is focusing on more affluent neighborhoods

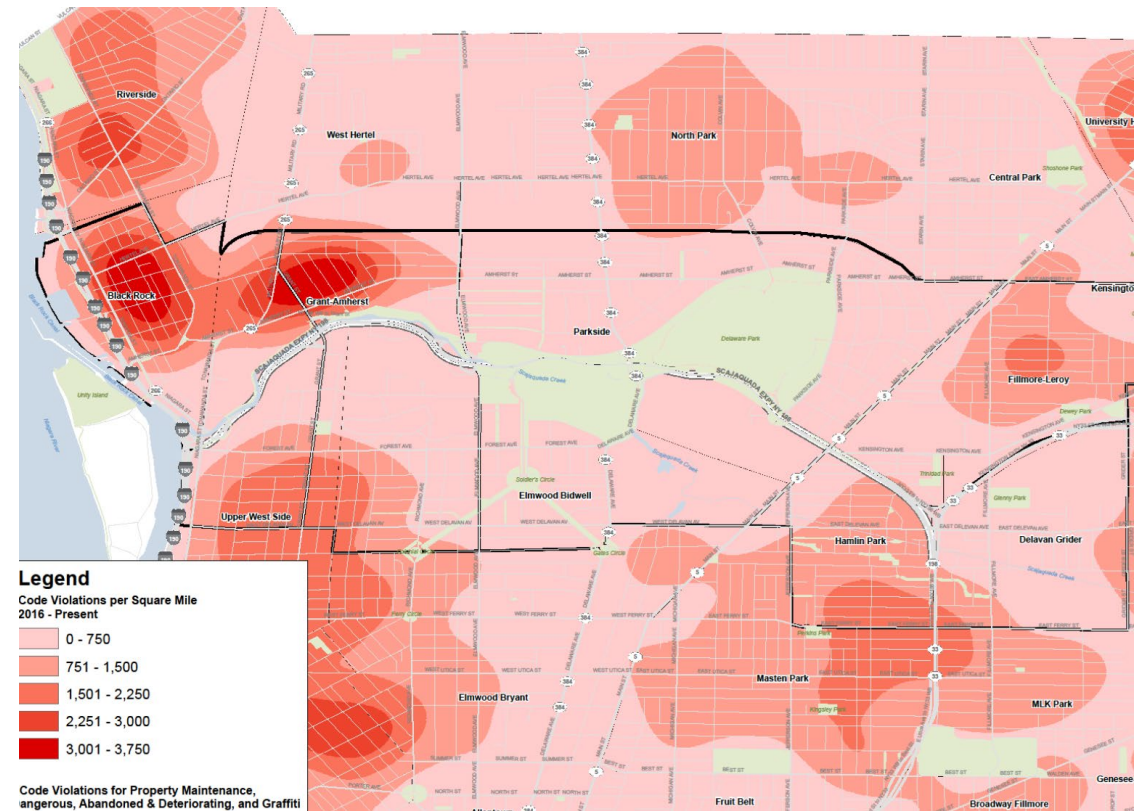
- The City uses a combination of building permit types to measure where gentrification is happening.
- The greatest concentration of these permits area in neighborhoods in the southwestern part of Region Central where property values are increasing or are already high.



Building Permit Applications 2016–2021

Lower income neighborhoods are suffering from disinvestment and worsening conditions

- The neighborhoods to the northwest have a significant concentration of code violations.
- Neighborhoods to the southwest have mix of property values, including many low value properties. These areas are also experiencing numerous code violations.



Code Violations By Parcel 2016–2021

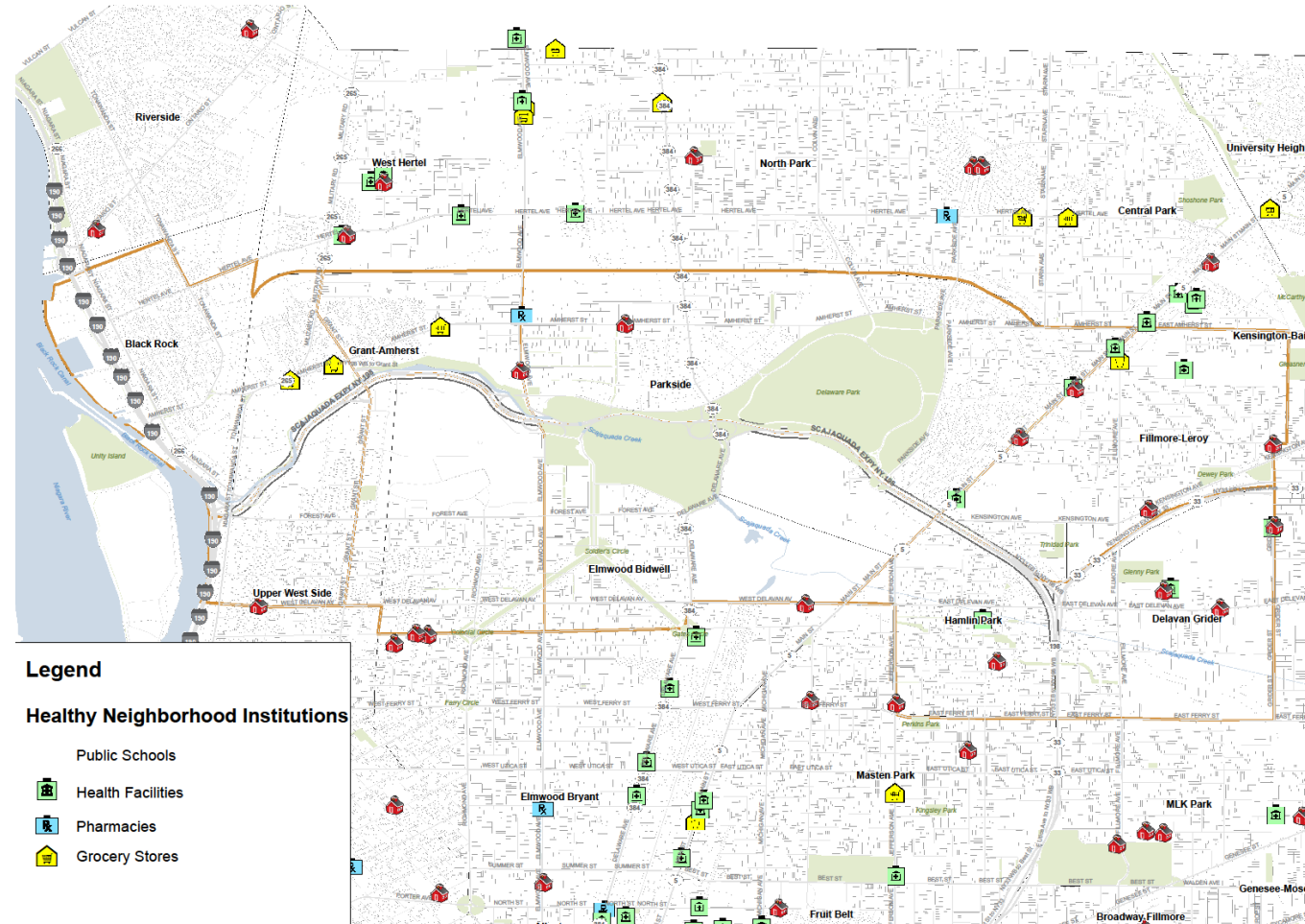
Health

Expanding and maintaining meaningful economic diversity.

Not all neighborhoods in Region Central have easy access to basic goods and services such as:

- Grocery stores
- Drug stores
- Health clinics/urgent care
- Elementary schools

...and heavy traffic pollutes air and generates particulates



Goals and metrics for shaping and evaluating alternative options

Which alternatives to a better jobs of...

1. Providing better locations to attract new jobs.
2. Providing better connections between local households and jobs.
3. Continuing to supporting commuters coming from outside of Region Central to work in key industries.
4. Spotlight on the need to invest in existing housing quality while addressing affordability.
5. Supporting better health outcomes for existing and future residents.
6. Creating property value uplift for existing “low value” parcels to support essential city services.



Replenished Parks, Parkways, Waterways, and Places Lens

Ensure that future mobility investments in Region Central take into consideration the area's rich heritage and efforts to replenish culturally and environmentally significant elements that enhance our city and society for both today and the years to come.



Goals and metrics for shaping and evaluating alternative options

Replenishing Part of Our Region's Identity & Heritage

- Renew the Olmsted legacy in Region Central, including Delaware Park and associated parkways.
- Reinforce and leverage Region Central's significant historic places, and buildings.

Replenishing Our Natural Assets

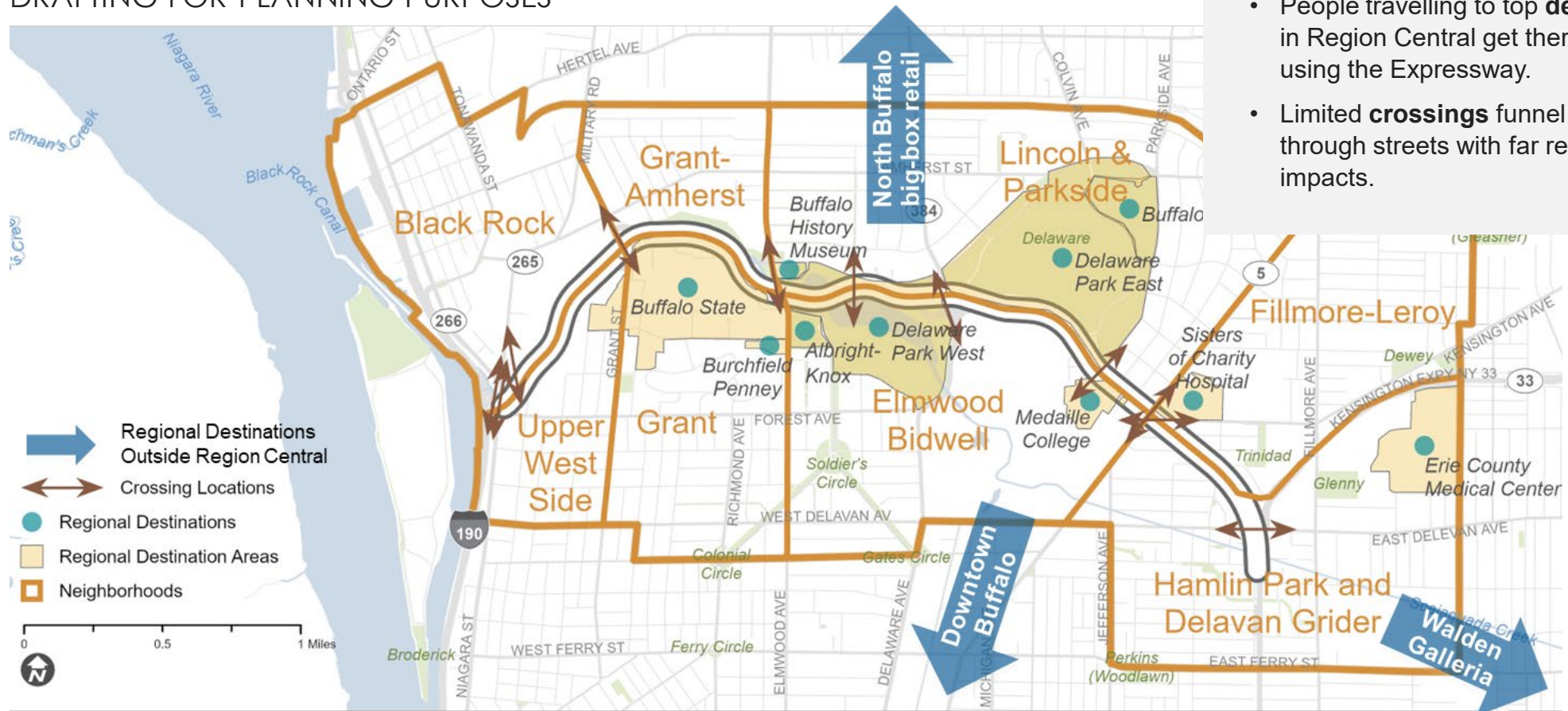
- Restore the quality and character of historic waterways and natural habitats.
- Emphasize sustainability and climate change resilience in both infrastructure and other public and private investments.

Replenishing Our Park Systems & Neighborhoods

- Expand local and regional connectivity of parks, parkways, and waterfronts as a system and destination for tourism, healthy recreation, and active lifestyles.
- Reinforce neighborhood centers as the social and cultural heart of local communities and places to celebrate community identity through sensitive investment in new and existing buildings and public spaces.

Access—the ability to get to places in and around Region Central

DRAFTING FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

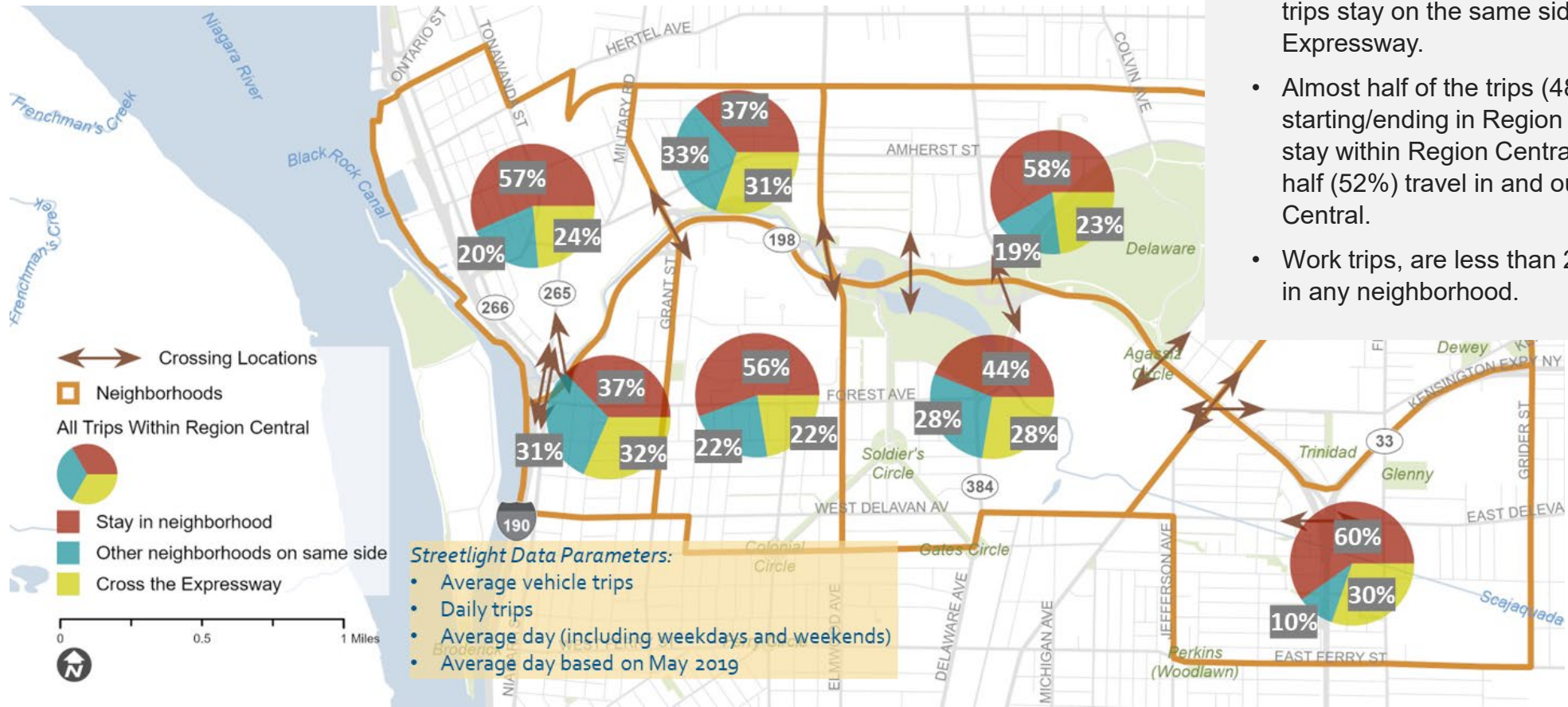


Effective and accessible connections that get people to destinations within Region Central and outside of Region Central facilitate access to necessary goods and services.

- People travelling to top **destinations** in Region Central get there without using the Expressway.
- Limited **crossings** funnel vehicles to through streets with far reaching impacts.

Access—the ability to get to places in and around Region Central

DRAFTING FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

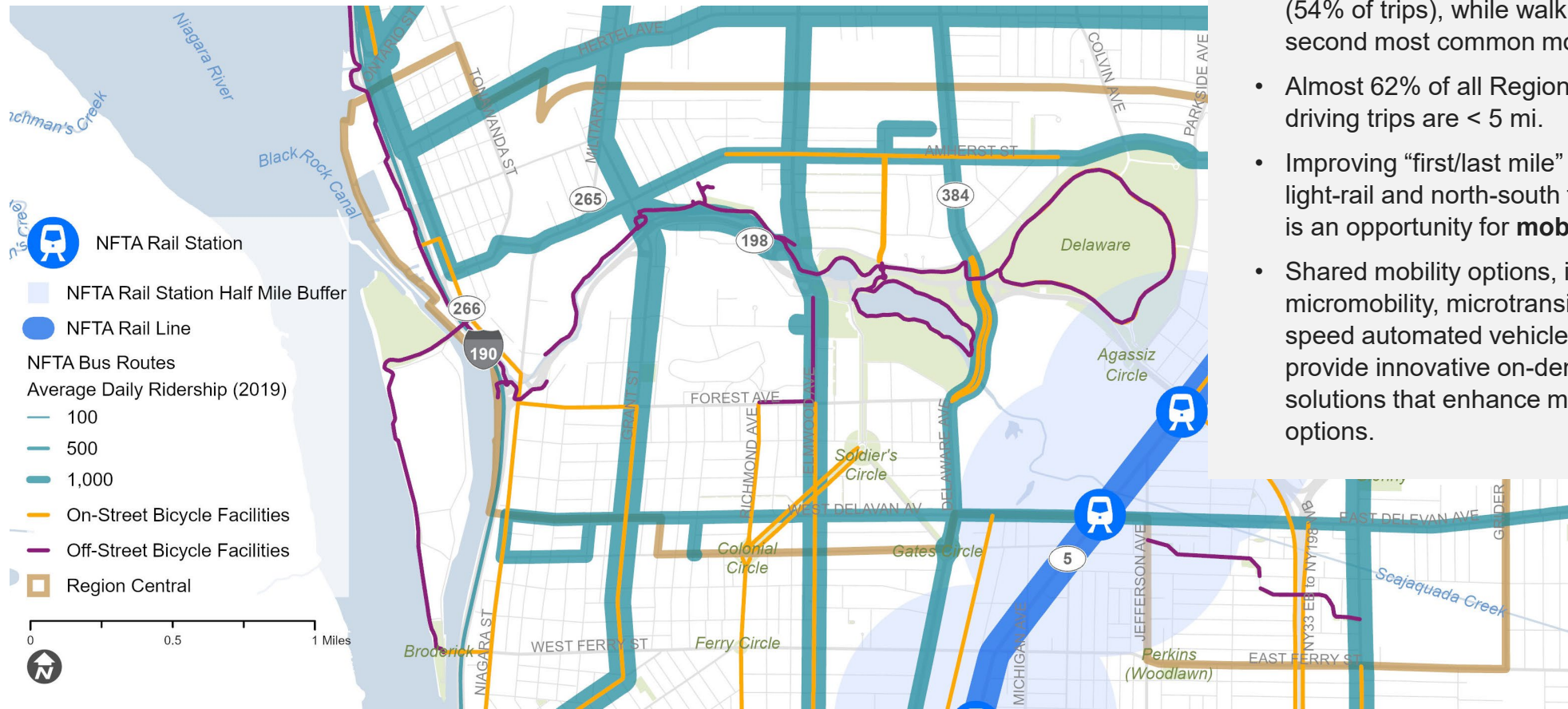


New data sources allow us to assess how people are travelling between and within neighborhoods today.

- In each neighborhood, more than half of driving trips do not cross the Expressway. And almost all walking trips stay on the same side of the Expressway.
- Almost half of the trips (48%) starting/ending in Region Central, stay within Region Central and half (52%) travel in and out of Region Central.
- Work trips, are less than 25% of trips in any neighborhood.

Choice—Having effective options for travel

DRAFTING FOR PLANNING PURPOSES



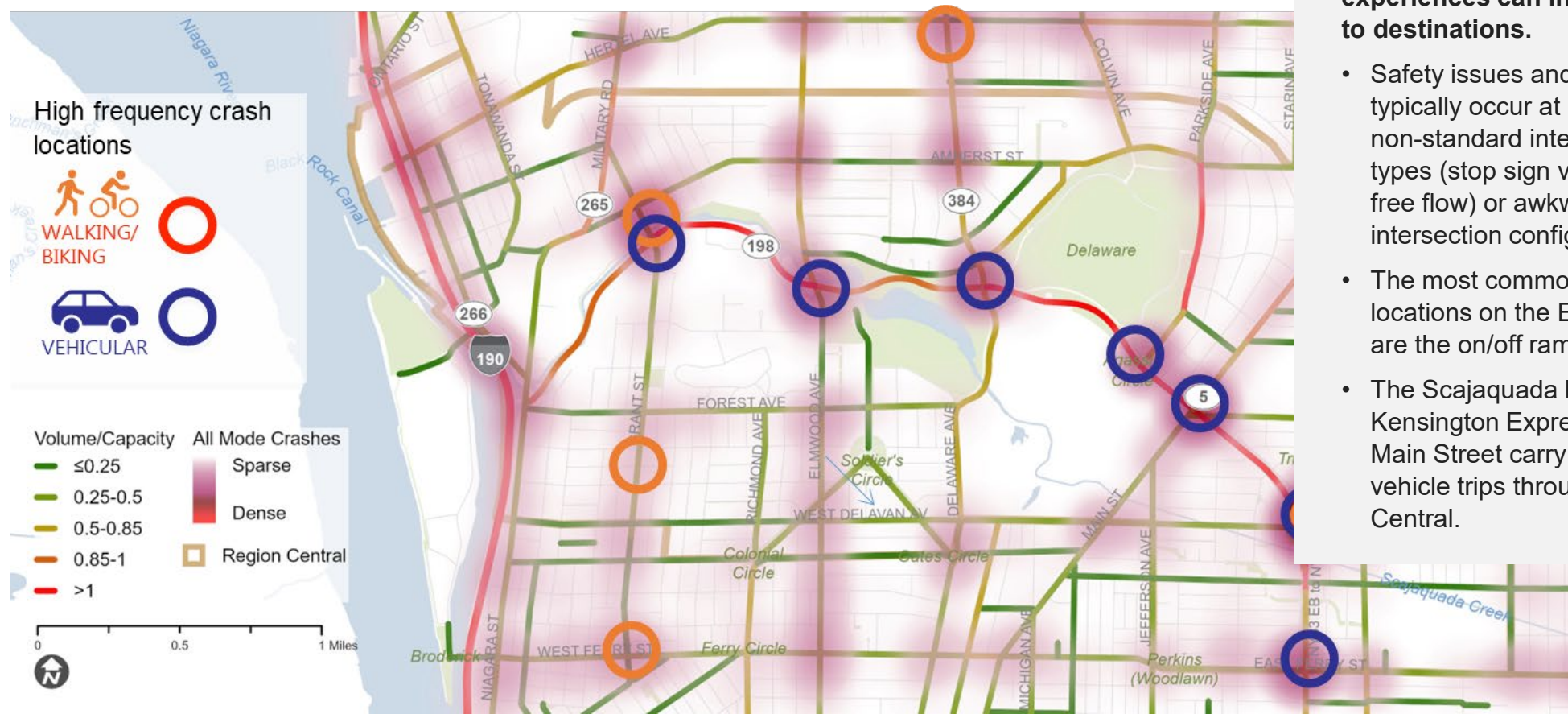
Travel patterns within Region Central show potential for more walking, biking, transit, and demand responsive mobility solutions.

- **Driving alone** is the most common mode of travel in Region Central (54% of trips), while walking is the second most common mode (35%).
- Almost 62% of all Region Central driving trips are < 5 mi.
- Improving “first/last mile” access to light-rail and north-south transit routes is an opportunity for **mobility hubs**.
- Shared mobility options, including micromobility, microtransit, and low-speed automated vehicles, can provide innovative on-demand solutions that enhance mobility options.



Character—Making Region Central’s facilities safe, pleasant, and accommodating

DRAFTING FOR PLANNING PURPOSES



Physical barriers and barriers caused by unsafe and unpleasant transportation experiences can inhibit access to destinations.

- Safety issues and delay typically occur at locations with non-standard intersection types (stop sign vs. signal vs. free flow) or awkward intersection configurations.
- The most common crash locations on the Expressway are the on/off ramps.
- The Scajquada Expressway, Kensington Expressway, and Main Street carry the most vehicle trips through Region Central.



Thank you. **Questions?**