

Broadway-Fillmore 2032

A Vision for Neighborhood Restoration

Central Terminal Neighborhood Association

BUFFALO, NY • JUNE 2022



“We must recognize, as urban renewal advances in Buffalo, that the city is urban; that every great city is characterized by denseness, compactness, cohesiveness; that there never can be suburbia in the city—regardless of the reasons put forth.”

Robert Traynham Coles, 1963

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Introduction

Broadway Fillmore 2032 is a community-based blueprint to restore our venerable neighborhood. This document is the result of a visioning workshop conducted by the Central Terminal Neighborhood Association (CTNA) on March 26, 2022. The CTNA was established in 2022 to reinvigorate block club activity, foster resident solidarity, and organize the neighborhood around desired physical improvements. This vision document is the start of our work together.

This consensus-building exercise set out to identify actionable steps toward a 2032 vision for Broadway Fillmore. These steps can be taken now and over the next ten years by the City of Buffalo, New York State, the private and nonprofit sectors, and most importantly the community itself. “Planning by doing” is our mantra.

Vision Statement

By 2032, the Broadway Fillmore neighborhood will be:

- **More walkable, livable, and beautiful, while remaining affordable to all;**
- **A desirable neighborhood and place of opportunity for working class and immigrant people;**
- **A revived historic district with regenerated landmarks and new parks and open spaces;**
- **A rejuvenated hub of art, culture, and public life;**
- **Once again, a second downtown for the city**



Residents from across the neighborhood contributed to the ideas and priorities in Broadway-Fillmore 2032.

This effort builds on a solid planning foundation. Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan (2006) laid out principles for fixing the basics, building on assets, investing strategically, and embracing smart growth and sustainability. The Green Code (2017) enacted a walkable vision for every neighborhood. The Broadway Market Business and Marketing Plan (2021) focused on turning around this historic resource. The Central Terminal Master Plan (2021) gave guidance on neighborhood revitalization and a roadmap for the future of the Terminal, likely Broadway Fillmore's greatest economic development asset. Recognizing a severe parks

deficit in the neighborhood, the Buffalo Parks Master Plan (2022) identified steps to reclaim open space for public use.

Consistent with planning work to date, we set out on March 26 and in subsequent conversations to be as specific and concrete as possible on steps needed to move Broadway Fillmore ahead.

Two dozen residents contributed to this document, which lays out a series of one or two sentence statements that were included only by unanimous agreement or after being adjusted to reach such agreement. These statements are divided into broad topic areas:

1. Economic Development
2. Anchor Projects
3. Placemaking & Public Life
4. Historic Preservation
5. Public Infrastructure
6. Transportation & Access
7. Parks, Open Space, & Access to Nature

Ideas and priorities run from sidewalk maintenance and street tree planting to a Memorial Drive cycle track, revived Sears Paderewski Park, and Central Terminal Great Lawn. These actions are often small scale and incremental, understanding that rebuilding Broadway Fillmore's density and vitality will take time, but can start now with modest steps.

With unprecedented resources now being committed to Broadway Fillmore, we felt an urgent need to get residents' priorities on paper and in the hands of policymakers at the City of Buffalo and New York State. This document is designed to be a guidepost for decisionmakers at every level, from the grassroots to the governor's office.

This document is also a gameplan for the Central Terminal Neighborhood Association itself, and work is already underway to implement ideas we can undertake on our own. By the time this document is released, a new



The inaugural meeting of the Central Terminal Neighborhood Association on March 26, 2022, was a visioning workshop that is the basis of this document.

block club sign will have been installed at our welcome garden at 60 Memorial Drive.

We're committed to Broadway Fillmore, and know that the neighborhood will come back only because we have come back together.

1. Economic Development



The Buffalo Brewing Company has started work on its expansion to the former Schreiber Brewing Company complex.

With a 47% poverty rate and only \$22,264 median household income, Broadway Fillmore is among the poorest neighborhoods in the City of Buffalo. Economic development must focus on lifting residents out of poverty, wherever possible directly investing in working class and immigrant populations.

Public investment in key projects have the potential to be a catalyst and springboard to uplift working people, as well as provide a base for residents permanently out of the workforce to build security and realize a brighter future for their families.

Even more than housing and amenities, Broadway Fillmore needs expanded employment opportunities so that a larger number of residents can both live and work in the neighborhood. Walkable, mixed use investment ought to be the vehicle for repairing a home-work divide where, decades ago, thousands of residents were employed in nearby factories, stockyards, railroad facilities,

department stores, and corner shops and taverns.

- Support **walkable, mixed-use development**, with the aim of helping residents access employment and accomplish daily errands without having to drive a car.
- Target economic development assistance to directly benefit **working class** and **new American people**.
- Prioritize development projects that create decent **affordable housing** and **living wage employment** opportunities. Reject projects likely to displace existing residents or exclude new residents of average means.
- Return to the neighborhood's roots of industrial production by supporting **legacy manufacturing** enterprises, such as Al Cohen's, Sahlen's, and Frank Wardynski & Sons, as well as newer enterprises such as the Buffalo Brewing Company.
- Encourage **cooperative, worker-owned enterprises** and **labor organizing** efforts.
- Support the reestablishment of a **Broadway Fillmore business association**.
- **Address limited access** to walkable schools, libraries, healthcare, addiction services, daycare, emergency shelters, and job training opportunities.

2. Anchor Projects

Building on assets and investing strategically are core principles of Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan. Understanding that rebuilding Broadway Fillmore is likely to be a multi-generational project, it is necessary to start with key anchors and the neighborhood's center at Broadway and Fillmore Avenue. Likewise, opportunities should not be missed to plant the seeds of public life at secondary centers, like Paderewski Drive, Lombard Street, or the dozens of corner shops and taverns on streets beyond the center.

- **Embrace the redevelopment of Buffalo Central Terminal and the Broadway Market** as the two principal regional draws to the neighborhood, while continuing to engage residents and stakeholders in planning.
- **Focus higher density growth adjacent to high frequency public transit**, such as the Broadway and Hertel-Fillmore Metro bus lines, to foster combined housing/transportation affordability.
- **Target the regeneration of neighborhood defining-buildings**, such as the Eckhardt Building, Union Stockyards Bank, Polish Union Hall, Dr. Francis E. Fronczak House, Fillmore Theater, Schreiber Brewing Company, Polish Cooperative Savings & Loan, Spolka, Polish Singing Circle, and Corpus Christi R.C. Church Complex.
- **Support incremental developers of average means.** Recognize small-scale, mixed-use buildings as opportunities to create new amenities and support working class and immigrant business and property owners.
- **Embrace the craft brewing and distilling movement**, known as *Beer-Oriented Development* (BOD), as an economic generator and community builder.
- **Establish a not-for-profit organization to manage the Broadway Market**, with representation from neighborhood residents.



The community minded Central Terminal Master Plan lays the groundwork for reactivation of this beloved landmark. A \$61 million infusion was recently announced by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

3. Placemaking & Public Life

Public life and street activity are features of any healthy urban neighborhood. By redeploying historic shopfront buildings, improving streetscapes, and supporting arts and culture, Broadway Fillmore will gain a stronger footing. In 1950, the corner of Broadway and Fillmore had one of the highest pedestrian counts of any intersection in upstate New York. Rebuilding some semblance of this vitality will likely require years of ongoing effort, but it must continue, and may as well focus on the neighborhood's center at Broadway and Fillmore.

- **Focus investments at the heart of the neighborhood at Broadway and Fillmore**, without overlooking placemaking opportunities beyond the center.
- **Recognize Paderewski Drive as the principal gateway to Buffalo Central Terminal**, possessing one of the great terminating vistas of Upstate New York; and Memorial Drive as a walkable and bikeable connector.

- **Continue successful grant programs**, such as the New York State Main Street Program and East Side Commercial Building Stabilization Fund, for building rehabilitation and streetscape improvements.
- **Embrace art and artists as an economic development tool**. Support spaces for music, theater, visual art, and cultural events such as Dyngus Day, Buddha's Birthday, and the Dożynki Polish Harvest Festival, and mural and sculpture projects in high visibility locations.
- **Support the establishment of sidewalk cafes and outdoor dining and product display**.
- **Address blank walls along the Gibson Street and Lombard Street facades of the Broadway Market**, first by restoring its 1956 glass facade. Revive and add new **outward-facing storefronts** to support public life and small business activity.
- **Restore lost signage** (such as at Eckhardt's department store or the Union Stock Yard Bank) and create new signage with placemaking potential (such as at the Broadway Market). Look nationally to examples of "postcard image" public market signage.
- **Study remaking Sienkiewicz Place** as a public plaza and open-air farmers and/or flea market site, adjacent to the Gibson Street entrance to, and perhaps managed by, the Broadway Market. Explore temporary block closures to test this concept.



Murals, such as this one by Casey Milbrand invoking lyrics from a Goo Goo Dolls song, are bringing personality to older buildings.

4. Historic Preservation

The 2018 establishment of the Broadway Fillmore Historic District is a City of Buffalo policy commitment that **this neighborhood will endure**. Yet with so many vacant or underutilized historic resources in Broadway Fillmore, historic preservation and adaptive reuse will remain a higher priority than new construction for the foreseeable future. As rising construction costs and the effectiveness of historic tax credits have proven, the most economically sustainable projects involve reuse of existing building stock.

As a principle, investment in Broadway Fillmore should be in the form of **restorative development**—first, reuse buildings; later, build new buildings that reflect the neighborhood’s traditions and feel familiar in form, scale, and relationship to the public realm. Contemporary and traditional architecture alike can achieve these ends, as shown in projects like Torn Space Theater and the Cigar Shop Apartments.

The late urbanist Christopher Alexander wrote, “Every increment of construction must be done in a way as to heal the city.” This principle isn’t limited to buildings. Most vitally, new development must maintain and grow Broadway Fillmore’s traditional role as a **working class, immigrant neighborhood**.

- **Emphasize historic rehabilitation** of vacant and underutilized buildings before new construction. Allow demolitions only as a last resort.

- **Promote the historic tax credit program** as an economic development vehicle for property owners in the Broadway Fillmore Historic District.



The reconstruction of Jankowski’s cigar shop, which burned in a fire, is an exemplary example of the concept of restorative development.

- **Recognize and celebrate the midcentury modern architecture of the Broadway Market** in any physical improvements, including materials, fenestration, signage, and interior design. Engage architects and designers who understand and appreciate this architectural period, and reverse recent insensitive alterations (such as the EIFS “brick”).
- **Where new construction takes place, take guidance from the neighborhood’s historic development pattern** and architectural typologies. **Avoid low-density, automobile-oriented development.**

- **Respect the Green Code** while recognizing that Green Code compliant development will not always adequately reflect Broadway Fillmore's historic character. Attention to context always matters.
- **Work with a neighborhood-led design committee** to establish development guidelines and review capital improvement projects.
- **Preserve historic narrow lot widths** (25 to 30 foot) as a built-in affordability and character restoration strategy. Avoid combining parcels for new development, while allowing existing homeowners to expand side yards where appropriate.
- Take advantage of UDO Section 6.1.1.F to **revive legacy commercial buildings** in residential zones. Making classic storefronts “rent ready” is a key goal.
- **Celebrate and help preserve the telescope house and corner shop and tavern** as vernacular building types of the neighborhood. Encourage accessory dwellings.
- **Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP)** for the adaptive reuse and historic rehabilitation of the City-owned **Railway Express Agency and U.S. Terminal Railway Post Office buildings** at 59 Memorial Drive. Support coordination with the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation on its forthcoming Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI).
- **Promote the neighborhood's history.** Establish a historic marker initiative and promote walking and biking tours. Explore establishing a Broadway Fillmore historical society.
- **Build on the Broadway Fillmore Historic District** by expanding the number of City of Buffalo landmark designations and/or National Register nominations. Eligible resources include:
 - Buffalo Central Terminal, 495 Paderewski Drive, 982 William Street, and 59 Memorial Drive (expand local designation to match National Register nomination)
 - St. Stanislaus R.C. Church Complex, 562 Fillmore Avenue, 348, 362, 380, & 389 Peckham Street
 - St. Adalbert's R.C. Church Complex, 208 Stanislaus Street, 130 Kosciuszko Street
 - Shoemaker & Meyer Building, 756 Broadway
 - 766 Broadway
 - People's Bank of Buffalo, 904 Broadway
 - Maisel Building, 915 Broadway
 - Gramza Building, 1118 Broadway
 - 1119 Broadway
 - 1121 Broadway
 - Dzimian Building, 1131 Broadway
 - Al Cohen's Bakery, 1132 Broadway
 - Lt. Col. Matt Urban House, 1153 Broadway
 - 1159 Broadway
 - Lipowicz Grocery, 1201 Broadway
 - Nowicki Building, 1202 Broadway
 - 587 Fillmore Avenue
 - Strusienski's, 363 Paderewski Drive
 - American Legion Adam Plewacki Post No. 799, 379 Paderewski Drive
 - Kucharski's/Joe's Grill, 483 Peckham Street
 - Burczynski Building, 179 Stanislaus Street
 - 840 William Street
 - Memorial Triangle Historic District (Potential)

5. Public Infrastructure

Fixing the basics is a core principle of Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, yet so many of the basics remain unattended in Broadway Fillmore. Sidewalks are crumbling, the only City park is abandoned, and street tree cover is among the lowest in Buffalo, once dubbed the "City of Trees."

Streets like Memorial Drive (57' pavement width) and Paderewski Drive (54' pavement width) remain designed for speed rather than safe passage. The neighborhood's Tree Equity Score is only 52, among the lowest in Buffalo. The tree canopy is measured at about only 12%, while Tree Equity Score considers at least 48% to be healthy. The City's Bureau of Forestry identifies 8,192 potential tree planting locations in the Fillmore District. About 8,022 City owned vacant lots across Buffalo, disproportionately located in the Fillmore District, go without sidewalk snow removal in the winter.

Broadway Fillmore's deteriorated public infrastructure is another facet of poverty and injustice that residents live with. All residents deserve safe and comfortable streets, basic infrastructure maintenance, a healthy tree canopy, and an inviting public realm. An equitable city demands substantial investment in these basics.

- **Undertake comprehensive repair and/or replacement of sidewalks, curbs, and street surfaces.**
- **Implement a municipal sidewalk snow removal program**, at least for City-owned property.

- **Upgrade street lighting on gateway streets**, especially Broadway, Fillmore Avenue, Paderewski Drive, and Memorial Drive. Consider Frederick Law Olmsted luminaires, matching the Memorial Circle luminaire. Ensure that street lighting is pedestrian oriented and dark sky compliant. Enhance lighting at railroad viaducts.
- **Upgrade traffic control infrastructure at major intersections**, especially along Broadway and Fillmore Avenue, from highway grade to pedestrian oriented fixtures.
- **Work with neighborhood organizations to plant and maintain street trees adjacent to City owned vacant lots**, and collaborate with property owners to request street trees through 311. Select street tree species that maximize air quality and ecosystem benefits.



Paderewski Drive is unnecessarily wide. Bike lanes, curb extensions, and/or a median are needed to calm traffic, green the street, and improve the public realm.

- › **Undertake “road diets”** at Paderewski Drive, Memorial Drive, Memorial Circle, and the William/Fillmore intersection.
- › **Reform refuse removal policies and fines to discourage dumping**, which is endemic in Broadway Fillmore.
- › **Consider new alleys, allowing vehicle access to take place from rear yards** and reduce the need for individual side yard driveways, where multiple contiguous City owned lots allow for them.
- › **Study converting Peckham Street, Paderewski Drive, and Emslie Street to two-way traffic** along their entire lengths to reduce congestion, improve circulation and wayfinding, and enhance emergency response times. Rely on the efficiency of the grid.

6. Transportation & Access

Broadway Fillmore is a car-lite neighborhood, whether by choice or, more often, by necessity due to poverty. About 39% of Broadway-Fillmore households lack access to a car, and 25% take transit, bike, or walk to work. The safety, comfort, and convenience of pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and the mobility impaired needs to be better prioritized.

Broadway Fillmore, despite the absence of some key amenities, possesses a respectable WalkScore of 82, or “Very Walkable,” meaning that most errands can be accomplished on foot. If public and private investments are successful, the WalkScore by 2032 should be at least 90. This will require a genuine commitment to complete, green streets paired with walkable, mixed-use development.



A Memorial Drive cycle track would slow vehicle speeds and promote access to Buffalo Central Terminal.

- › **Paint high visibility crosswalks** at intersections on Broadway, Fillmore Avenue, Paderewski Drive, Peckham Street, William Street, and Memorial Drive.

- Complete universal **installation of ADA-accessible curb ramps**.
- **Install curb extensions at intersections on key rights-of-way**, including Broadway, Fillmore Avenue, Memorial Drive, Paderewski Drive, William Street, and Peckham Street, to calm traffic speeds and minimize pedestrian crossing distances. Create bus plazas at high-use Metro stops.
- **Act on opportunities for through-block pedestrian connections** on contiguous City owned lots that connect both sides of long blocks, paying special attention to existing “desire paths.” Start with the Kent Street Connector, which would increase pedestrian access to the Broadway Market.
- **Erect stairs/ramps** connecting Bryson Street, Hilton Street, and Newton Street/Curtiss Street to the Central Terminal plaza.
- **Install a protected bicycle facility along Memorial Drive and bike lanes along Paderewski Drive**, per the Buffalo Bike Master Plan. Expand on-street bicycle parking.
- **Expand bike share, car share, and micro-mobility options** in Broadway Fillmore.
- **Support 15 minute or better peak hour transit headways** (7 am to 7 pm weekday) on the #4 Broadway and #23 Fillmore-Hertel Metro bus lines, and at most 25 minute peak hour headways on the #1 William and #6 Sycamore lines.
- **Prioritize transportation investments based on evidence of the greatest needs and impact** for reducing traffic fatalities and injuries.

7. Parks, Open Space, & Access to Nature

Broadway Fillmore lost 85% of its population from 1950 to 2010, a decline that is unrivaled almost anywhere in America. While population is growing again, and must continue to do so for the neighborhood to heal, this decline has opened up a chance to permanently secure City owned vacant land for public use. **Land is now the people's wealth.**

Broadway Fillmore has been without a viable City park since the Sears Paderewski Park was

and permanently affordable housing, is especially compelling in Broadway Fillmore.

The neighborhood not only lacks useful City parks, but also the variety of park types—sports, play, passive, habitat, urban plaza—that are all needed to make a neighborhood healthy and whole. **This open space deficit must be resolved with a constellation of public spaces** designed to meet different community needs. Existing community gardens and urban farms should also be supported.



Built as a pocket park but not officially designated, 280 Paderewski Drive is the potential Manru Park.

abandoned years ago and Polonia Park was transferred to the New York Central Railroad in 1926. The Partnership for the Public Good's call for reserving at least half of City owned vacant land for public purposes, such as parks, stormwater management, habitat regeneration,

- **Move forward on the proposed Great Lawn** as a bridge connecting Buffalo Central Terminal to the neighborhood, while realizing opportunities to retain and expand access to nature and habitat. Incorporate pollinators.
- **Transform Sears Paderewski Park into a neighborhood asset**, per the Buffalo Parks Master Plan, and expand the quarter-acre park to include the adjacent City owned parcels at 123 and 125 Sears Street (increasing the park size by 46%).
- **Establish a Kent Street Connector** with a paved multi-use path with lighting connecting both sides of Kent Street through the City-owned 177 and 179 Playter Street and 84 Sweet Avenue. Work with Eugene V. Debs Hall, Inc., to plant landscape and provide regular maintenance.

- **Establish a public square at 111 Memorial Drive**, which is appropriate as an art, sculpture, fountain, or monument site. Consider a partnership with a local arts organization.
- **Consider a park or playground on contiguous City owned parcels** at 55 Newton Street and 332 Curtiss Street, which offer dramatic views of the Central Terminal.
- **Work with the Central Terminal Neighborhood Association to improve community spaces** at 60 Memorial Drive and 71 Lombard Street. Erect a new block club sign.
- **Support non-profit acquisition of City owned land for permanent open space uses.**
- **Grant City of Buffalo parks designation to City owned vacant parcels** already used by neighborhood residents as park-like spaces, and give them names in consultation with residents, including:
 - 111 Memorial Drive
 - 280 Paderewski Drive
 - 388 & 400 Paderewski Drive
- **Consider a habitat and meadowlands rehabilitation pilot project** on a contiguous set of City owned parcels, such as at Peckham and Lombard, to increase access to nature.
- **Create a neighborhood level committee** to review City-owned vacant lots and open space parcels for potential opportunities **to create new parkland and natural areas**, per the Buffalo Parks Master Plan.
- **Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles** into parks and open space planning.
- **Base citywide investment decisions in parks and open spaces upon need**, with equity and justice principles at the forefront.



Sears Paderewski Park has long been abandoned, but is slated for hundreds of thousands of dollars in improvements. Neighbors hope to expand the park to include two adjacent City owned parcels.



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