

# Regional Revitalization Partnership

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**A Collaborative Economic  
Development Strategy for Buffalo,  
Niagara Falls and Rochester**

DEVELOPED IN 2021  
PUBLISHED IN SPRING 2022

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Maximizing Impact:  
Co-Investing in  
Community Wealth Building

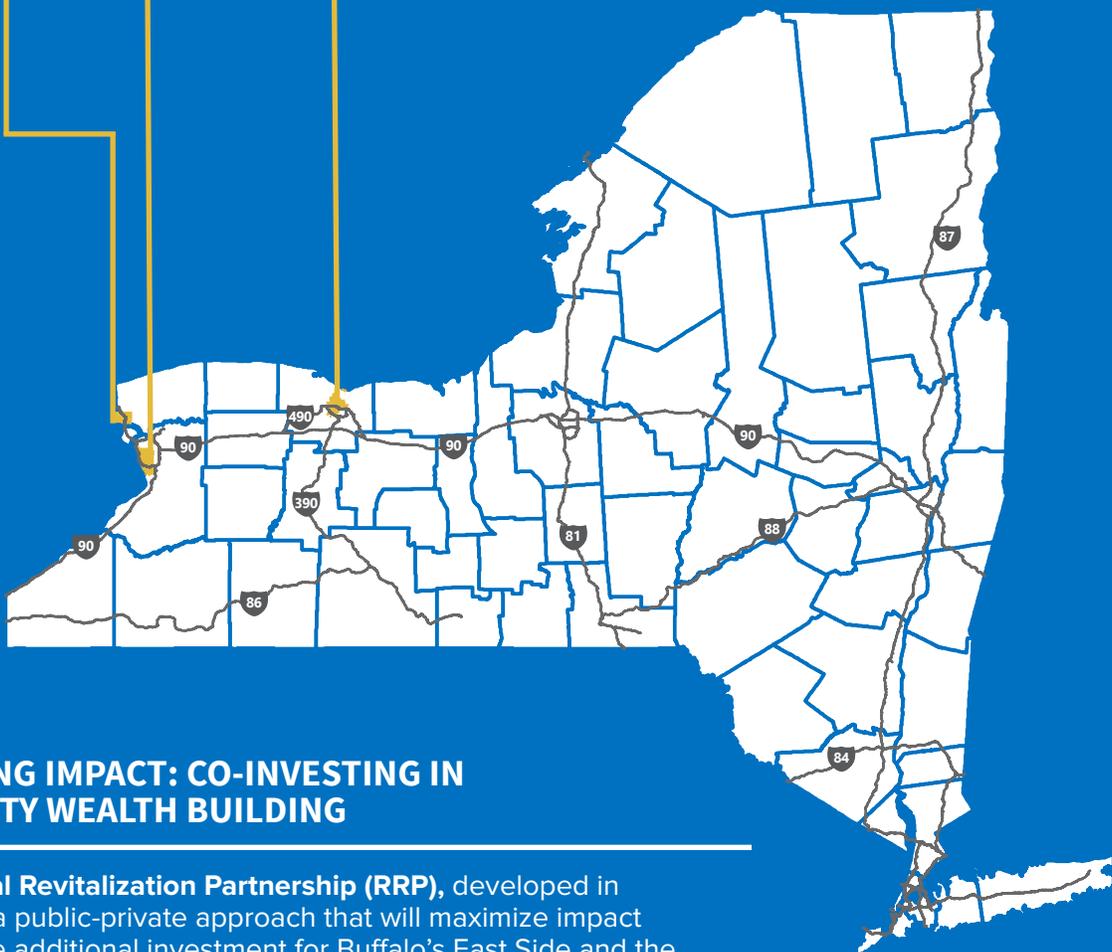


**Empire State  
Development**

City of  
Niagara Falls

City of Buffalo

City of Rochester



## MAXIMIZING IMPACT: CO-INVESTING IN COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

The **Regional Revitalization Partnership (RRP)**, developed in 2021, takes a public-private approach that will maximize impact and leverage additional investment for Buffalo's East Side and the urban cores of Rochester and Niagara Falls. This holistic economic development strategy can demonstrate how NYS's partnership with cities as well as private/philanthropic sectors can drive catalytic initiatives that help disadvantaged communities and lay the foundation for a decade of inclusive recovery. This strategy, first implemented in Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Rochester will serve as a pilot program that could be rolled out to the rest of New York State and has the potential to become an unprecedented and innovative national model for community and economic revitalization.

# Regional Revitalization Partnership

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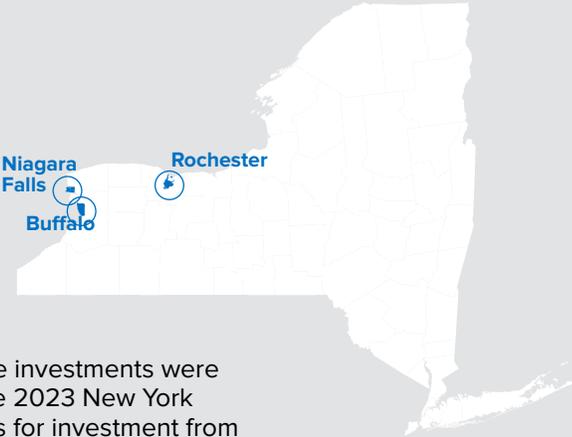
# Planning and Funding Revitalization Together: A Cohesive Strategy Developed in 2021

## Co-Investing in Regional Community Wealth Building

The **Regional Revitalization Partnership (RRP)** takes a holistic approach to economic development designed to strengthen the region’s ecosystem and build community wealth through multiple paths.

A collaborative, community-driven, targeted economic development investment strategy will build community wealth and leverage public/private co-investments to maximize impact. These investments were announced on April 25, 2022 by Governor Kathy Hochul as part of the 2023 New York State budget. This book provides additional details about the priorities for investment from the RRP.

Developed through a collaborative effort in 2021, the **RRP** is a **\$300 million private and public co-investment** in three interconnected geographic areas. Investment in these areas catalyzes economic growth for the entire region. Each area is at a different stage in its economic development, so the level of project detail provided herein varies.



**BUFFALO’S EAST SIDE** has an existing, ambitious community revitalization effort called East Side Avenues that provides capital and organizational support to transformational projects. This initiative will be built upon and scaled up.



**ROCHESTER** is a center for innovation and entrepreneurship with a rich history of invention and modernization. Investment will create places that attract and retain companies and talent.



**NIAGARA FALLS** is initiating a strategic economic development plan that builds on its unique assets. With millions of tourist dollars flowing each year, the plan will work to build and lengthen visitorship to increase tourism spend.

### ABOUT THE REGIONAL REVITALIZATION PARTNERSHIP

The Regional Revitalization Partnership (RRP) is a comprehensive community-driven economic development strategy developed in 2021 by a team led by the **University at Buffalo Regional Institute (UBRI)**, a research center of the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning. This strategy was made possible by the investment, leadership, and support of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation and in collaboration with the Office of Governor Kathy Hochul, Empire State Development Corporation, and partners in the cities of Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Rochester.

## COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING ECOSYSTEM

The RRP will focus investment on:



### SMALL BUSINESS

with a focus on those owned by women and people of color



### PLACEMAKING

to regenerate commercial corridors and waterfronts, rebuild community anchors and revitalize neighborhoods



### WORKFORCE

investments to enhance residents' skills and increase access to good paying jobs for everyone

## Economic Development Strategy built FOR the Community, BY the Community

The RRP was designed through interactive and ongoing community and stakeholder input and engagement. Increased capacity and sustainability of **community-based organizations** ensures that programs directly engage with community members. Strong local intermediaries connect the dots while assessing, problem solving and ensuring resources are getting to the community.

The effort has garnered broad regional support, initially led by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation and their pledge of **\$67 million of matching funds.**

## COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING EMERGES THROUGH TARGETED INVESTMENT IN:



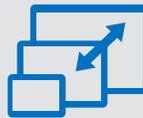
### NEW PATHS TO BUILD ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:

Invest in building the small business ecosystem to ensure supplier diversity, entrepreneurial growth for MWBEs and workforce development that connects people to good-paying jobs.



### BUILD CAPACITY AND SCALE UP SUCCESS:

Strengthen core existing nonprofits through capacity-building programs, leverage recent investments and enhance successful programs to build more community wealth.

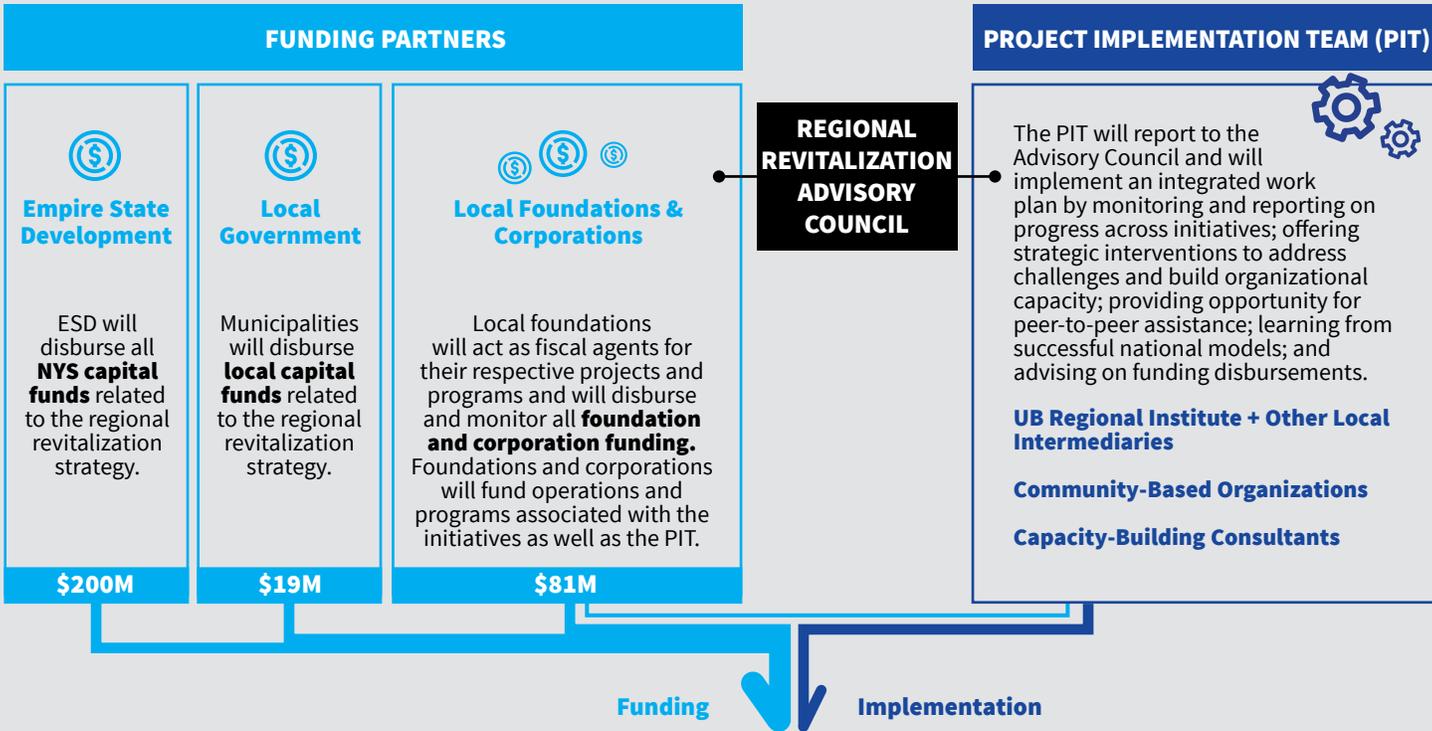


### TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITY ANCHORS AND HERITAGE AREAS:

Invest in iconic, catalytic large-scale community anchors and unique historic assets/areas.

**GOVERNANCE,  
PARTNERS & FINANCE**

A Project Implementation Team (PIT) will provide leadership, implementation support and technical assistance for existing community-based organizations. Pooled funds and operations will be overseen by a Regional Revitalization Advisory Council.



**REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY AND EXECUTIONAL PROGRAM ELEMENTS**

- Three advisory councils (Buffalo, Rochester and Niagara Falls) will each participate in quarterly meetings and receive quarterly reports.
- An annual regional summit will be held to share ideas, strategize and plan.
- One annual report to the community will be developed that communicates the progress of the regional revitalization effort.

# Why is this Strategy Unique?

Economic Development Strategy:

## FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE COMMUNITY

A **community-driven process** was used to develop **economic investment strategies** for Buffalo's East Side and Niagara Falls.



A similar public engagement process will **take place in Rochester.**

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIP TO MAXIMIZE IMPACT

The RRP is a **unique partnership of private funders, public entities and community-based organizations.**

By **investing in a coordinated, collaborative, strategic way**, the RRP's impact will be maximized.

By **co-investing**, federal, state and local dollars will be aggregated and leveraged.

**Increased capacity and sustainability** of community-based organizations ensures that programs engage with and are led by community members.

This **holistic approach to economic development** is designed to strengthen the ecosystem and build community wealth through multiple paths.

**Strong local intermediaries connect the dots and help build and implement programs**, while assessing/reporting, problem solving and ensuring resources are getting to the community.

# How are we getting there?

**Building an ecosystem that generates community wealth by investing in programs, people and places.**

The \$300 million portfolio of catalytic projects and programs represents a holistic and sustainable approach to community wealth building. By co-investing, partners in local and state government, as well as local banks and foundations, create a coordinated and strategic funding model to maximize leverage and impact.

## MULTI-YEAR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

	BUFFALO	NIAGARA FALLS	ROCHESTER	TOTAL
State/Federal	\$130M	\$20M	\$50M	\$200M
Philanthropy/Corporate	\$41M	\$15M	\$25M	\$81M
Municipality/Federal (Buffalo)	\$9M			\$9M
Municipality/Federal (Niagara Falls)		\$5M		\$5M
Municipality/Federal (Rochester)			\$5M	\$5M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$180M</b>	<b>\$40M</b>	<b>\$80M</b>	<b>\$300M</b>



# Buffalo's East Side

The East Side is a place with active and engaged residents and visitors, significant historic resources, community-based assets, walkable main streets, education and training resources and access to public transit. Its commercial districts are primary economic drivers, embracing unique neighborhood character, providing services and amenities to residents and visitors, offering small business opportunities for entrepreneurs, and establishing crucial connections between anchor assets, residential neighborhoods and employment centers. It's a place with momentum, and a place worth investing in. Strategies developed by the community build on the early success of the collaborative capacity-building initiative East Side Avenues.

## PROPOSED INVESTMENT SUMMARY

	INVESTMENT
Commercial Corridors / Small Business Development	\$15M
Broadway Market	\$37M
Central Terminal	\$61M
Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor	\$30M
Martin Luther King, Jr. Park	\$6M
Northland Workforce / Corridor	\$21M
Intermediary / Capacity Building	\$10M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$180M</b>

## BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE

# Commercial Corridors/ Small Business Development



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$15M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Small businesses are critical to the local economy. MWBEs are the backbone of the East Side. This funding will give businesses access to resources to ensure they can grow with the needs of evolving markets. It will create an expanded building renovation program to improve the business climate, combat vacancies, and contribute to the overall revitalization of East Side commercial corridors. This program also supports a dedicated funding source to support stabilization of at-risk historic buildings so they may be used for future commercial development, ensuring that historic assets are saved and neighborhood character is preserved—both essential to a thriving commercial district.

### HOW \$15M WILL BE USED

**Funding will support and expand the existing East Side Commercial Districts program** which provides capital grants to small business owners to improve their buildings and surroundings. Operational support enhances the capacity of community-based organizations on the East Side who lead outreach to business owners and assist with the administration of the grants.

**The small business ecosystem will be built** through Open4's strategic investments in Community Development Financial Institutions, Business Support Organizations, and Community Development Corporations. Open4 is a partnership of community-based organizations and funders working together to connect entrepreneurs and small businesses with the resources, support and guidance they need to thrive.

**Additional capital grants will be made available to East Side building owners who complete the Community-Based Real Estate Development Training (CBREDT) program.** The grants support building renovations, with priority given to those who both live in and own buildings on the East Side. Support would continue and expand the 23-week, hands-on education program.

**The state's current \$5M investment in the Commercial Building Stabilization Fund will be expanded** to provide additional capital grants to building owners for the stabilization of at-risk historic buildings in targeted investment areas.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

Buffalo's East Side commercial districts house some of the most successful and long-term neighborhood-based businesses of all sizes and scale. Revitalization of these clustered amenities grows businesses on the corridors and serves nearby residents.

Open4's investment in the small business ecosystem provides expanded opportunities for underserved and low-income business owners and entrepreneurs.

The CBREDT program empowers East Side community members who own buildings and protects against displacement and gentrification. Students gain tools to succeed, and have access to grant opportunities upon successful completion of the course.

More than in any other area of the city, the East Side has historic buildings in danger of demolition by neglect. The stabilization program will ensure the core fabric of neighborhood and commercial corridors and will provide viable redevelopment opportunities.



## BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE

# Broadway Market



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$37M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Broadway Market is being transformed into a year-round attraction that supports small businesses and creates stronger connections to the Broadway Fillmore business district and nearby Central Terminal.

A comprehensive planning process was completed to create a business and marketing plan and concept design services.

Operational funding will support plan implementation, and ensure that small business tenants are supported and that the space is optimized. Capital funding for equipment and improvements will create a modern facility that is welcoming to visitors.



### HOW \$37M WILL BE USED

This investment will enable improvements to renovate and reinvent the dated facility and turn it into a dynamic, neighborhood-based international food hub. Capacity building and operational investment will go toward the establishment of a not-for-profit management entity and associated board of directors solely committed to the market's operations and success, and staffed with full-time personnel.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

The Broadway Market will be the center for vibrant food access and opportunities, entrepreneurial growth for diverse populations of local residents, and will stimulate the East Side economy by attracting local and regional visitors year-round to the market.

[Hear inspiring words from East Sider, Michael Threat.](#)

## BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE

## Central Terminal



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$61M

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The plan is to restore and reactivate one of Buffalo's most iconic buildings. The Central Terminal is currently using New York State funds to restore its historic concourse. Capital investments and operational support will create a year-round, regional venue using the diversity of spaces on the Main Concourse of the Terminal and will include parking accessibility and full capacity for catering and entertainment.

Central Terminal recently completed a community-informed 12-month master planning process that will guide the vision, operations, finances, and capital improvements to the site; and neighborhood planning and outreach to connect the site to the Broadway Market and the Broadway Fillmore business district. New full-time operational staff now oversees and manages future capital improvements to the property, fundraising, events, outreach and marketing with the goal to eventually reuse the entire complex and restore the iconic art deco tower.

View videos to learn more:

[Board Chair, Paul Lang](#)

[Executive Director, Monica Pellegrino Faix and Board Member, James Morell.](#)

## HOW \$61M WILL BE USED

Capital investments will stabilize this iconic former train station to allow its use as a multi-purpose center for events and community activities, and also to render it "developer-ready" for future adaptive reuse of portions of the complex for residential, commercial, lodging, small business incubator space, etc. to contribute to long-term economic sustainability. Capacity building and operational support will ensure the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation can serve as an ongoing steward/landlord for such a transformation and grow the complex into an asset for the community.

## IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

The restoration of Broadway Fillmore's significant landmark building will attract private investment and visitors to the area, changing the trajectory of Buffalo's East Side economy and signifying a broader, regional growth mindset, inspired by historic preservation.



## BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE

# Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$30M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

This project builds off the work of the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission to create a cohesive tourist destination around the concentration of historic assets between William Street and Broadway (the Michigan Street Baptist Church, the Nash House Museum, the Colored Musicians Club, and the WUFO Black Radio History Collective).

Capital investments such as upgrades to historic buildings, building expansions, ADA and safety compliance, streetscape improvements, community gathering spaces, and other critical amenities such as a visitor center will improve the visitor experience and better connect the assets to each other and downtown Buffalo. The goal is to create a unified tourist destination that will tell the story of Buffalo's contribution to African American history while attracting new visitors from the region.

The Corridor's Strategic Action Plan and Economic Development Plan were completed in early 2022 and will help formalize a cooperative operating model that can support operations, fundraising, and marketing, and prioritize future capital investments.

View videos to learn more:

[Lillie Wiley-Upshaw, MS Baptist Church](#)

[George Scott, Colored Musicians Club](#)

[Terry Alford, Executive Director, MSAAHC Commission and Sharon Holley, Nash House Museum](#)

### HOW \$30M WILL BE USED

Capital investments will implement recommendations from the recently completed Strategic Action Plan and Economic Development Strategy for the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor, a nationally and internationally recognized Buffalo neighborhood that serves as the focal point of residents' and visitors' experience for learning about Buffalo's rich African American history. Operational dollars will support programs, tours, and enhance the visitor experience.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

The Heritage Corridor's festivals, cultural events and artistic programming will draw residents, scholars and artists, writers, storytellers, poets, dancers, and actors to a thriving community of historic urban scale. The surrounding area will benefit from visitor spending and an improved district.



## BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE

# Martin Luther King, Jr. Park



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$6M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Park is a critical historic asset and widely-used community anchor. Funding will be used to renovate the Park's greenhouses. The greenhouses currently produce 10,000 annuals and hundreds of other plants for all the parks in the Olmsted Park System and support park maintenance and horticulture jobs.



### HOW \$6M WILL BE USED

Capital investment will fully restore the historic MLK Park greenhouses and ensure the space will house educational and workforce development opportunities in horticulture and park management. Operational support for the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy will train and employ residents to work at MLK Park and throughout the Olmsted Park System.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

MLK Park is a critical greenspace on Buffalo's East Side. It is well used and accessible to residents and the addition of workforce development and training in the Park will build wealth for community members interested in park management and horticulture with new job opportunities in parks.

## BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE



# Northland Workforce Training Center

## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$21M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Northland Workforce Training Center (NWTC) is an industry-driven, public-private partnership between employers, educational institutions, community and faith-based organizations and state and local government. NWTC is focused on closing the skills gap of the local labor pool and creating economic on-ramps to training, co-ops, internships, apprenticeships, and permanent employment for Western New Yorkers seeking high-paying advanced manufacturing and energy careers.



### HOW \$21M WILL BE USED

Funding will provide capital and operating support and advance NWTC's mission to prioritize training and employment for under- and unemployed residents, with an emphasis on communities of color, while growing WNY's and the state's clean energy resources. NWTC's workforce development program will continue to provide much-needed, in-demand training for hundreds of residents per year.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

As an initial East Side target area, investments in the Northland Corridor have been transformational, setting the stage for an economic center for manufacturing innovation. Companies will locate at Northland to be near Buffalo Manufacturing Works, residents will earn higher wages in manufacturing through training at the NWTC, and the promise of future development to ensure future growth and success will exist.

[View Northland's Performance Outcomes](#)

### ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

In addition to the \$21M of investment through the RRP, \$55M in capital funding from New York State will fully prepare the remaining former factory sites and build additional clean-energy infrastructure along the Northland Corridor from Fillmore to Grider, building on the success of investments to date.



# Niagara Falls

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Niagara Falls is a city on the move. Drawing inspiration from its unparalleled natural landscape and rich history, the city is reversing the scars of failed urban renewal projects and repositioning itself as a sustainable, globally-recognized place to visit and an attractive place to live and work.

Strategic investments identified through community-centered planning are ripe to enliven walkable commercial corridors, support local businesses, and connect regional and global visitors with local amenities beyond the downtown tourism core.

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## PROPOSED INVESTMENT SUMMARY

	INVESTMENT
Agritourism and Food Entrepreneurship	\$19M
Waterfront, Heritage Tourism & Community Anchors	\$15M
Small Business & Placemaking	\$5M
Intermediary / Capacity Building	\$1M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$40M</b>

## NIAGARA FALLS

# Agritourism & Food Entrepreneurship



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$19M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Niagara Falls offers an eclectic mix of food enterprises, but there is not a cohesive food ecosystem that builds on the region's food and agriculture strengths. Expanding existing and fostering new food-related enterprises—such as restaurants, food stores, farming, manufacturers, processors, food waste and agri-tech businesses—that are authentic to the region has the potential to be alluring for travelers and a major economic driver for Niagara Falls. Beyond creating wealth for local business owners, this industry has the potential to create employment and training opportunities, draw tourists from the waterfront and downtown into adjoining neighborhoods, spark innovative products and processes, attract new residents to the area, invigorate a treasured Niagara Falls institution—the City Market on Pine Avenue, and revitalize the area surrounding the market.



### HOW \$19M WILL BE USED

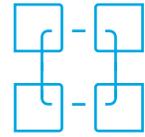
The program will foster a long-term pipeline for food entrepreneurship in Niagara Falls that capitalizes on the rich food culture of the city, regional agricultural strengths, and food-based tourism/hospitality opportunities and trends. Funding will support a food-based ecosystem strategic action plan along with capital needs, organizational supports and programmatic interventions associated with the plan. This will facilitate the revitalization and redevelopment of the City Market as a key anchor, invest in the area surrounding the market, and build collaboration among stakeholders to connect and coordinate the agriculture and hospitality industries; and ultimately foster entrepreneurship while building on the authentic agriculture and culinary strengths of the city and region.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

Strengthening food-based entrepreneurship can be a catalyst for economic growth in the city and region. Agriculture is a strong sector in Niagara County, but compared to nearby Ontario, Canada as well as other upstate New York regions, farm revenues lag behind and are disconnected from food retailers and restaurants in the City of Niagara Falls and throughout WNY. By creating stronger connections between existing food entrepreneurs and the region's food producers and processors and investing in capital improvements and support for small businesses, Niagara Falls has the opportunity to create an authentic, premier food and agritourism destination.

## NIAGARA FALLS

# Waterfront, Heritage Tourism & Community Anchors



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$15M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Through the planning processes for the *Downtown Niagara Falls Development Strategy (2020)* and *Niagara Falls Strategic Economic Development Fund (2021)*, community stakeholders prioritized projects that strengthen Niagara Falls' waterfront and community anchors, while telling the story of Niagara Falls' unique history and heritage. Collectively, projects that advance these priorities have the potential to transform the way visitors and residents experience and move between downtown, the State Park, and nearby neighborhoods. They also offer new opportunities for entrepreneurship, enhance the City's cultural offerings, expand the possibilities for community programming, and create a more vibrant urban environment attractive to both residents and visitors.



### HOW \$15M WILL BE USED

Investment in waterfront and heritage tourism projects will reinforce and strengthen important connections to the waterfront, upgrade community anchors, and/or enhance the current or future built environment. Areas of focus could include heritage tourism assets and projects identified in the *Niagara Falls Strategic Economic Development Fund*; additional connections to the City's world-class waterfront; enhancements that provide residents and visitors additional ways to experience the waterfront and other key neighborhoods both actively and passively; and potential investment in strategic sites that have adjacency to the waterfront, sites that build upon previous investment, and/or sites that have substantial pedestrian flow.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

Consistent leveraging and investment in high-impact and importantly situated land parcels throughout Niagara Falls will continually increase access to the waterfront, enhance and extend the resident and visitor experience, and provide increased value and use of important sites. The City of Niagara Falls will continue its differentiation as a place that understands and celebrates its own unique strengths and authenticity, and invests in it both through capital investment and targeted tourism marketing. This approach will have meaningful economic and fiscal impact over the long-term.

## NIAGARA FALLS

# Small Business & Placemaking



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$5M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Despite the work of committed and long-standing business owners, there is a lack of capacity in Niagara Falls to organize and implement collective placemaking projects and programs. And, despite a rich history, and some efforts to brand areas along the targeted corridors (i.e. Pine Avenue “Little Italy”), there is no cohesive placemaking strategy that ties together businesses and cultural assets. The RRP will drive a comprehensive placemaking strategy and build the capacity of nonprofit organizations to work with business owners to execute a unified vision for improvements and communicate to residents and visitors that these corridors are worth visiting.



### HOW \$5M WILL BE USED

This investment will establish the Niagara Falls Small Business Property Improvement Program (SBPIP) which will provide funding for renovations to commercial and mixed-use buildings along strategic investment corridors. Modeled after the New York Main Street program, SBPIP will offer capital grants to building owners. In coordination with the City of Niagara Falls, funding will be dedicated to streetscape and infrastructure improvements along the investment corridors that directly align with SBPIP commercial building renovations and other projects and programs.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

The SBPIP will generate wealth for small business owners through expanding and enhancing neighborhood-serving businesses including retail, restaurants, and other services. With small businesses recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, some business owners put off capital improvements due to financial strain and no longer have all the necessary funding for these critical projects. A building renovation fund will improve the business climate, increase mixed-use opportunities, combat vacancies and contribute to the overall revitalization of the investment corridors. Stakeholders voiced that investment in public spaces could be transformational in creating vibrant commercial districts and enhancing the overall sense of place to attract more and new customers to the investment corridors.



# ROCHESTER

The City of Rochester sits on the southern shore of mighty Lake Ontario, the fourteenth largest lake in the world. It is truly a Great Lake City, with its waterfront being the beautiful and fascinating end-of-the-line of the spectacular Genesee River. Rochester combines small-town accessibility with big-city services, with short commute times, world-class cultural and entertainment offerings and a fast-growing entrepreneurial economy poised to thrive in the 21st century. Rochester is known as a hub for innovation and has played a leading role in advanced manufacturing/research, and has impressive educational resources in both traditional and evolving imaging sciences.

## PROPOSED TARGETED INVESTMENT SUMMARY

	INVESTMENT
Commercial Corridors / Small Business Development	\$9M
Waterfront / Placemaking	\$50M
Workforce Development	\$20M
Intermediary / Capacity Building	\$1M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$80M</b>

## ROCHESTER

# Commercial Corridors / Small Business Development



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$9M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Recent investments have been made in initiatives like the Rochester Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) Revitalize Rochester Fund, which delivers a multi-pronged and geographically targeted investment strategy aimed at reimagining Rochester's traditional commercial corridors. REDCO works to create equitable neighborhood wealth for existing and new businesses through strategic economic development. Its mission is to reduce wealth disparities between Rochester neighborhoods by creating and supporting locally owned micro and small neighborhood businesses and urban enterprises.

The small business ecosystem would be built out further through Open4's strategic investments in Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Business Support Organizations, and Community Development Corporations to provide programs and financial support to small businesses.

### HOW FUNDING WILL BE USED

The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC) will form an advisory committee to oversee investments made from this new Regional Revitalization Partnership. The newly formed FLREDC advisory committee will setup a process to accept and review applications for projects and initiatives to implement the strategic goals of the partnership, including small business development, workforce development and placemaking in downtown Rochester and along the Genesee River waterfront.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

Community-based economic development that increases wealth in every part of the City is essential for future prosperity in Rochester. The RRP will support and invest in minority and women-owned businesses and establishments in urban commercial corridors. Public-private partnerships like the Revitalize Rochester Fund can help address disparities by providing much-needed access to capital and support to business owners and entrepreneurs. Open4's investment in the small business ecosystem provides expanded opportunities for underserved and low-income business owners and entrepreneurs.



## ROCHESTER

Waterfront /  
Placemaking**PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$50M****ABOUT THE PROJECT**

Investment will focus on initiatives that improve and enhance Rochester's waterfront such as Phase 2 of ROC the Riverway which will focus on creating a new state park, reopening a key riverside hotel, a renovated visitor center, a reimagined aqueduct, and a new downtown partnership to galvanize public and private resources and attract more businesses, residents and visitors.

**HOW FUNDING WILL BE USED**

The ROC the Riverway Program consolidates more than two dozen transformational projects along the Genesee River into a unified strategy that will enable Rochester to better leverage the value of its riverfront. The program includes a variety of projects, such as the completion of the Genesee Riverway Trail along the riverfront through the Center City, and a redesign of Charles Carroll Plaza and Genesee Crossroads Park. The plan also envisions significant upgrades to major riverfront facilities, including the Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial; the Joseph A. Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center; and the Rundel Memorial Library building.

**IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT**

Revitalizing the Genesee River corridor will help fuel the local economy. ROC the Riverway attracts new jobs and solidifies Rochester's identity as a vibrant waterfront community. Cities around the world have discovered the power of great public spaces, bicycle/pedestrian-focused infrastructure, and water-oriented development in attracting employers and the next generation workforce. ROC the Riverway previously received a total initial state investment of \$50 million for Phase I. Funding for additional phases from the RRP for projects like restoring the historic aqueduct and creating a new state park at High Falls would further enhance Rochester's waterfront.

## ROCHESTER

# Workforce Development



## PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT: \$20M

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Workforce training programs will work to reduce area unemployment and better prepare and align under- and unemployed individuals with regional employer needs. In addition, programs that prepare workers and connect them to in-demand high-tech and higher-paying employment opportunities will be supported.

### IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

Working in coordination with the NYS Department of Labor and the new Office of Strategic Workforce Development (at Empire State Development), this partnership will help direct operational support to expand programs that have demonstrated success or can help address the new, unique workforce challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Community-Based Organization and Intermediary Support

Intermediaries work with community implementation partners to connect dots between the programs, the community, key stakeholders and funders and lead community engagement, project management, research, implementation, communications and evaluation.

Funding provides operational support, technical assistance, and strategic capacity building for community-based organizations/RRP implementation partners and intermediaries.

## HOW \$12M WILL BE USED

The funding will help build the infrastructure to support community-based organizations that serve as implementation partners for the RRP. For example, funds from this program could be used to support the creation of positions at organizations to plan for RRP-related programmatic growth. Project leadership and coordination will keep programs moving forward.

## IMPACT OF THE INVESTMENT

Funding will build and strengthen the capacity of the RRP's community implementation partners, provide strategic direction and ensure long-term sustainability.

# Who will Benefit?

The effort will focus on underserved areas and populations in Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Rochester where strong community assets and dedicated community-based organizations exist. Core commercial districts will be enhanced resulting in small business, entrepreneurial and tourism growth. Industry-based training and placement programs will provide opportunities for under and unemployed residents and strengthen and attract manufacturing and innovation.



### Residents

(with a focus on under/unemployed, communities of color and under-represented populations)



### Small Business Owners and Entrepreneurs

(with an emphasis on MWBEs)



### Commercial Property Owners

(with an emphasis on historic and corridor property owners)



### Community-based Non-profit Organizations



### Employers Looking to Fill Jobs



### Visitors and Tourists



### Educators and Students



### Artists and Artisans

## TARGETED SECTORS

- Manufacturing
- Hospitality/tourism
- Agriculture and food
- Tech
- Energy
- Construction
- Retail

# Measurable Impacts

Through collaborative investment in catalytic projects, the region's long-term economy will be positively affected in numerous ways creating new opportunities for diverse and previously underserved populations and encouraging small business, entrepreneurial and manufacturing growth.

## Examples of Measurable Impacts

### INCREASE IN:

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Number of firms, start-ups and small businesses

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Business revenue

---

Number of jobs, especially higher-paying jobs with career pathways

---

Access to jobs and training

---

Total wages/Average annual wage

---

Capacity and sustainability of community-based organizations

---

Access to capital

---

Visitors and visitor revenue

---

Awareness and positive public perception of the region

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Young adult population

---

Access to fresh foods

---

Community engagement

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# Community Projects in the \$300M Investment Portfolio



				TOTAL
<b>BUFFALO'S EAST SIDE</b>	<b>Commercial Corridors/ Small Business Development</b>	Strengthen the small business ecosystem by funding commercial building enhancements and stabilization and partnering with CDFIs and BSOs.	<b>\$15M</b>	<b>\$170M</b>
	<b>Broadway Market</b>	Re-establish the Market as a viable and vibrant public shopping hub and attractive regional destination.	<b>\$37M</b>	
	<b>Central Terminal</b>	Plan for the future of the site and create a robust organization to guide capital improvements with the goals to eventually reuse the entire complex and better connect it to the Broadway Fillmore neighborhood.	<b>\$61M</b>	
	<b>Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor</b>	Create a cooperative operating/business model and plan for and implement capital improvements for a unified tourist destination around Michigan Street's unique assets.	<b>\$30M</b>	
	<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Park</b>	Fully restore the historic MLK Park greenhouses and ensure the space will house educational and workforce development opportunities in horticulture and park management.	<b>\$6M</b>	
	<b>Northland Workforce/ Corridor</b>	Provide training and job placement for under- and unemployed residents, with an emphasis on communities of color, while growing WNY's and the state's clean energy resources.	<b>\$21M</b>	
<b>NIAGARA FALLS</b>	<b>Agritourism/Food Entrepreneurship</b>	Maximize the growth and connectivity of agriculture and tourism through intentional partnerships, entrepreneurship, and the built environment.	<b>\$19M</b>	<b>\$39M</b>
	<b>Waterfront, Heritage Tourism &amp; Community Anchors</b>	Strengthen and reinforce connections to the waterfront, optimize tourism and the future built environment, and facilitate growth and expansion of key community assets.	<b>\$15M</b>	
	<b>Small Business/ Placemaking</b>	Generate stability and growth for small business owners through commercial building improvements that help create attractive, safe, accessible commercial corridors.	<b>\$5M</b>	
<b>ROCHESTER</b>	<b>Commercial Corridors/ Small Business Development</b>	Revitalize commercial corridors through neighborhood economic development and by supporting emerging, diverse local city entrepreneurs.	<b>\$9M</b>	<b>\$79M</b>
	<b>Waterfront/ Placemaking</b>	Improve and enhance Rochester's waterfront in order to attract visitors, businesses and the next gen workforce.	<b>\$50M</b>	
	<b>Workforce Development</b>	Invest in programs that train underserved populations and connect them to in-demand high-tech and higher-paying employment opportunities.	<b>\$20M</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION CAPACITY BUILDING</b>	Work to connect dots between programs, the community, key stakeholders and funders. Build capacity of community-based organizations that serve as RRP implementation partners with support on community engagement, project management, research, implementation, communications and evaluation.			<b>\$12M</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$300M</b>

# Regional Revitalization Partnership

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A Collaborative Economic Development Strategy  
for Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Rochester

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Empire State  
Development