

Buffalo's Jefferson Avenue

A New Commercial District

Real Opportunity • City-Wide Commitment

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peter j. smith & company inc.
design based planning

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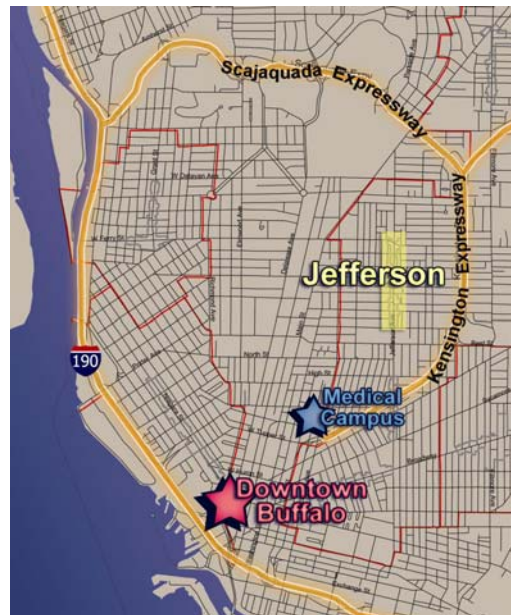
THE BIG PICTURE

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

The Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation (BERC) is proud to showcase the rapidly revitalizing Jefferson Avenue commercial district as one of the City's premiere development opportunities. Whether your project is mixed-use residential, retail, community service or restaurant related, you will be locating in the right place at the right time.

A confluence of events is occurring on Buffalo's East Side. Rapid economic changes including a burgeoning medical corridor, and a renewed municipal commitment to neighborhood economic development, have transformed this historic commercial strip. Funding opportunities are in place to improve existing businesses. Educational opportunities are in place to train local entrepreneurs. The City is firmly committed to implementing strategic infrastructure improvements that will improve the physical appearance and function of Jefferson Avenue.

Positioned directly proximate to Buffalo's burgeoning Medical Campus, Route 33 (Kensington Expressway), and minutes from Downtown Buffalo, the Jefferson Avenue commercial district is a strategic location for growth. Our focus area includes the retail corridor along Jefferson Avenue, bounded by East Ferry Street on the north and Dodge Street on the south. Existing businesses include established retailers, such as Tops Supermarket and Family Dollar, as well as independent businesses (laundromat, convenience stores, etc.) and unique restaurants. The neighborhood is also home to several newly built community and cultural facilities, such as a fire station, library, and state-of-the-art media center.



Regional Context

The Jefferson Avenue commercial district is strategically situated to attract a local, regional and international market. Less than a 10-minute drive from the Peace Bridge to Canada, Jefferson Avenue is proximate to a population of more than 5 million potential patrons in the Niagara Peninsula.



Downtown Buffalo (above) & Buffalo's Medical Campus (right) are within close proximity to the Jefferson Avenue commercial district.

THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY NOW

BUILDING ON OUR PAST ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2005, the Jefferson Avenue Commercial District was designated part of BERC's **Commercial Area Revitalization Effort (CARE)**. CARE was established to promote the economic vitality of Buffalo's older neighborhood commercial districts, and to assist existing business owners with improvements to the physical appearance of their stores. The CARE initiative produced a detailed Market Analysis for Jefferson Avenue that identified specific retail opportunities and action items for the economic improvement of the neighborhood.

Other elements of the CARE program currently offered to existing business owners within the Jefferson Avenue Commercial District include:

- "Operation FACELIFT" funding to remove deteriorating signage or supportive structures, replace and/or repair broken windows and frames, and scrape/paint building facades.
- Storefront Façade Grants to encourage the rehabilitation of building exteriors along the commercial corridor
- Security Improvement Grants
- Rehabilitation Loans to make improvements to real estate
- Corridor Signage Grants to help create new identities for each CARE neighborhood in the form of banners and other promotional items
- Business Assistance Program and small business loans.

This document takes the findings of CARE to the "next level". To attract national retailers and stimulate private investment, the following pages illustrate physical potentials of the neighborhood and the City's commitment to helping make these potentials a reality. Specific market opportunities are correlated to specific buildings on the street. A development theme, and opportunities to attract and retain new businesses are also presented. This coordinated vision has been created to enhance the physical, cultural and economic characteristics that define **Jefferson Avenue**.



Tops Supermarket opened this location on Jefferson Avenue in 2003.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR JEFFERSON AVENUE

BERC's overall vision for the future of the Jefferson Avenue Commercial District can be expressed through the following Goals and Objectives. They represent the standard against which the accomplishments of future implementation will be measured. They are flexible enough to accommodate changes and impose an achievable vision of the future upon today's realities and market potentials.

Goal 1: Clearly Communicate the Vision for the District

Objectives

- Identify specific retail and mixed-use potentials to stimulate private investment
- Clearly illustrate the City's commitment to assisting with public improvement projects
- Highlight specific properties with potential for development, re-use, or façade improvements

Goal 2: Improve & unify the physical appearance of the project area through the development of a "master plan"

Objectives

- Highlight gateway to the project area and central commercial node through special pavement treatments, signage, etc.
- Improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation and parking
- Improve the quality and unity of streetscape elements
- Improve business visibility through clear, organized signage
- Identify location of additional street trees and landscaping

Goal 3: Establish a strong and viable identity for the district

Objectives

- Reflect the art deco style of the old Apollo Theatre in the design of streetscape elements and building architecture
- Build upon the neighborhood's historic jazz heritage
- Provide indoor/outdoor venues for unique musical events to make this area a destination for the greater Buffalo community

Goal 4: Identify steps to attract & retain new businesses

Objectives

- Make Jefferson Avenue a *destination* by identifying a mix of businesses and services that reflects potential demand
- Identify related public sector community improvements



The Jefferson Marketplace was made possible through financial and technical assistance from the BERC and the BERC's Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (EAP).



MARKET POTENTIALS FOR THE DISTRICT

The 2005 Market Study and Revitalization Plan proposed promoting the **identity** of the Jefferson Avenue Commercial District as an *African-American Marketplace*, with retail development focusing on a diverse blend of African-American foods, crafts, clothing, restaurants, music clubs and gift stores. The primary trade area, or geographic area from which most of the project area's customers and sales are expected to be drawn, would be predominantly African-American. Based on 2000 Census data, the median age of residents is 39 years. When compared to the City of Buffalo, the Buffalo-Niagara MSA and the State, the Jefferson CARE Area has the highest median age, the highest percentage of residents 65 years of age or older, and the highest percentage of residents between the ages of five and 17.

The chart below illustrates the specific retail opportunities determined by a comprehensive Retail Market Analysis:

Retail Type	Sales/Sq. ft.	Potential Capture	Expenditure Jefferson 2004 (\$000's)	Potential Sales within District	Supportable Sq.ft.	Existing Sq. Ft.	Shortage/ Surplus
Appliance Stores	\$234.10	20%	637	\$127,360	544	0	-544
Bars	\$271.60	65%	585	\$380,289	1,400	10,200	8,800
Beauty Salons	\$259.97	65%	3,052	\$1,983,586	7,630	6,500	-1,130
Book/Music Stores	\$304.90	20%	537	\$107,464	352	2,300	1,948
Clothing Stores	\$142.73	20%	7,269	\$1,453,850	10,186	1,100	-9,086
Coin Laundry	\$95.97	65%	588	\$382,226	3,983	4,300	317
Computer & Software Stores	\$580.20	20%	544	\$108,744	187	0	-187
Drug Stores	\$513.07	65%	17,693	\$11,500,489	22,415	4,700	-17,715
Florists	\$152.24	20%	155	\$31,024	204	0	-204
Furniture Stores	\$295.76	20%	1,891	\$378,148	1,279	0	-1,279
Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	\$727.20	65%	6,488	\$4,217,252	5,799	0	-5,799
General Merchandise Stores	\$124.40	20%	17,330	\$3,465,958	27,861	5,200	-22,661
Gift Shops	\$128.91	20%	440	\$88,098	683	0	-683
Grocery Store	\$349.41	65%	30,965	\$20,127,107	57,603	4,400	-53,203
Home Improvement Centers	\$197.51	20%	2,784	\$556,820	2,819	1,800	-1,019
Jewelry Stores	\$280.93	20%	814	\$162,798	579	0	-579
Office Supplies	\$215.52	20%	171	\$34,114	158	0	-158
Rental Stores	NA	20%	122	\$24,372	NA	0	NA
Restaurants	\$205.35	65%	12,007	\$7,804,394	38,005	7,100	-30,905
Shoe Stores	\$166.19	20%	926	\$185,206	1,114	2,000	886
Sporting Goods Stores	\$194.55	20%	847	\$169,306	870	0	-870
Toy Stores	\$207.52	20%	611	\$122,190	589	0	-589
Video Rental	\$92.67	65%	290	\$188,175	2,031	0	-2,031



Newly renovated Doris Records and Dexter Pharmacy, courtesy of CARE funding, 2005



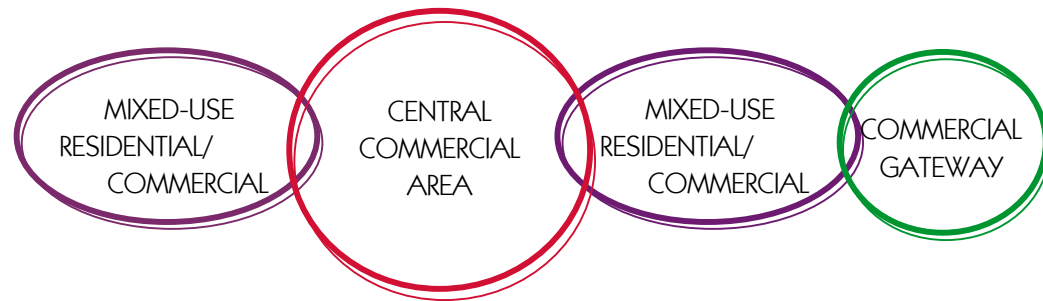
The 2005 Market Study and Revitalization Plan also examined retail sales trends and expenditures for the Jefferson CARE Area. Sales increases between 2004-2009 are anticipated for most of the retail categories examined. These include: beauty salons/barber shops, book/music stores, clothing stores, coin laundry, computer and software stores, drug stores, florists, gasoline stations with convenience stores, general merchandise stores, gift shops, grocery stores, office supplies, rental stores, restaurants, shoe stores, sporting goods stores, toy stores and video rental. Significantly higher than expected household expenditure rates were observed in the following retail categories: grocery store, rental store, beauty salon/barber shops and coin laundry. Areas highlighted in yellow on the preceding chart represent the potential square footage of retail in each category that could be supported within the District.



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE DISTRICT

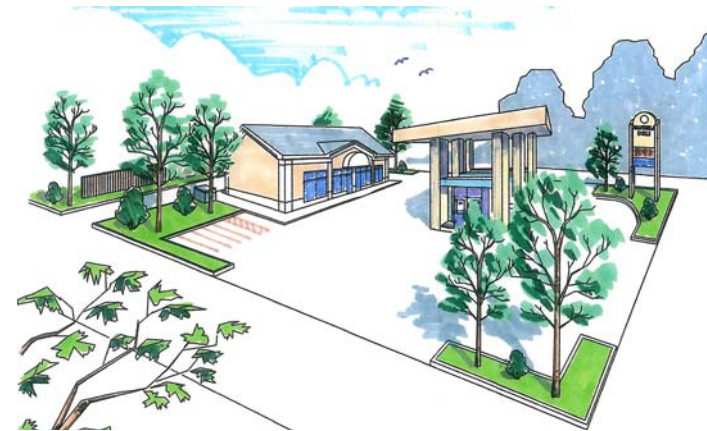
A PHYSICAL “MASTER PLAN”

Redeveloping Jefferson Avenue will better serve its primary trade area, and enable the District to transform into a **destination** for those living within the Greater Buffalo Metropolitan area. The proposed physical “master plan” includes four characteristic areas, as illustrated below:

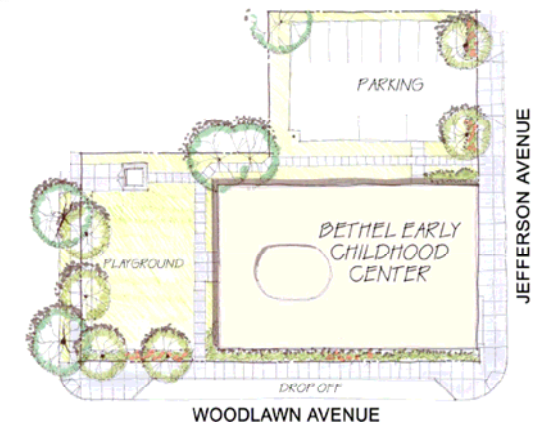


- A **gateway** at Jefferson Avenue and East Ferry Street, the north end of the commercial district
- A **central commercial area** on Jefferson Avenue between East Utica Street and Eaton/Kingsley Streets
- A mix of **residential/commercial uses** north and south of the central commercial area
- A **pedestrian promenade** extending through the central commercial node between Glenwood Avenue and Kingsley Street and connecting with businesses, public facilities (fire station, libraries, etc.), green spaces/parks, and the adjacent neighborhood
- Improved **pedestrian circulation and connections** along Jefferson Avenue and between businesses, the proposed promenade and the adjacent neighborhood
- Improved **vehicular circulation** and additional **parking**
- Additional **street trees** and **landscaping** to help define circulation, provide shade and greenery, and improve the image of the project area

The proposed improvements build an Art Deco Jazz Heritage **image** for the project area, calling to mind the rich legacy of jazz in Buffalo and the influence of the Buffalo Colored Musicians Club. Design Details are proposed to unify the overall project area, improve the appearance of existing businesses, and create an identity which future development can build upon.



Several new projects are already underway, including a gas station with convenience store and a childcare center.



The **RE-DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT** expressed in the “master plan” is to make Jefferson Avenue a **destination** for those within the primary trade area and the greater metropolitan area. The opportunity exists to realize this vision by capitalizing on the prospects of an emerging and capable neighborhood commercial market. This document describes the strategy to achieve this vision.



THE FUTURE

CREATING AN IDENTITY

Focus

The **CENTRAL COMMERCIAL AREA** is the **focus** of the neighborhood. It surrounds the existing Tops supermarket and Jefferson Plaza. New commercial uses are proposed for this area to reinforce the existing, successful retail businesses. A **pedestrian promenade** organizes pedestrian circulation. It provides connectivity between the various civic and commercial buildings within this area and into the surrounding neighborhood. See page 10 for more details.

Anchor

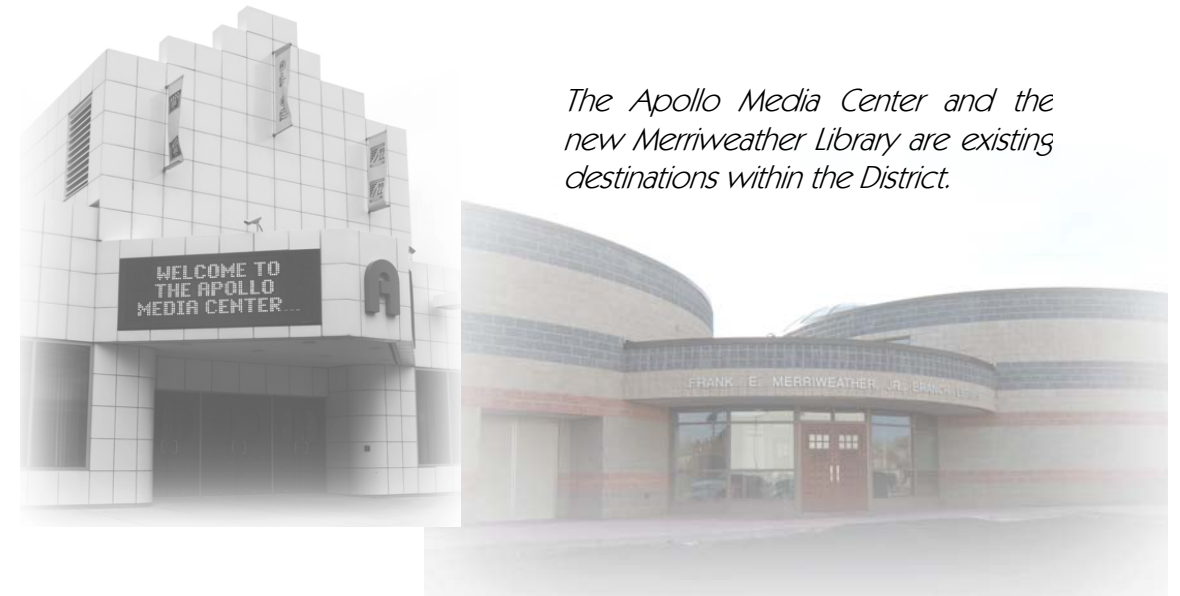
A **NEW APOLLO THEATER AND COMMUNITY PLAZA** are proposed to provide an **anchor** for the central commercial area. The theater could host venues that would attract visitors/shoppers from beyond the primary trade area. The Community Plaza provides an outdoor space for events and community activities.

Image

The proposed image for the project area is an **ART DECO JAZZ HERITAGE** theme, which is reinforced through site elements and the new Apollo Theater. The Art Deco architectural style can be seen throughout Buffalo in many buildings built between 1925-1940, including City Hall, Central Terminal and the Pierce-Arrow showroom (now Greater Buffalo Savings Bank). Within the Jefferson Avenue project area itself, several buildings reflect the Art Deco style. Concurrent with the Art Deco period, jazz enjoyed its heyday in Buffalo. The Colored Musicians Club, formed in 1935, has hosted many famous jazz musicians, including Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, and many more. The Colored Musicians Club has remained vibrant for over 80 years, which may be attributed to Buffalo residents' love of music and the arts. The new Apollo Theater and Community Plaza will build upon the rich legacy of jazz in Buffalo, providing indoor and outdoor performance, meeting and festival spaces.

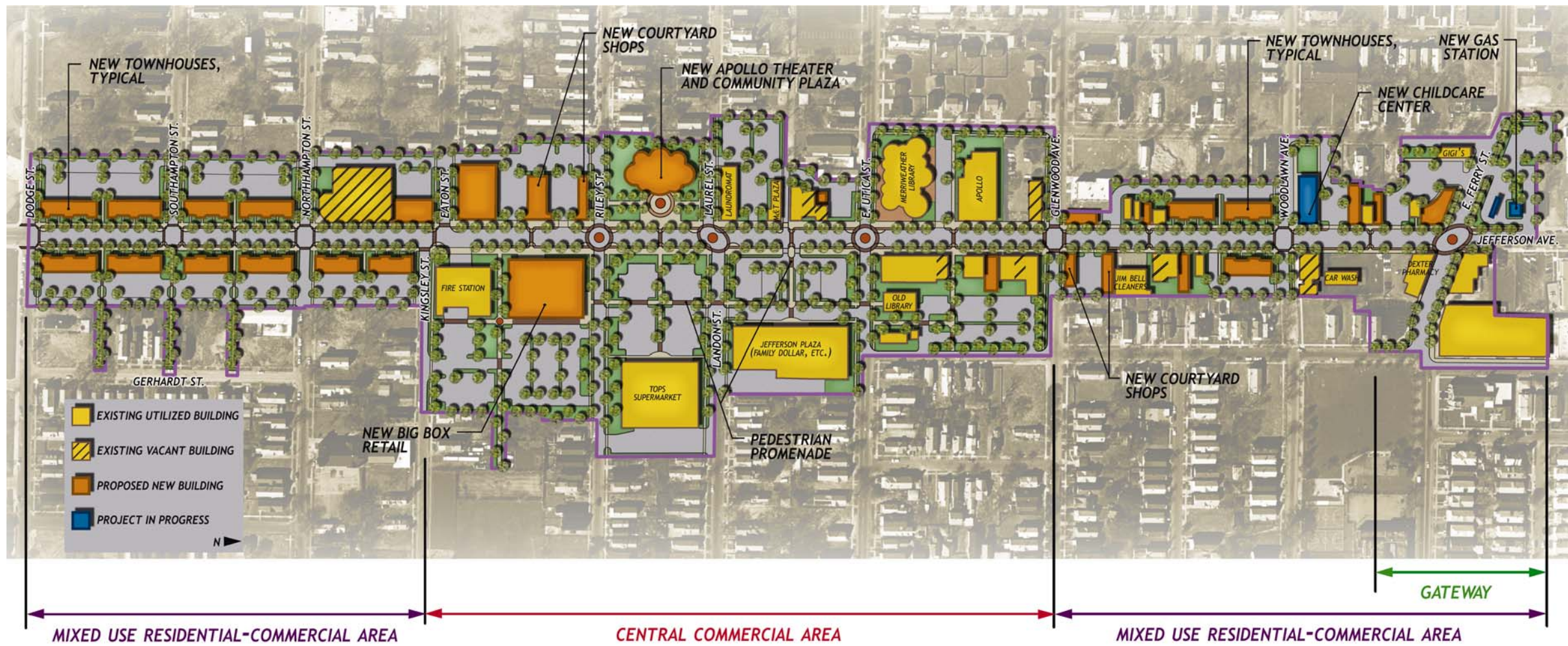
Completing the Picture

The central commercial area is bordered at each end by the **MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL-COMMERCIAL AREAS**, which complete the proposed spatial plan of the neighborhood. The southern mixed-use area extends from Makowski School and Wiley Sports Pavilion at Dodge Street to Kingsley/Eaton Streets. Two story **townhomes** with rear-access attached garages and additional rear surface parking are proposed. Pedestrian connectivity is provided between townhouse buildings from Jefferson Avenue east to Gerhardt Street. The northern mixed-use area extends from Glenwood Avenue to the project area gateway at E. Ferry Street. Commercial uses include existing businesses and restaurants, buildings that could be re-used for commercial purposes, **new courtyard shops** and new **infill commercial** buildings. **Townhomes**, similar to those described above, are also proposed.



The Apollo Media Center and the new Merrivweather Library are existing destinations within the District.





FOCUS



Detail of commercial focus area

The **CENTRAL COMMERCIAL AREA** is the **focus** of the Jefferson Avenue project area; it includes a vibrant mix of retail and civic uses. This area incorporates the existing Tops supermarket and Jefferson Plaza, and includes civic uses, such as the fire station, new Merriweather Library, the old library and the Apollo Media Center.

A new **Apollo Theater** and **Community Plaza** are proposed, as well as new **courtyard shops** (similar to the existing M&T plaza), a new **big box retail store**, other new commercial buildings/restaurants, and off-street parking. Several existing buildings could be re-used for commercial purposes.

Within this area, a **pedestrian promenade** organizes pedestrian circulation and provides connectivity between the various civic and commercial buildings and the surrounding neighborhood. The promenade runs N-S between Glenwood Avenue and Kingsley Street, adjacent to the fire station and the old library. E-W connections are provided: between an existing park on Kingsley Street and Jefferson Avenue; as well as between existing and proposed businesses/civic uses.



Photo simulation of the pedestrian promenade through the Tops parking lot



ANCHOR

APOLLO THEATER AND COMMUNITY PLAZA

The new **APOLLO THEATER AND COMMUNITY PLAZA** provide an **anchor** for the central commercial area. The theater could host music and film venues that would attract visitors/shoppers from beyond the primary trade area. The Community Plaza provides an outdoor space for events and community activities.

The idea for a new Art Deco style theater derives from the presence of the old Apollo Theater (now the Apollo Media Center) on Jefferson Avenue within the central commercial area and the fact that jazz has had an important role in Buffalo's African American community. The city has hosted many famous jazz musicians, including Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, and many more. Jazz, along with other forms of music and art, enjoy a strong following in the region. Outdoor festivals are very popular and also have a long history in the city. The new Apollo Theater and Community Plaza will build upon the rich legacy of jazz and the arts in Buffalo, providing indoor and outdoor performance, meeting and festival spaces.

The design of Community Plaza utilizes the same site elements and paving materials that are proposed for the new Jefferson Avenue streetscape and pedestrian promenade. See pages 12-13.

The Master Plan allows for ample off street parking for the theater . The parking is located in the blocks adjacent to the theater and plaza.



Photo simulation of the new Apollo Theater and Community Plaza



IMAGE

The Master Plan creates a unique identity for the project area that makes it distinct from the surrounding neighborhood (you know you have entered it), yet integrated into the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed **image** for the Jefferson Avenue project area is an **ART DECO JAZZ HERITAGE** theme. Streetscape improvements, site elements, new construction, and signage that reflect this theme will help reinforce the proposed image. Façade improvements, to both utilized and vacant buildings, street trees and landscaping also have a big impact on improving the overall image of the project area.

SITE ELEMENTS

Site elements, such as benches, light posts, planters, tree grates, awnings and signage can reinforce the proposed image, when chosen to reflect the Art Deco Jazz Heritage theme.



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements to the facades of existing buildings will enhance the appearance of the neighborhood and contribute to its economic viability. Many existing buildings have reuse potential. See Figure XX. Façade improvements are recommended for existing vacant buildings with reuse potential, as well as for buildings with existing commercial activities.



Photo simulation: Façade improvements & reuse of existing vacant building

Photo simulation: Façade improvements to existing retail use building & two existing vacant buildings



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Streetscape improvements along Jefferson Avenue through the project area are proposed. The most obvious benefits of the streetscape improvements are visual and aesthetic. Additionally, the improvements will help to unite the project area through unified paving materials that are distinct from the surrounding community, define on-street parking, direct pedestrian traffic, and provide safe and visible pedestrian crossings.



Photo simulation: Commercial Streetscape



Photo simulation: Residential-Commercial Streetscape

Intersections in the mixed-use commercial/residential areas will get a different treatment than those in the central commercial area, helping to differentiate these areas. Intersections within the **residential-commercial areas** will be provided with brick crosswalks banded by a concrete strip on each side. In the **central commercial area**, the intersections will be highlighted by the use of a circular brick paving pattern, which will serve the function of crosswalk as well as call attention to one's presence in the central commercial area. This circular pavement treatment will also be used at the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and W. Ferry Street, also a commercial area, to highlight the northern gateway into the project area.

Along the length of Jefferson Avenue in the project area, the existing concrete sidewalks will be replaced with a combination of (1) **concrete walks** to define the pedestrian travel ways and (2) **brick pavers** in the tree aisle (between the concrete walks and the street) and at cross walks. **Bump outs** shall be provided at street corners and mid-block crosswalks; these will provide safe, well- defined areas for pedestrians to cross the street, as well as demarcate on-street parking by segmenting the existing street width into one travel lane in each direction and one lane of parking on each side of the street. The **pedestrian promenade** will be highlighted by a combination of concrete walks and brick pavers.



Photo simulation: Pedestrian Promenade

OPPORTUNITIES

NEIGHBORHOOD POTENTIALS

The following graphic illustrates the potential opportunities for reuse and redevelopment within the Jefferson Avenue District.



Redevelop

1216-1222 Jefferson Ave. **A**
 Status: 3 empty lots
 Approx. total size: 93'x133'
 Potential use: commercial, retail, restaurant with off street parking



1228-1242 Jefferson Ave, 309-317 Riley St. **B**
 Status: 1 empty lot & 1 lot with vacant bldg
 Approx. total size: 169'x164'
 Potential use: commercial, retail, restaurant with off street parking (demo building)



1246-1262 Jefferson Ave, 309-317 Riley St. **C**
 Status: 6 empty lots & 1 lot with residence
 Approx. total size: 160'x195'
 Potential use: courtyard shops/dining with off street parking (demo residence)



1436-1438 Jefferson Ave **D**
 Status: 2 empty lots
 Approx. total size: 64'x100'
 Potential use: courtyard shops/dining with off street parking



Reuse

1198 Jefferson Ave.

Status: vacant

Potential reuse: commercial, light industrial

Approx. size: bldg (26,600 SF), lot (177'x135')

Parking: on-street or shared with neighboring property

1



1308 Jefferson Ave.

Status: vacant

Potential reuse: mixed use

Approx. size: bldg (3,900 SF), lot (30'x100')

Parking: on-street or shared with neighboring property

2



1312 Jefferson Ave.

Status: vacant

Potential reuse: mixed use, replace rear part

Approx. size: bldg (4,200 SF), lot (30'x100')

Parking: on-street or shared with neighboring property

3



1339 Jefferson Ave.

Status: vacant

Potential reuse: mixed use

Approx. size: bldg (3,200 SF), lot (30'x107')

Parking: on-street

4



1357 Jefferson Ave.

Status: vacant

Potential reuse: mixed use

Approx. size: bldg (2,900 SF), lot (35'x107')

Parking: on-street

5



1362 Jefferson Ave.

Status: vacant

Potential reuse: commercial

Approx. size: bldg (3,350 SF), lot (35'x101')

Parking: on-street or shared with neighboring property

6



1389 Jefferson Ave.

Status: vacant

Potential reuse: mixed use

Approx. size: bldg (4,700 SF), lot (39'x107')

Parking: on-street

7



1423 Jefferson Ave.

Status: vacant

Potential reuse: mixed use

Approx. size: bldg (3,350 SF), lot (50'x107')

Parking: on-street

8



AN INVITATION TO DEVELOPERS

LET'S GET GOING!

In addition to the outstanding programs and opportunities you've just read about, there are additional opportunities that may be applicable to your situation. The following represents a sampling of the wide array of additional programs that may help your business succeed on Jefferson Avenue. For additional information on funding and financing, please see www.berc.org.

CARE Business Loan Program

The BERC Business Loan Program provides fixed rate loans of up to \$300,000 for renovation or the acquisition of real property, the purchase of furniture, fixtures and equipment, and for permanent working capital. Bank financing of 50% of the project is required.

CARE Special Loan Program

BERC is pleased to announce a new component of the Commercial Area Revitalization Effort (CARE) Program which will provide a \$25,000 forgivable loan to attract the top 3 targeted businesses needed for each CARE Area.

Erie County PILOT Program

Certain projects may be eligible for reduced property tax status (on improvements only) through an economic incentive vehicle known as a PILOT or Payment In Lieu Of Taxes agreement.

A project's eligibility for reduced property taxes under a PILOT agreement is typically determined with reference to the policies of, and in consultation with the staff of, the Erie County Industrial Development Agency.

New York State Empire Zone Program

Your business could qualify to become tax-free if it expands in, or relocates to, an Empire Zone (Economic Development Zones). New York State's Empire Zones (EZs) are designated areas throughout the State that offer special incentives to encourage economic development, business investment and job creation. Certified businesses located within a designated zone are eligible to receive significant tax credits and benefits.



OUR SINCERE PROMISE

We hope you are as excited about Jefferson Avenue as we are. We hope you can see what we see, and that our mutual vision can become a reality. Be assured that we are dedicated to protecting and growing your investment in Jefferson Avenue, no matter how big or how small. Whether you are planning a mixed-use development that includes residential opportunities, new retail or restaurant services, the market is here to serve. Over the long term, Buffalo is committed to assisting private investors by implementing thoughtful, high quality infrastructure improvements as the funding becomes available.

It is my goal as Mayor of the City of Buffalo to ensure our existing businesses can grow and evolve, and our efforts to attract and serve investors remains a top priority of my administration.

I look forward to working with you, and pledge that The Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation is behind you 100% of the way.

Sincerely,

Mayor Byron Brown



For more information contact:

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Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation

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www.berc.org

