

Seventh Class
05.16.2023



SUMMIT

Hayes Hall
UB South Campus

Champions for Change Class of 2023

A celebration of bright ideas and inspired leadership
in service of a sustainable future for our region



One Region Forward's Citizen Planning School is an innovative, citizen-centered learning program designed to empower residents from across Erie and Niagara counties to become agents for sustainable change in their local communities. The citizen planners from across the region, known as Champions for Change, receive one-on-one technical support to develop project ideas for practical, positive impact to make sustainability a regional reality.

In this booklet, you will find the work of the seventh class of Champions for Change. This past spring, our Champions applied to work with faculty mentors and students at the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning to transform their ideas into action. Champions participated in workshops with student technical advisors, community leaders, and fellow citizens to explore key issues in regional sustainability and regenerative development and gain skills and tools to get more involved in the planning process.

The projects of our Champions range in scale, focus, and impact but they are practical and do-able, and little by little, step-by-step, they can add up to a big change toward a more sustainable region. The seventh Citizen Planning School Idea Summit was convened to celebrate these ideas and the people who have committed themselves to making them a reality.

The seventh year of the Champions for Change program brought with it exciting partnerships with Blackstone LaunchPad at the University at Buffalo as well as It Takes A Village Action Organization, a two-time graduate of the program. Both Champions and students learned from one another as they developed a variety of concepts into ideas for action across a broad range of topic areas.

Champions for Change and the Citizen Planning School are part of what we hope will be a broad movement to implement the regional plan for sustainable development created by the One Region Forward effort. Making the change we need to be more sustainable won't come in one fell swoop. It will be made piece by piece over the long haul by citizens determined to make their communities better. It will also be made by citizens who learn about the issues and develop the capacity to get good things done.

Join us in celebrating the seventh class of Champions for Change. We hope that as you read about their work you find inspiration to move our region forward. We look forward to future collaborations with you.

Warmest Regards,

A blue ink signature of Robert G. Shibley.

Robert G. Shibley FAIA, AICP
Professor and Dean
University at Buffalo
School of Architecture and Planning
Director, Citizen Planning School

A blue ink signature of Libertad Figueroa.

Libertad Figueroa
Adjunct Instructor
University at Buffalo
School of Architecture and Planning
Principal Instructor, Citizen Planning School

"[C]hange takes place in living systems, not from above but from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously." –
Philosopher, educator, and grassroots activist, Grace Lee Boggs

Acknowledgements



In 2014, One Region Forward, in partnership with the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning, held the first ever Citizen Planning School for residents of Erie and Niagara counties. Since then, the UB School of Architecture and Planning has supported the program through a service-learning course available to UB graduate and undergraduate students. This year's program would not have been possible without the contributions of the individuals and organizations listed here. Individuals donated their time as faculty mentors, technical advisors, and community coaches to share their experiences and insight with our Champions on the long road to turning ideas into action.

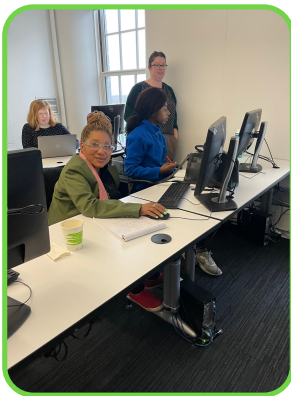
Teaching Team

- Robert G. Shibley, FAIA, AICP- Dean, University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning
- Libertad Figueroa- Adjunct Instructor, University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning
- Ivy Yan- Teaching Assistant, BA Environmental Design, Architecture Minor, 2023



Community Coaches

- Kim Amplement- Planner, Town at Amherst
- Hadar Borden- Director, UB Blackstone LaunchPad & WNY Prosperity Fellowship Program
- Drew Canfield, AICP- Associate Director, Central Terminal Restoration Corporation
- Dr. Beverly E. Newkirk- Founder/CEO Transforming Hearts, Changing Lives and Altering Destinies Executive Director, It Takes a Village Action Organization (Champion for Change '14-15)
- Matthew Sieracki- UB Alumn, BA Environmental Design
- Mary Rech Rockwell, Ph.D.- Director, The New Buffalo Institute and Western New York Prosperity Fellowship® Canisius College



Program Support

- Darren Cotton, Former Principal Instructor- Citizen Planning School
- Kelly Gregg, Ph.D., Assistant Professor- Department of Urban and Regional Planning
- Camden Miller, Ph. D., Clinical Professor- Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Director of Operations- Rudy Bruner Center for Urban Excellence
- Nicholas Rajkovich, Ph.D., AIA, Associate Professor- Department of Architecture
- Bart Roberts, UBRI Associate Director of Research and Faculty Engagement

Special Thanks

to the Faculty and Staff of the School of Architecture and Planning who helped support the development of the 2023 Citizen Planning School

UB Student Technical Advisors

- Nathan Barbara, Master of Urban Planning, 2024
- Francesca Gentilcore, BA Environmental Design, 2024
- Laila Jerome, BA Environmental Design, 2023
- Nicholas Lividini, BA Environmental Design, Architecture Minor, 2023
- Evan McCabe, Master of Arts, Sustainability Leadership, 2024
- Anya Morgan, BA Environmental Design, Global Gender Minor, 2023
- Amie Tripoli, BA Environmental Design, Architecture Minor, 2023
- Jehlani Williams, BA Environmental Design, Architecture Minor, 2024

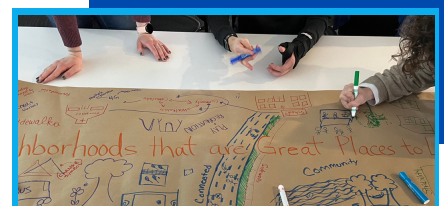




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One Region Forward

Land Use & Development

WILKESON POINTE, BUFFALO

Buffalo Community Boathouse

MY IDEA FOR CHANGE

Our project is centered around the idea of free public access to Buffalo's waterfront. In Buffalo's current condition, there are a few strong community gathering places along the waterfront, but these spaces do not actually interface with the water at all. Private boat clubs own almost all of the piers in South Buffalo and public access to the water is designated to a few select lake beaches. Buffalo treats using its waterfront as a luxury, when in reality there are countless activities and watersports that are affordable to all. This is the premise for a community boathouse, a facility with commonly-owned boats and equipment that allow anyone to access Buffalo's waterfront as they see fit. By nature of being community-led, the boathouse would also serve as a center to hold events and organize group meetings. This is to be a place where anyone regardless of race, gender, income, or creed is able to come and enjoy the natural world. Ultimately, we want a community boathouse to give people the opportunity to feel like they belong as a part of something bigger.

WHERE THE CHANGE WILL HAPPEN

225 Fuhrmann Boulevard, Buffalo, NY 14203

PLANNING A CHANGE

ACTIONS TO MOVE IT FORWARD

- Generate broad public appeal and support for Buffalo's waterfront
- Establish a yearly program on the waterfront
- Create a preliminary budget and timeline

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- Social Media
- Public Events
- Connection and networking with the families who are interested in the waterfront

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

IDEA

PLAN

ACTION



Tom & Gayle Nowak

nowakrad@aol.com, gknowak@buffalo.edu

About the Champions...

Tom and Gayle have been very vocal and dedicated members of the City of Buffalo working on many projects to help their community. Their latest project is trying to create a more accessible place for everyone to enjoy the beauty that is the Buffalo Outer Harbor, more specifically the Wilkeson Pointe. They believe that this area should be open for everyone and have worked tirelessly to try and achieve their goal. Last summer they were able to run a successful "Learn how to Sail" program for the youth attending the YMCA in the City of Buffalo. They hope to not only continue this program this summer, but to grow it and be able to reach an even larger group of kids in the Buffalo area who wouldn't normally be able to go to a sailing program. However, this isn't their end goal; they want to do even more to help develop Wilkeson Pointe. Their ultimate goal is to have a boat house that anyone in the community can come and use. They would be able to use a sail or powerboat free of charge. They want everyone to be able to experience life on the water, not just those who can afford it. Tom and Gayle hope to work with the New York State Park system, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeepers, the DEC and many more to help and build the boat house and have access to Lake Erie.



One Region Forward

Food Access & Justice

FRUIT BELT, BUFFALO

Fruit Belt Shop

MY IDEA FOR CHANGE

My idea for change is to start and run a community garden in the Fruit Belt community. I have seen a need for more community outreach and want to share my passion for gardening and being outside with nature. More importantly I see the need for healthy food and accessible food for everyone the area. This is a place where people can come and grow and learn how to tend to a garden, while also learning the value of accessing nutritious food. I would one day like to own and operate my own grocery store; however, I understand that we all need to start from somewhere and a community garden is the perfect stepping stone for me. However, because I am so new to this, I need some help. I have reached out to some organizations who already established community garden groups such as PUSH Buffalo and Grassroots Garden of WNY for help. Grassroots Garden even has an application to help start a community garden that I will be applying to. While I am still only in the early planning stages, I am very passionate and eager to get started to help others in my community to have better access to healthier food.

WHERE THE CHANGE WILL HAPPEN

Fruit Belt neighborhood in Buffalo, NY

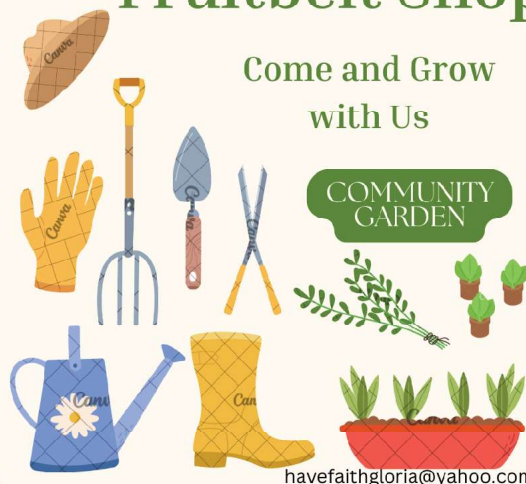


Gloria Bernard

havefaithgloria@yahoo.com

Fruitbelt Shop

Come and Grow
with Us



havefaithgloria@yahoo.com

PLANNING A CHANGE

ACTIONS TO MOVE IT FORWARD

- Reach out to other community gardens to see how they got their start
- Find an exact location where in the Fruit Belt the garden would go
- Find community members to help with the garden
- Teach kids and adults the importance of growing food and having fresh healthy food

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Grassroots Garden application and connections

Collaboration with Push Buffalo

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

IDEA

PLAN

ACTION

About the Champions...

Gloria has long been a member of the Fruit Belt community in Buffalo, New York. She wants to help people in her community by getting them to learn and work in her community garden. She understands the importance of knowing where your food is coming from and the benefits of eating healthy food that come from your backyard.



One Region Forward

Housing & Neighborhoods

NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK

Niagara Falls Safe Haven



MY IDEA FOR CHANGE

The goal of this project is to provide a safe haven for victims of domestic violence. Jamika wants to create something that she never had when going through her own experiences and believes that there needs to be more interventions when it comes to domestic violence. This project specifically targets Niagara County as that is where Jamika calls home and feels connected to the community. The key elements of this project include finding possible homes to provide the safehaven, locating resources for victims such as counseling, therapy, child care, work training, and food options, and possible future connections with public systems such as schools and help-lines.

WHERE THE CHANGE WILL HAPPEN
Niagara County



Jamika Nicole Cameron

cameronjamika@yahoo.com

About the Champions...

Jamika Cameron is a recent honors graduate from Bryant and Stratton with an Associate's degree as a medical assistant. She has 24 years of experience as a healthcare worker and is a strong advocate for victims of domestic violence. As a survivor herself, Jamika wants to provide resources that were not afforded to her.

PLANNING A CHANGE

ACTIONS TO MOVE IT FORWARD

- Build relationships with other safe haven's and local resources.
- Make connections with systems of help (therapy, food, childcare, etc.).
- Identify reliable funding sources and grant programs.
- Find a potential home in the Niagara Falls area.

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

In order to accomplish these goals and actions moving forward, investment in time and energy need to be made. This requires resources such as a reliable community and open communication to other organizations. These goals will also require a network of people working together in order to provide a safe and healthy environment for victims.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT



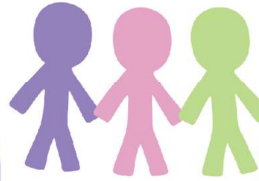


People Helping People LLC.

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE LLC.

An organization helping people who are unemployed, underemployed, or want to better their lives

Holding information sessions at various churches in the Fruit Belt about connecting medical corridor jobs and training opportunities to Fruit Belt residents

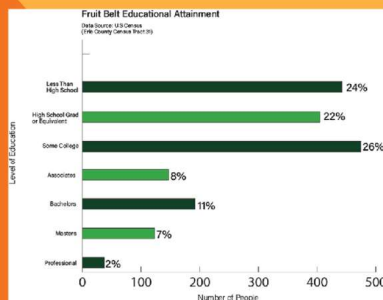


For more information contact Paulette Woods
drpwoods@yahoo.com
716-956-10

MY IDEA FOR CHANGE

Promote greater **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** in hiring in the Medical Corridor by expanding access to jobs to Fruit Belt residents.

WHERE THE CHANGE WILL HAPPEN
Fruit Belt neighborhood



Paulette Woods

drpwoods@yahoo.com

About the Champions...

Paulette Woods is an established member in her community who has 37 years of experience in budget and financial management in Erie County government. She is currently the City of Buffalo Central District Board of Education representative. In this role she works for equitable practices in Buffalo Public Schools. Minister Woods is on the ministry staff at the St. John Baptist Church. She is a veteran of the United States Military, 1st commander of the Jesse Clipper American Legion Post 430. Was the senior budget examiner and chief fiscal officer for the Erie County Youth Detention and Early Intervention Department. She is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

PLANNING A CHANGE

ACTIONS TO MOVE IT FORWARD

Host listening in the neighborhood to identify the employment and educational needs and wants of the residents

Establish a relationship with professionals across the medical corridor to develop ongoing career and job fairs and professional development fairs

Collaborate with local workforce development centers and vocational schools to provide training, classes, and skill development that will help local residents become qualified applicants for relevant jobs in the medical corridor.

Collaborate with Community First Alliance to continue to implement the Community Benefits Agreement

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Support, dedication and commitment from the community

Space to hold events

Connections with professionals with knowledge of jobs needed and how to access job training for youth.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

IDEA

PLAN

ACTION

Winter Preparedness Checklist

Home Winter Preparedness Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Select Foods See Additional Checklist	<input type="checkbox"/> Warm Clothing Hats, Mittens, Parkas, Boots	<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights & Extra Batteries
<input type="checkbox"/> Disposable Dishware Plates, Bowls, Utensils	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Blankets	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit
<input type="checkbox"/> Specialty Items Medicines, Infant Formula, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Matches For Candles & Gas Fireplaces	<input type="checkbox"/> Cell Phone Fully Charged
<input type="checkbox"/> Portable Radio AAA/AA/9V Radio & Batteries	<input type="checkbox"/> Shovel/Snow Blower Check condition & maintain	<input type="checkbox"/> Firewood For Wood Fireplaces

Car Winterization Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Check Engine Fluid Levels Oil, Coolant, Washer Fluid, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Inspect Tire Tread Replace if Near Wear Limit
<input type="checkbox"/> Test Battery Replace if Necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> Install Snow Tires if You Own a Set
<input type="checkbox"/> Use Deicing Washer Fluid Clean Windshield at Low Temp.	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Headlights & Taillights
<input type="checkbox"/> Switch to Synthetic Oil Handles the Cold Better	<input type="checkbox"/> Add & Inspect Winter Survival Kit

Home Winter Survival Food Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Canned Fruits and Vegetables Requires a Manual Can Opener	<input type="checkbox"/> Bread and Condiments Keep Bread Frozen to Last Longer
<input type="checkbox"/> Crackers, Nuts, Fruit Bars, Chips High Energy Foods	<input type="checkbox"/> Cereal and Toaster Pastries
<input type="checkbox"/> Soups Some Soups Require Water or Heating	<input type="checkbox"/> Meals Ready to Eat (MREs)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cookies and Hard Candy	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottled Water 1 gallon per person, per day (for at least 3 days)

Car Winter Survival Kit Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight & Extra Batteries	<input type="checkbox"/> Blankets/Sleeping Bag	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Clothing Hats, Mittens, Parkas, Boots
<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Perishable Food Granola Bars, Dried nuts, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sand/Ritty Litter Used for Traction
<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Shovel	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottled Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Cell Phone & Charger
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Scraper with Brush	<input type="checkbox"/> Booster Cables	<input type="checkbox"/> Flares/Triangles & other Bright Objects



BUFFALO TO WESTERN NEW YORK

Prepared BFLO

MY IDEA FOR CHANGE

The project is a digital and printed toolkit in multiple languages on weather and storm safety measures for Buffalo residents to ease winter preparedness into everyday lives.

The key things to include are:

- How to build a network of assistance with neighbors or family.
- Resources that are easily accessible in one platform to make this information useful.
- Helping Buffalo be educated and prepared for its winter storms.

Buffalo will always have this climate and it will only get more challenging as climate change continues to affect the world.

WHERE THE CHANGE WILL HAPPEN

Begin in the City of Buffalo and then expand across the Western New York Region

PLANNING A CHANGE

ACTIONS TO MOVE IT FORWARD

Research on Buffalo's climate changes

Look at underdeveloped communities

Develop a design toolkit accessible to all audiences

Collaborate with the Erie County Community Climate Change Task Force

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Capacity building to aid with research and design

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

IDEA

PLAN

ACTION



Jordan Pescrillo

japesc08@gmail.com

About the Champions...

Jordan is native to the Buffalo area and she knew she always wanted to serve locally, yet she also wanted to take the opportunity to learn from grassroots, international approaches to education and community development.

Jordan completed two terms of Americorps working between the Buffalo Public Schools and the International Institute of Buffalo. She quickly learned that Buffalo was becoming an international hub, especially for the Burmese resettlement community, and was offered a postgraduate teaching fellowship on the Thai-Burma border. Eight years later, Jordan worked in a post-secondary education provision in Thailand and Burma until the 2021 military occupation in Burma pushed her to repatriate back to Buffalo just in time for the Buffalo Blizzard of 2022. Her experiences in Southeast Asia and the storm inspired her to share her global perspectives to learn and work together with local grassroots organizers to find coordinated, sustainable solutions to Buffalo's array of unique challenges.

BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Transitional House of Hope Inc.

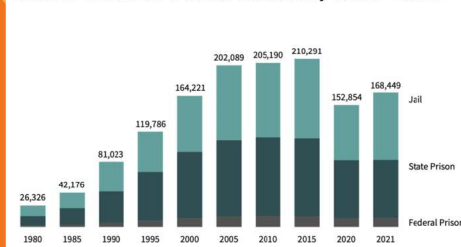
MY IDEA FOR CHANGE

Throughout the United States, our prison system is to correct incarcerated people's behaviors for the goal of them reentering back into society successfully. Unfortunately, more times than not this goal is not fulfilled as often people released from prison are usually spit out with little to no resources to sustain themselves. As a byproduct of this, recidivism rates are extremely high meaning that typically, imprisoned people will return after serving their time. Unfortunately, this usually results in high crime rates and many other issues. However, through all of this, the formerly incarcerated individual is thrown to the side and forgotten about. Through the Transitional House of Hope Inc., we believe that these people deserve a second chance at life. For that reason, our goal is to create transitional housing that gives these individuals a place to live as well as different services to help ensure a successful reentry. This would give formerly incarcerated individuals a place to live and grow after fulfilling their sentencing.

In the context of this project, the focus will be placed on women to be housed as there is an inadequacy of resources for them. In the United States, the limited resources that are available are usually only aimed for men, excluding women. Despite that, women are being incarcerated at twice the rate than men are with less resources available to them after release. From 1980 to 2021, the number of incarcerated women has increased by over 500%. Additionally, incarceration of young women, those aged under 25 has been increasing since 1980. As shown, these women need to be seen, heard and helped which will be the ultimate goal of the Transitional House of Hope Inc.

To ensure success other transitional housing programs will be studied to hopefully reflect and understand what they do. One program that we are hoping to mirror is Hudson Link as they have three transitional houses open in Ossining, New York. Some things that will be adopted from their program are the sense of choice, financial literacy, job training, clothing drives and educational services.

Rise in Women's Incarceration, 1980-2021



WHERE THE CHANGE WILL HAPPEN

Within Buffalo, New York



Linnette Woods Ingram

Linnette28woods@gmail.com

About the Champions...

Ms. Linnette Woods Ingram is a retired nurse who worked for 40 years in the field of nursing, across many sectors including mental health, medical-surgical nursing, and prison nursing. Her experiences working as a prison nurse has inspired her to help incarcerated people and to create transitional housing. Ms. Woods would like to use her experiences in the healthcare industry to further contribute to her community by providing necessary services to a population she believes is underserved and in great need in the Western New York region.

Transitional House of Hope Inc.



One Region Forward

Housing & Neighborhoods

PLANNING A CHANGE

ACTIONS TO MOVE IT FORWARD

- Shadowing managers at homeless shelters and other transitional housing programs in Buffalo, New York to understand the inner workings of them.
- Understand how to secure a team as well as a house with adequate funding.
- Establish relationships with local stakeholders dedicated to helping formerly incarcerated women.

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- Community Engagement
- Housing/Funding Options
- Non-profit Management Training
- Team to With Different Skill Sets

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

IDEA

PLAN

ACTION

MY IDEA FOR CHANGE

The habitat that borders the Buffalo River is an oasis for nature but remains generally unseen by the surrounding residents. Many local residents across the City of Buffalo face high rates of poor health issues, including obesity and heart disease, and lack opportunities to engage or access wellness activities. The city favors automobiles compared to healthier modes of transportation, such as bicycles, and does not value enough the physical and mental health benefits of access to greenspaces.

My idea for change is to create a trail that connects three adjacent parks, currently separated by only small roads. A trail can bring people together and promote healthy neighborhoods. It can support continued stewardship of the environment and promote small businesses that can thrive off of a popular recreation destination. It can be a place of pride, celebration, and calm. If connected, the greenspaces of the three parks could provide at least 1.5 miles of uninterrupted safe walking, biking, and ADA accessible paths along the beautiful waterfront habitat. This project promotes the idea that nature and people can thrive in urban environments if given enough care. The Southside River Wellness Trail can provide accessible and beneficial wellness care activities to walkers, bikers, and rollers.

The Southside River Wellness Trail can connect:

- a local public school
- two playgrounds
- a running track
- a fishing access point
- forests to meadows
- two locations for future kayak launches
- a popular dog walking trail
- a popular birding spot
- the Buffalo Blueway to a greenway
- two complete streets: Bailey Ave and Seneca Street



Needed features of the trail:

- a path suitable for bikes, wheelchairs and pedestrians
- safe road crossings at Seneca Street and Bailey Avenue
- wayfinding signage directing people to and along the path
- stopping points with benches to relax
- trash cans to prevent litter
- public restrooms
- urban environments if given enough care



WHERE THE CHANGE WILL HAPPEN

When you travel down Seneca Street and Bailey Avenue into South Buffalo you may notice in the heart of the neighborhood of zip code 14210, is the Buffalo River along with many acres of greenspace. In this area, three currently disconnected greenspaces will be joined, Thomas F. Higgins Riverfront Park, Mungovan Park, and Seneca Bluffs Habitat Park. All three parks border one another with only roads separating them. Additional greenspaces could also be linked to this trail section such as Houghton Park and the Riverline.



Southside River Wellness Trail



One Region Forward

Transportation & Mobility

PLANNING A CHANGE

ACTIONS TO MOVE IT FORWARD

- Collaborate with designers and urban planners to obtain renderings and maps of the trail system
- Meet with neighborhood landowners and rally community support by discussing ideas and challenges to develop a support petition
- Program events such as wellness walks to spread awareness of the project idea and educate the public on the health and wellness benefits of greenspaces

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Community Awareness and Buy-In

Support from the City of Buffalo and its Division of Parks and Recreation, and other landowners

Support from a conservancy for trail implementation, operation and maintenance

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

IDEA

PLAN

ACTION



Wendy Paterson

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About the Champions...

Wendy is a volunteer for the City of Buffalo Animal Shelter and a member of Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper. As a strong supporter of outdoor space, she spends most days outside exploring her neighboring parks. However, in doing so, she has noticed that these beautiful parks are very underused. She has taken a step forward in her community to provide a trail system that not only brings more attention to these parks, but ensures that everyone can reach them safely.



CITIZEN PLANNING SCHOOL