

Fall 2021

# Building an Urban Hamlet 2:

*Imaging Buffalo's Post-Highway Future*

UB School of Architecture and Planning  
Urban Design & Planning Studio

*Interdisciplinary* Studio opens to:

MARC UD/GRG + MUP UD Specialization + Eligible MARC/MUP Students

Professor Hiro Hata

Draft: 5.13.21

# What is the studio about?

## Overarching Goals:

- Climate Change
- Social/Environmental Justice
- Inner-City Regeneration

## Studio Objectives:

- To address the city's car-centric culture and post highway future
- To replace excess highway ramps with new development for more affordable housing
- To eliminate dead-space of highway ramps that are cancerous
- To make the city more walkable and accessible by non-motorists
- To connect the city with its waterfront and a new public park (Ralph Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park).

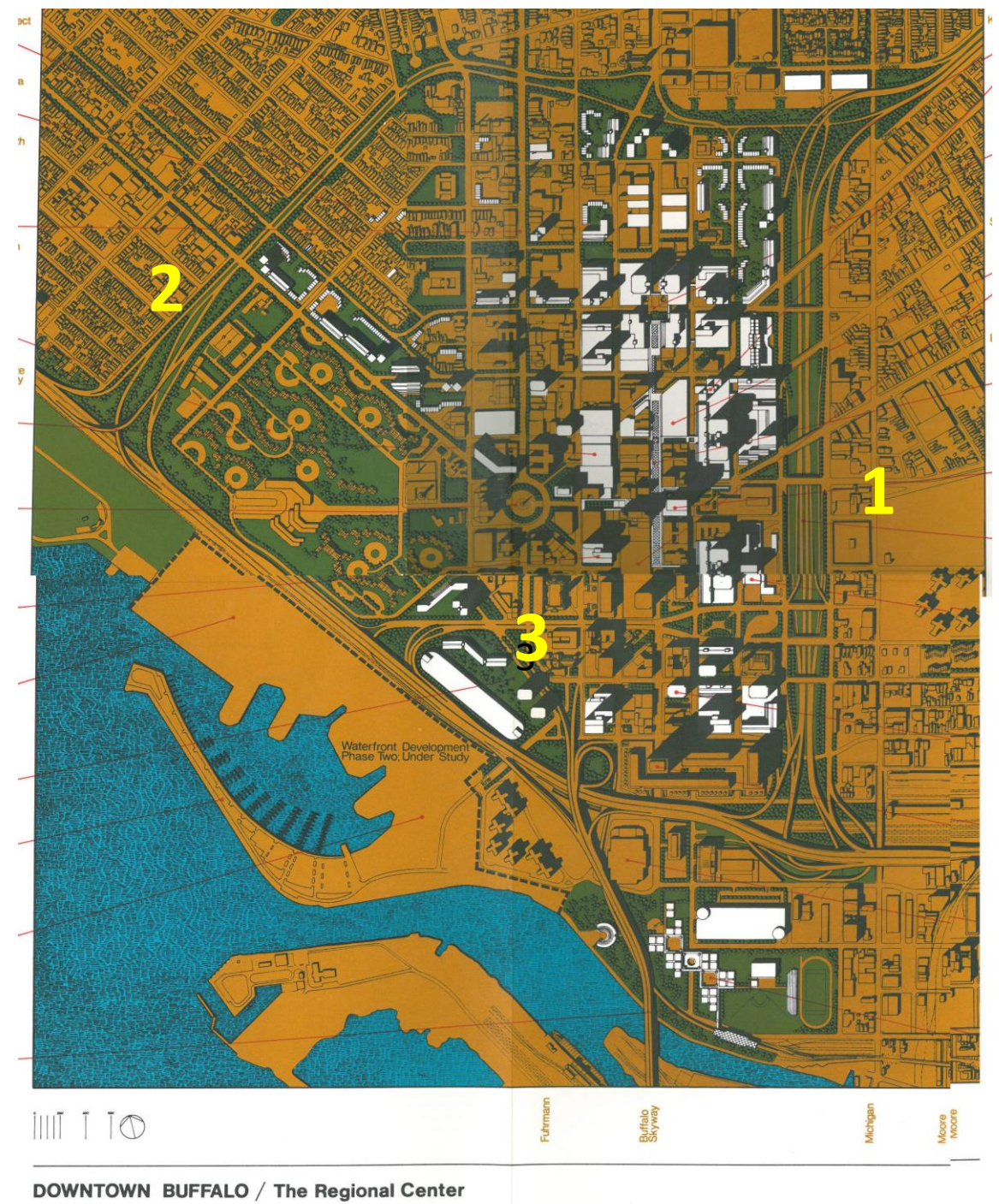
# The Regional Center Plan for Downtown Buffalo, 1971

*Looking back to see the future:*

With partial implementation of the 1971 Plan, Downtown became an island:

- This year marks the 50 year anniversary.
- Surrounded by highway moats, downtown became a corporate desert making the 9-5 CBD.
- It still governs present vehicular circulation system.

A multi-year plan for an urban design studio:  
1. The Oak/Elm, 2. the Virginia/Carolina, 3. Skyway





# Studio Goal 1: Making of a fine-grained Urban Hamlet by reclaiming the I-190 Virginia and Carolina ramps

- Using the Virginia/Carolina ramps, publicly-owned land, the studio proposes to reclaim the ramps to developing a fine-grained, walkable, and mixed-use urban hamlet.
- In turn, it will create a small neighborhood conjoining the existing West Side community.



Virginia/Caroline Urban Hamlet project boundary



# What is an Urban Hamlet?



## Definition of An Urban Hamlet:

An Urban Village  
A Small Neighborhood  
A Precinct or a Quarter

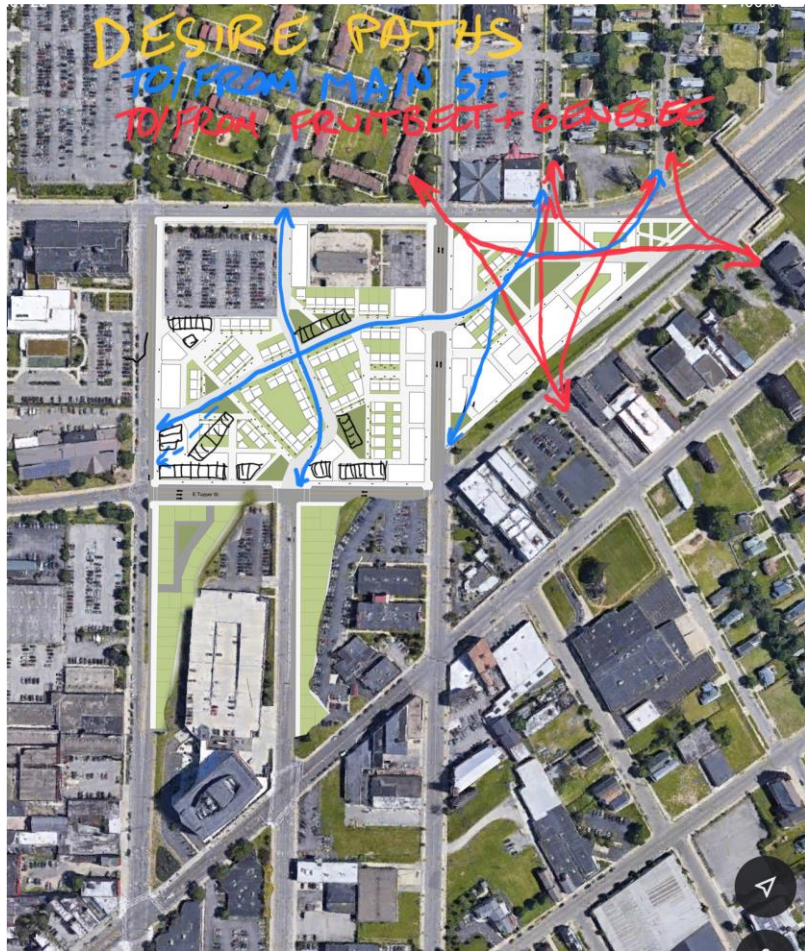
- A cluster of Compact Urban Village or Hamlet
- A densely-settled mixed-use development
- Low- to mid-rise housing
- Fine-grained with human-scaled architecture
- Walkable-shared streetscapes
- Well-designed public spaces that are connected by fine-scaled paths
- Affordable – a place to live for all people from a diverse background
- An fine alternative place for families and individuals

Left: New waterfront village in Malmö, Sweden  
Above: a Mews in England



An example of an Urban Hamlet:

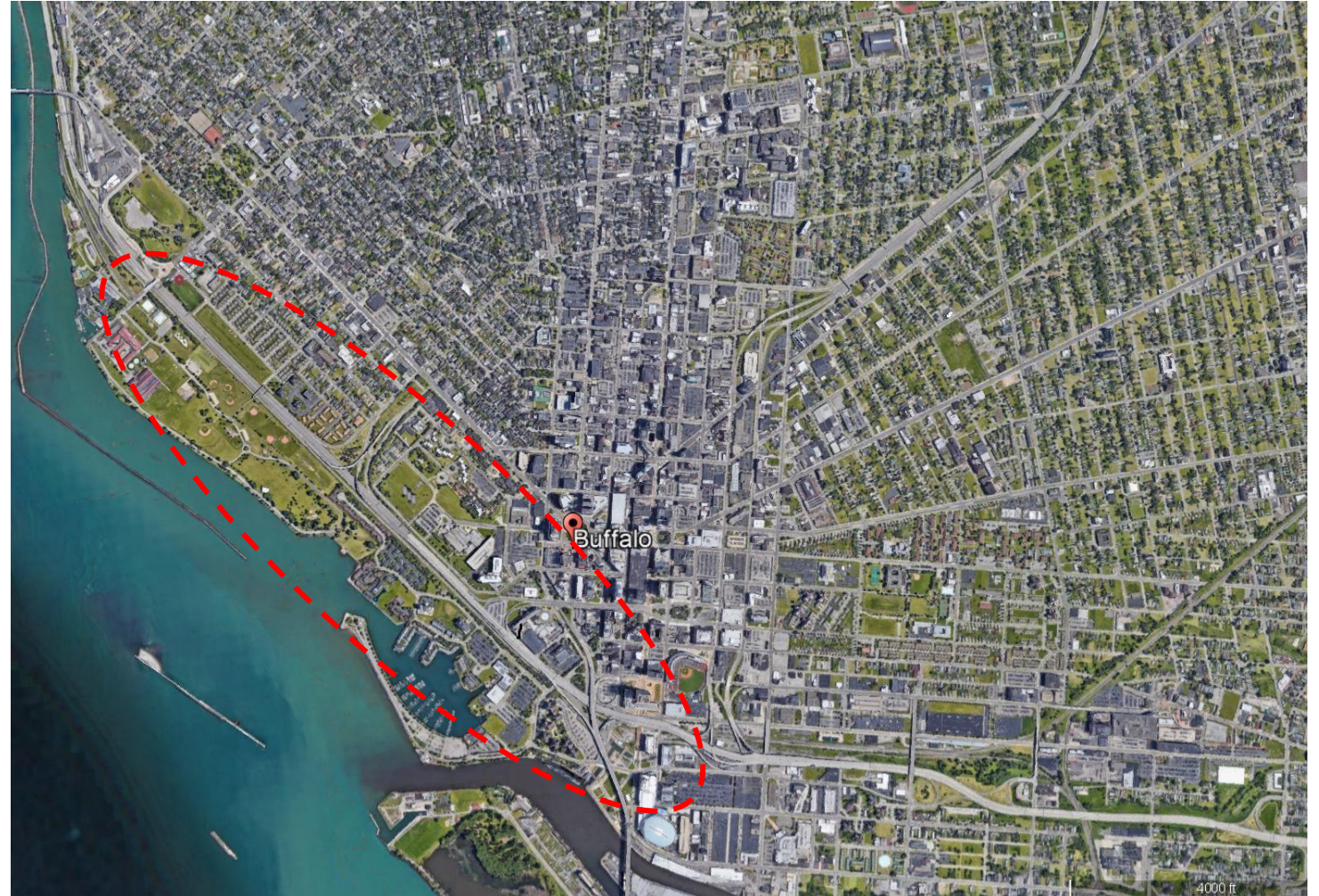
Redevelopment of Kensington Expwy ramps at the Oak/Elm Arterial  
completed in fall 2020 Urban Design Studio





# Studio Goal 2: Conversion of I-190 to an at-grade urban boulevard

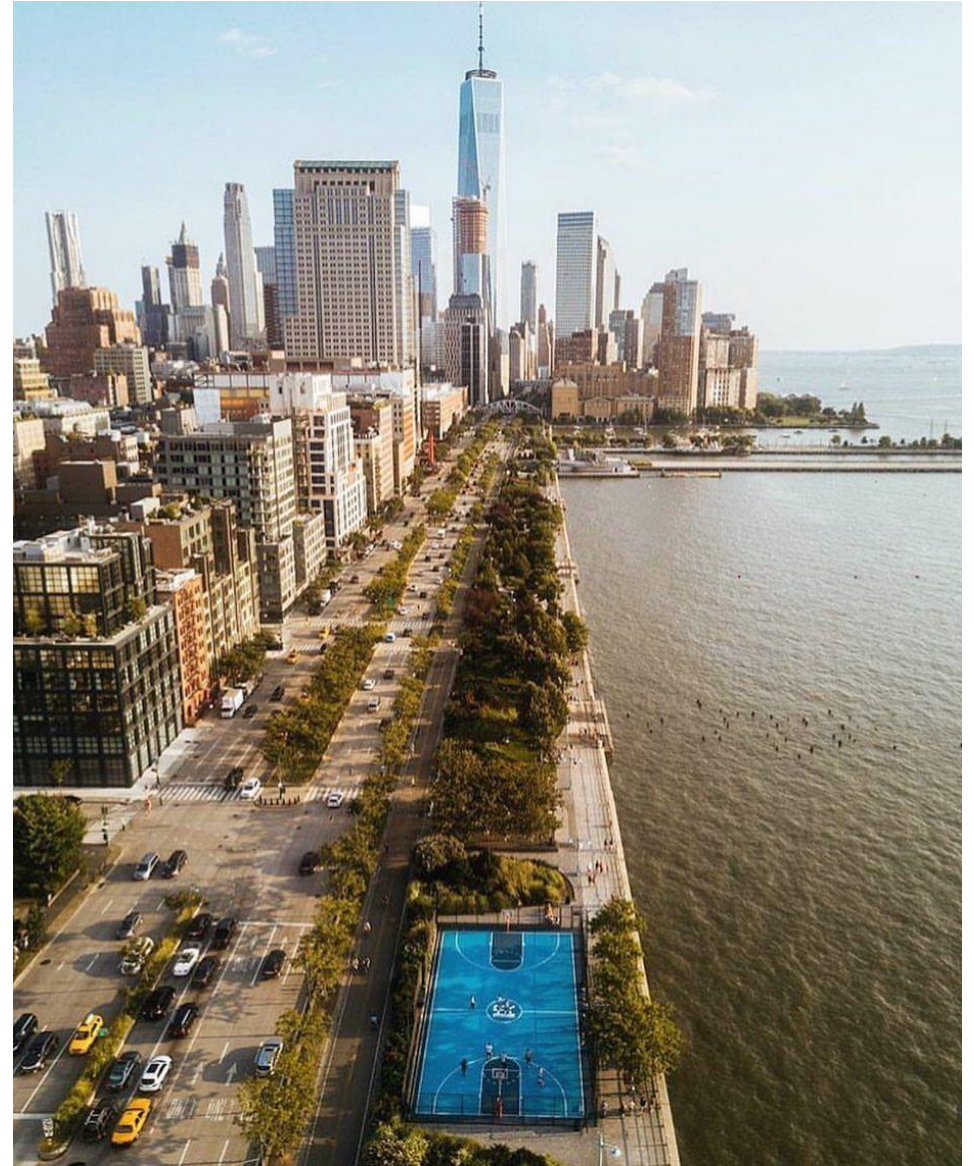
- The studio proposes to convert the I-190 from the elevated highway to an at-grade tree-lined urban boulevard from Virginia Street to Louisiana Street and elimination of the Church Street ramps and Oak-Elm ramps.





Precedent:

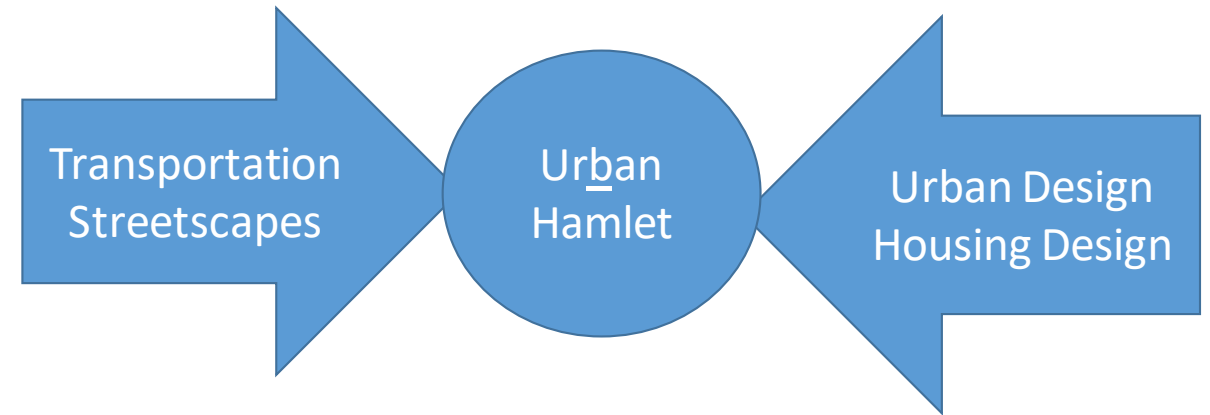
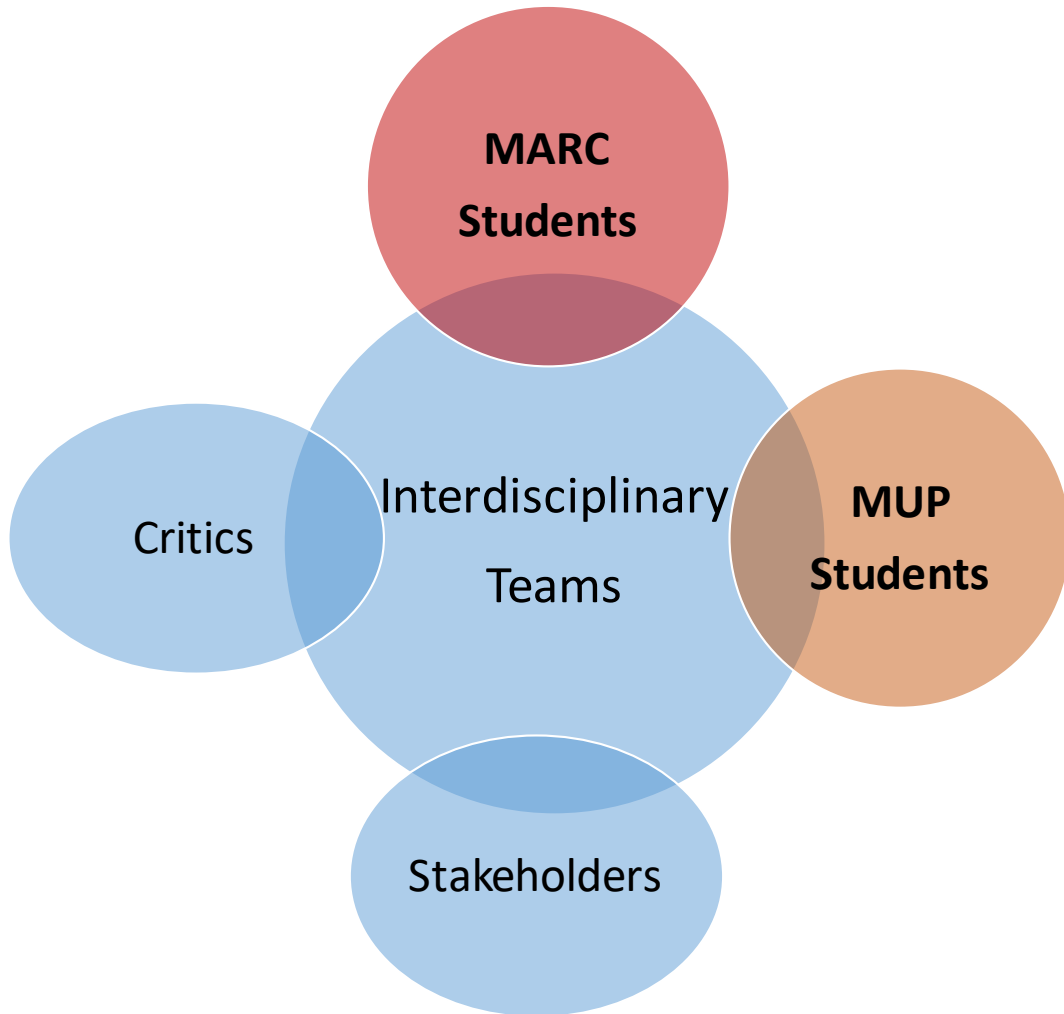
West Side Highway: from a viaduct to an at-grade boulevard



- Replacing the viaduct has created the Hudson Greenway along Hudson River, world-class waterfront amenities and major economic development along its length.



# Creating an Interdisciplinary learning experience



The Studio will bring:

- Interdisciplinary Learning
- MARC + MUP (MS/RED/HP) student teams
- Best Practices
- Learning from Stakeholders and Design Critics



# Scope of Work for an Urban Hamlet 2:

## *Production of an Urban Design Master Plan for the Virginia-Carolina site*

### Scope of Work

- Project Statement & Goals
- Assumptions and Rationale
- Site Analysis Documentation
- Precedent Study Documentation
- Strategic Framework for UD Concept and its Options
- Best Practice for Transportation Design, Streetscapes, Public Spaces
- Architectural Design of an Urban Hamlet
- Production of Final Presentations
- Final Report Production
- Post Studio activities: exhibits

### Schedule

- Introduction
  - Project Goals
  - Stakeholders Engagement
- Site Analysis – field trips
- Precedent Study
- Conceptual Framework
- Mid review
- Revise and Expand Urban Architectural Design
- Putting all together and report
- Final review
- Post review activities