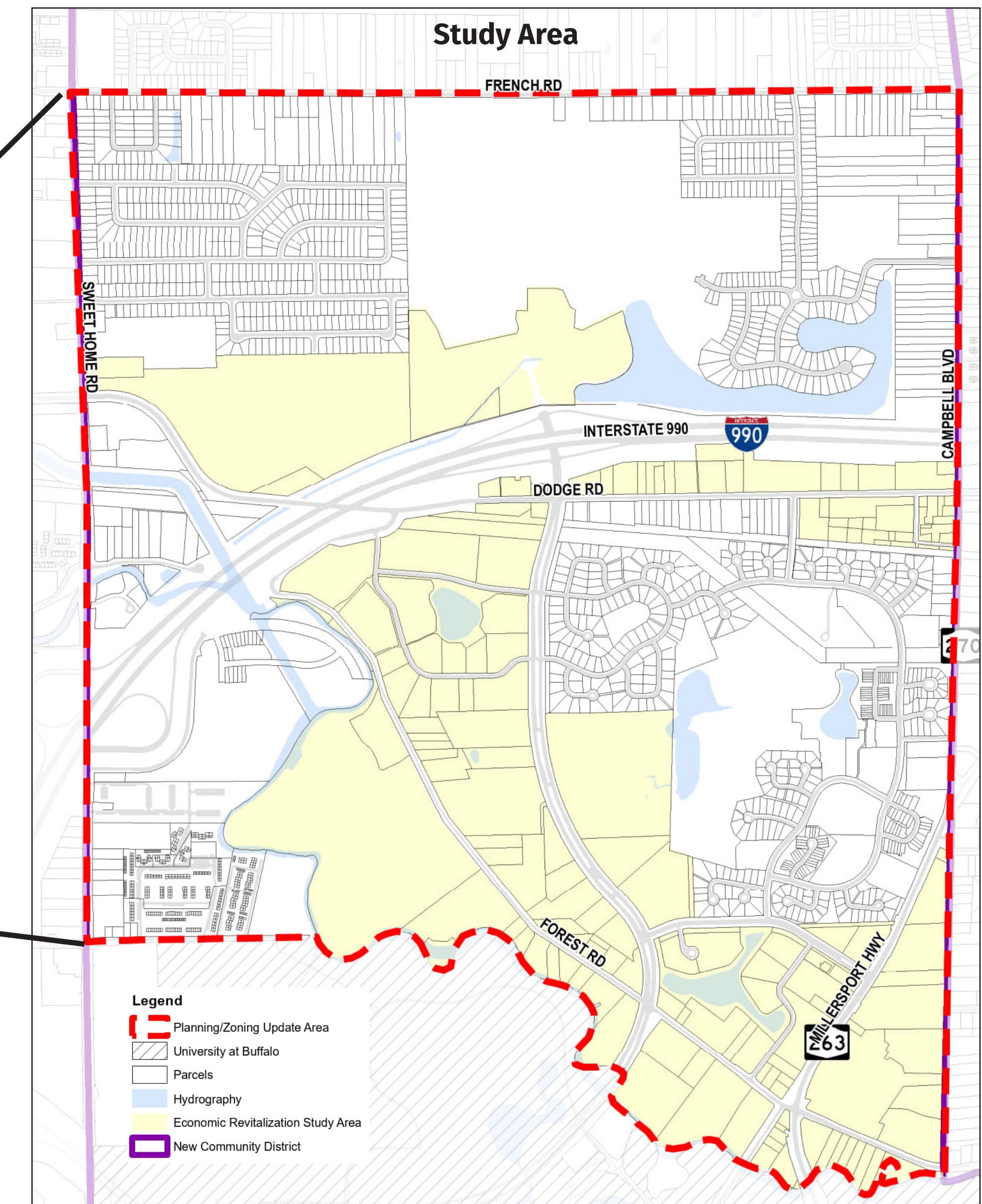
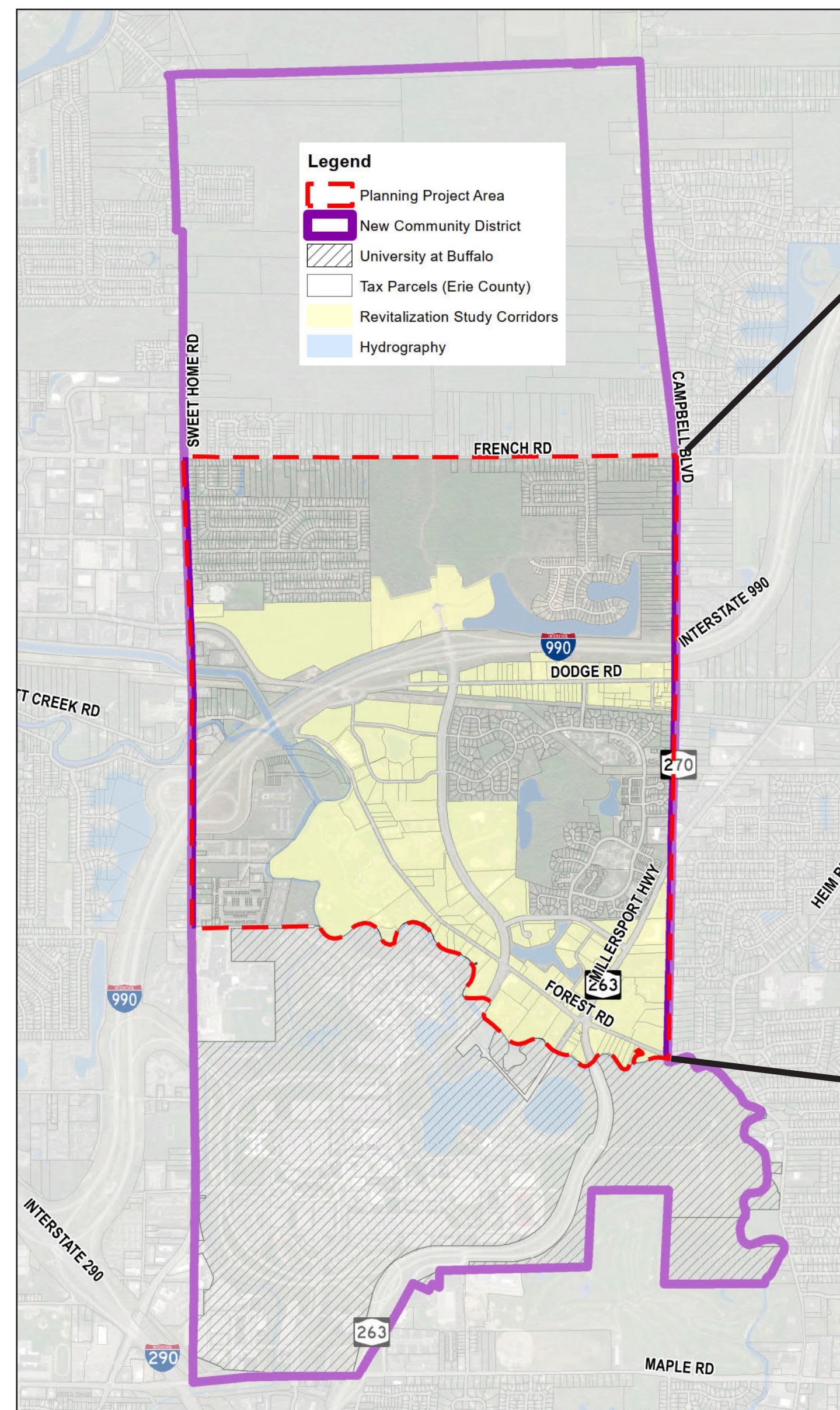
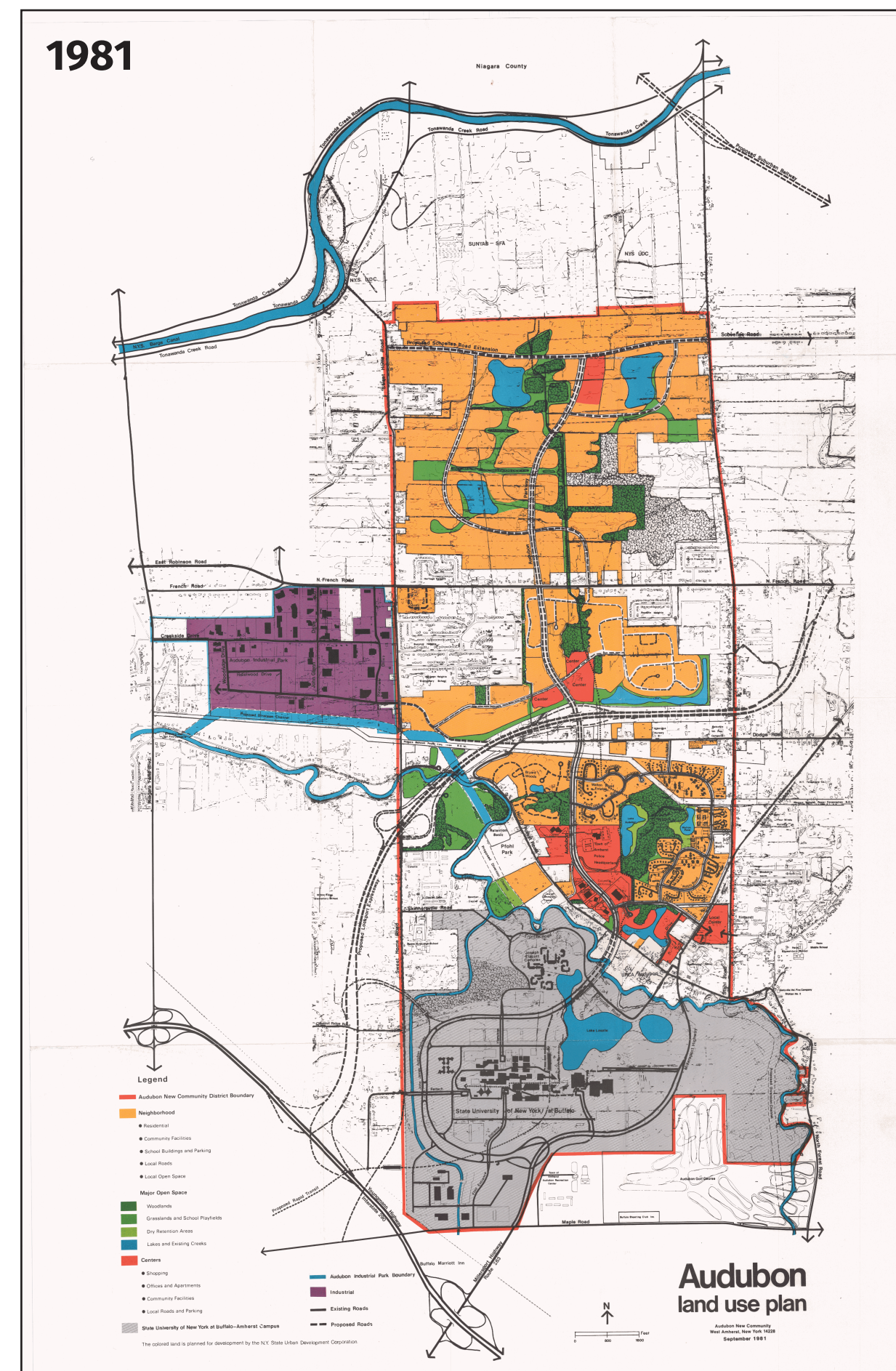
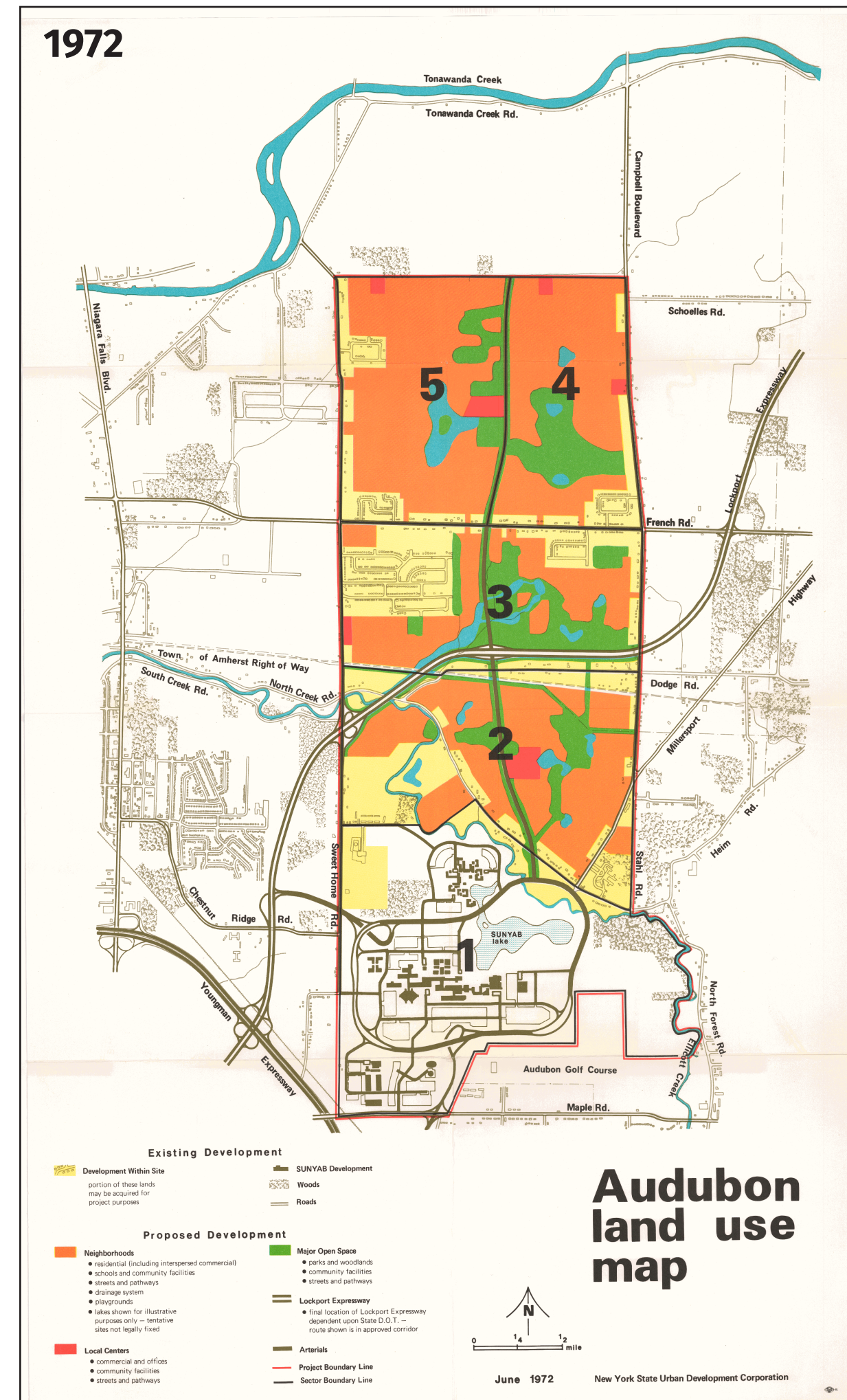


HISTORY AND STUDY AREA

- In the early 1970s, the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC) designated a planned community to support and compliment anticipated growth related to the development of the UB North Campus.
- The “Audubon New Community” was conceived as a mixed-use area of the Town, north of the University.
- Audubon was created through a Contract Agreement in 1972 between the UDC and the Town. The original contract between UDC and the Town expired in 1987, and a new contract was executed in 1992.
- The Community was intended to be implemented by way of the Audubon Development Plan, which was approved by the Town Board in December of 1972. Along with this, the Town adopted the New Community District (NCD) as an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.
- The Audubon New Community extends north to south nearly 5 miles from a National Grid utility right-of-way just to the north of Schoelles Road to the southern boundary of the UB North Campus. From east to west the area is 1.75 miles wide, bounded by Campbell Boulevard and the Ellicott Creek corridor on the east, and Sweet Home Road to the west. The area also includes 1,200 acres of the UB North Campus.
- The area was mostly developed between 1973 and the late 1990s as a low-density community, with office, commercial, residential, and recreational uses separated into distinct planning sectors, primarily dependent on the use of automobiles.
- Over the past 50 years, the most developable portions of the Audubon Community have reached near-buildout conditions; therefore, the Town began a study to identify locations for potential redevelopment and reinvestment to support revitalization, greater connectivity and improved accessibility.
- For purposes of this effort, the Study Area boundaries are focused on the core development area of the Audubon Community, with the northern boundary at North French Road and the southern boundary established along Ellicott Creek (excluding UB). The east and western boundaries remain the same.



LAND USE AND ZONING ANALYSES

An extensive review of existing land use and zoning district regulations for the Study Area was conducted, along with a review of the historic progression of the zoning regulations that have governed it since the adoption of the zoning ordinance and creation of the Audubon Development Plan.

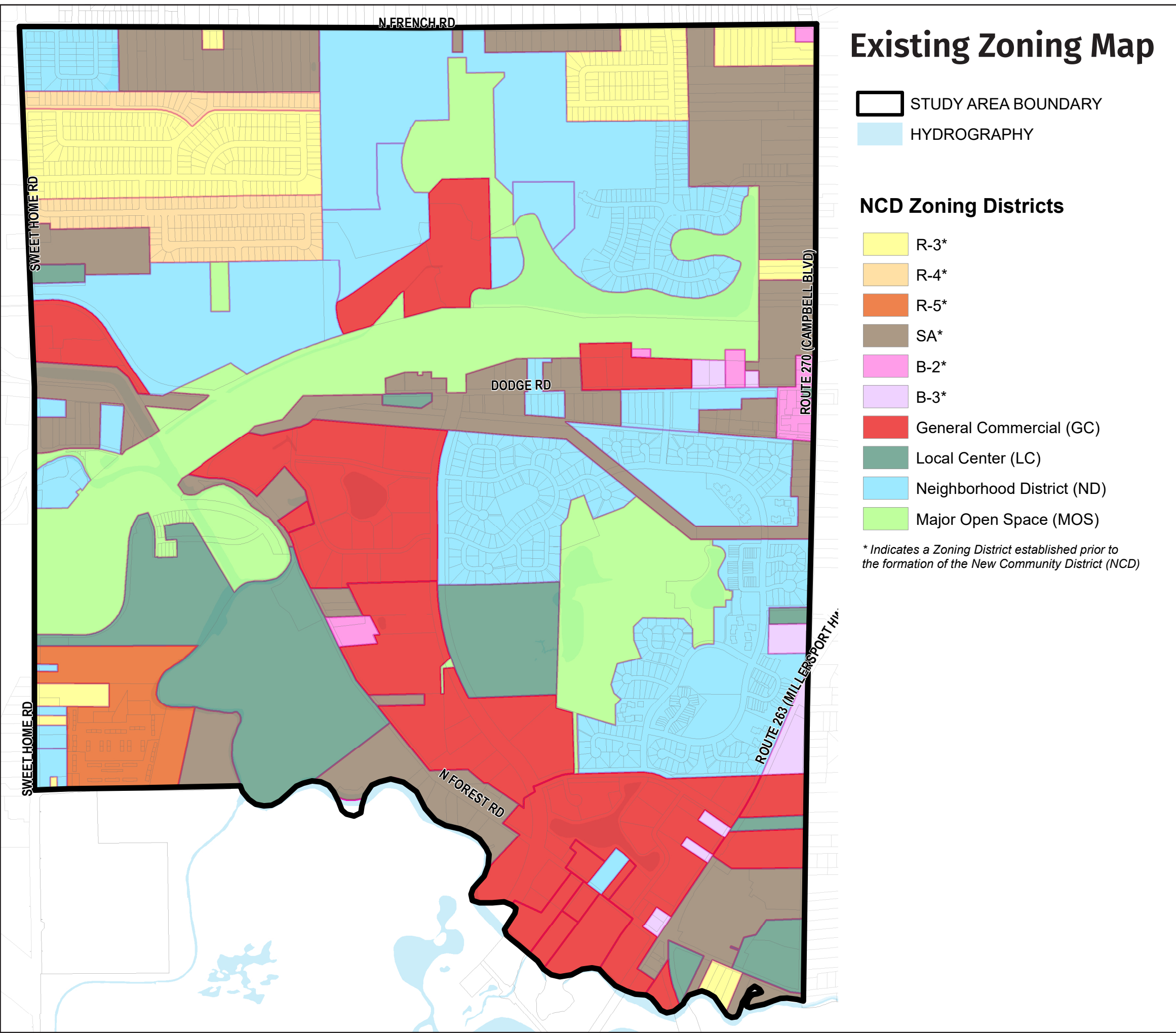
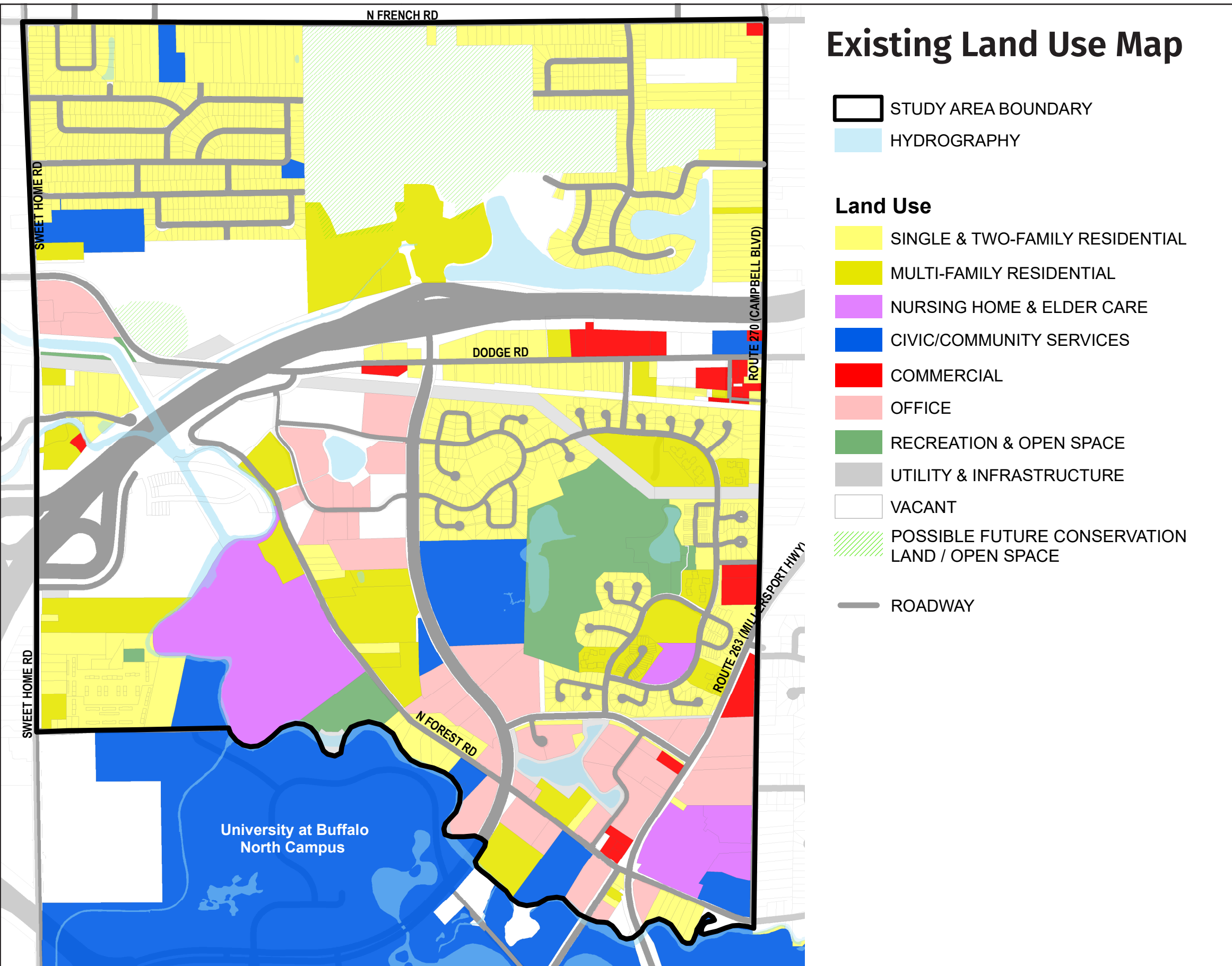
Land Use Findings

- Revisions to the Audubon Development Plan shifted the emphasis of land use planning in the Study Area. This included assignment and dedication of most of the lands north of North French Road to the Town as the Nature View Park, which were originally designated for residential development. The Bryant Woods office park was also originally proposed to be residential, and both Sylvan Parkway and John Muir Drive were constructed with office uses rather than housing.
- The 1972 Contract between UDC and the Town specified several requirements, limitations and restrictions on development such as limits on the total number of housing units, the acreage to be devoted to various land uses, and the number and ratio of housing units receiving certain types of government funding assistance.
- The area lacks retail uses and other services and businesses to complement and support existing land uses. There are no markets or sources for fresh food, and there are a limited number of restaurants, personal service shops, and retail stores. Getzville Plaza, located on the east side of Millersport Highway, is the only established commercial district but it is isolated from Audubon. There is an opportunity to develop small-scale commercial and retail uses within the Study Area that would benefit residents, students, and employees in the community.
- The Audubon Study Area is lacking in usable open spaces and recreation areas, with Walton Woods Park being the only significant active park space in the community. The Town should explore opportunities to develop multi-use trails and pathways along roadways, in residential neighborhoods, and through preserved wetland areas.
- The Town should pursue major improvements to the bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure in the Study Area, which was not an original focus on the land use planning for the area.
- Ultimately, the Study Area has developed in a manner that achieved the original goal of creating an attractive, organized community. However, the land uses and development are segregated by type, which has created distinct residential communities, office park districts, and an with community facilities. While originally proposed to support and absorb the impacts of the UB North Campus, the types of uses ultimately in the area did not fully accomplish this goal.

Zoning Findings

- The purpose of the New Community District (NCD) was to provide flexible regulations using design and performance criteria so that small-to-large scale, multi-use neighborhoods could be developed on relatively large tracts in a manner that incorporated a variety of residential and non-residential uses and services. The NCD provides limited dimensional standards that control area density, and the arrangement of buildings, open space, and landscape features.
- Five use classifications were developed to enable rational and thoughtful patterns of development that blended uses, building types, and construction methods.
- Requests to change the zoning classification of a property to NCD are recorded as amendments to the Audubon Development Plan. To date there have been over 70 amendments.
- Design guidelines were developed for all office development. The intent was to ensure well-planned and maintained office developments that made a significant and pleasing contribution to the community. All office projects are required to be reviewed by the Audubon Architectural Committee to ensure adherence to the guidelines.
- Property owners in the Audubon Community were given the choice to either have their property zoned to the new NCD district or to continue to utilize existing zoning. Many owners chose to retain their zoning and as of May 2023, there are still 798 parcels (just over 523 acres), containing zoning districts that existed prior to the adoption of the NCD in 1972. This needs to be rectified, likely by rezoning of the properties that opted out of NCD to one of the NCD use classifications.
- Although the NCD-ND zoning classification permits small convenience retail and service facilities, and ancillary office facilities designed to serve the needs of residents in the neighborhood, none were ever built.
- There are two separate Suburban Agriculture (SA) districts; one that is pre-1972 for which no governing regulations were carried over from Chapter 56, and a new district that was adopted in 1976 that is quite different from the latter. This needs to be resolved.

The Comprehensive Plan needs to be reviewed and revised to recognize zoning amendments that have been adopted that may not be consistent with that Plan. The NCD zoning regulations also need to be amended to more easily allow for mixed-use within individual buildings in addition to mixing the same types of uses within segregated commercial or residential areas.



ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

A market analysis was conducted in 2023 to evaluate economic and real estate market opportunities in the Audubon area. Regional economic trends such as population growth, employment rates, housing type, and household income comparisons were also evaluated.

Residential Findings

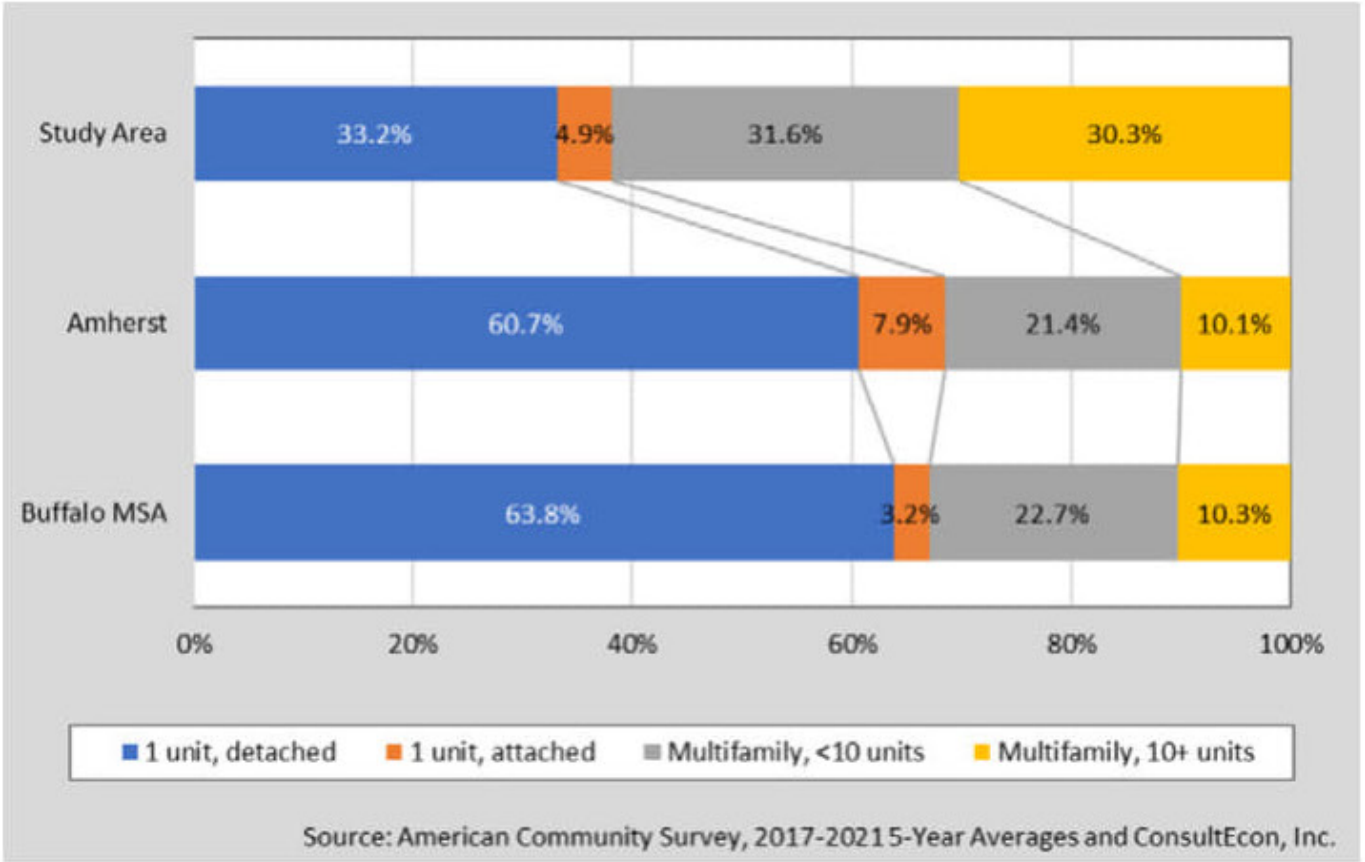
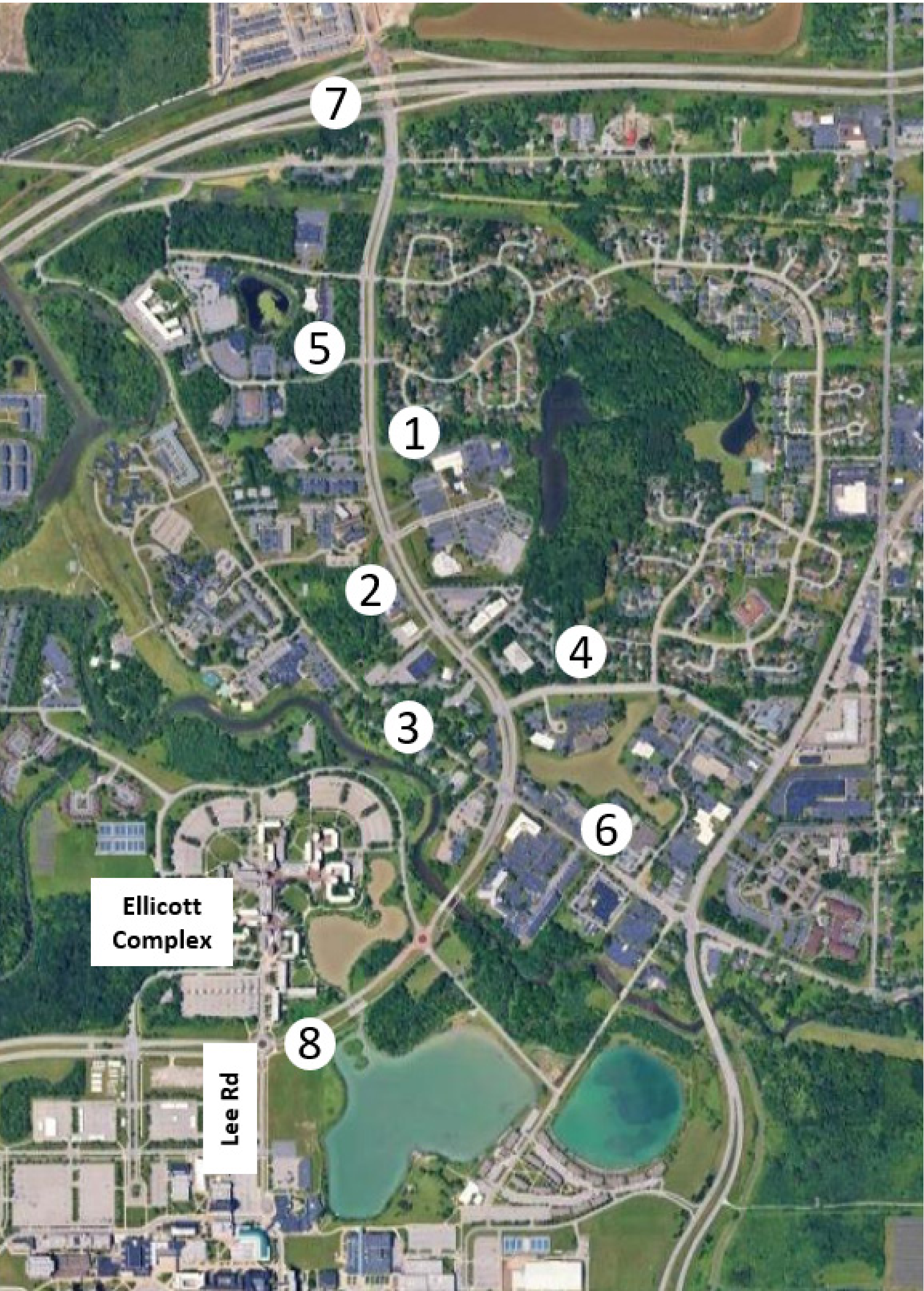
- The majority of the housing in the Study Area was built after 1979 but it is starting to age.
- The for-sale residential housing market remains very strong in both the local area and the region. There is very limited inventory, and demand remains high for all types of units, regardless of size and price point.
- Demand for market-rate rental housing is similarly high, and not just for student housing. There is a clear need for rental housing that serves young professionals, singles, and empty nesters in smaller units, while the demand for larger units is limited to larger households. There is also a higher concentration of recent multi-family housing developments in the Study Area as compared to the rest of the Town.
- New developments, built since 2010, have quickly achieved 97% occupancy further exemplifying the strong underlying demand for housing at both market rate and affordable price points.
- Over the years, a robust off-campus student housing market emerged to provide housing for the student body at UB. However, the University anticipates enrollment to remain constant over the next decade, and because of the recent student housing developments, the demand for student housing is estimated to be satisfied for the near future.

Non-Residential Findings

- The local office market is facing an elevated vacancy rate, particularly among older, low-density buildings. Larger multi-story and smaller one-story office buildings have remained attractive to professional office users; however, larger one and two-story buildings have proven more difficult to rent. There may be some demand for new office development in the area, but it will need to be focused within walkable, mixed-use environments with amenities and proximity to restaurants and retail spaces. This shows the need for more variation in size and location for office space.
- The retail market of Western New York has a relatively high vacancy rate of 13% compared to the national average of 5%. The Boulevard region submarket, which includes Amherst, has higher vacancy rates than the City of Buffalo.
- There is presently limited retail activity within the Study Area. Most of the existing retail development near Audubon is clustered along Millersport Highway while there is virtually no retail development along Audubon Parkway north of the University at Buffalo North Campus. There is need for neighborhood-oriented retail and commercial uses located in proximity to both existing and future residential and office areas.
- The original Audubon Development Plan introduced the concept of a planned community consisting of a mix of land uses. The current planning project reinforces and builds upon the original intent and hopes to create an enhanced legacy as a mixed-use, livable area that supports the University at Buffalo and neighborhood residents with a variety of amenities (see Figure 8).

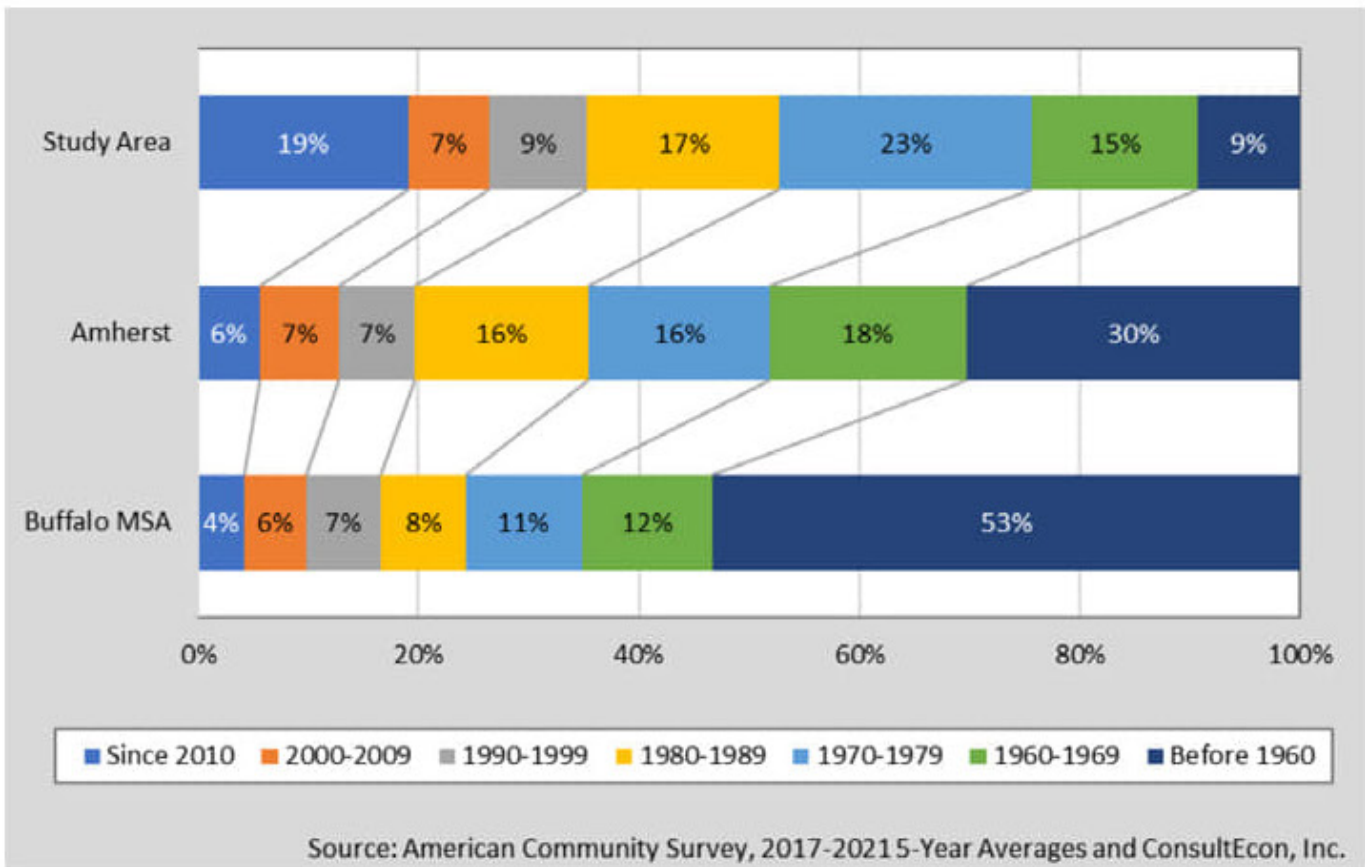
Conclusion

- Based on the economic analysis and specific market needs, and ensuring compatibility with the surrounding uses, several locations within the Study Area were identified as having reasonable potential for redevelopment or infill development (number correspond to the locations on the map). These sites may not all be feasible for development due to timing, ownership, environmental constraints, or alternative uses, but they all merit future consideration:
 1. Town of Amherst Municipal campus
 2. West Side of John James Audubon Parkway, north of North Forest Road
 3. West Side of John James Audubon Parkway, south of North Forest Road
 4. Pinchot Court
 5. Bryant Woods parcels
 6. North Forest Road and St. Rita’s Lane
 7. Dodge Road corridor
 8. *UB Key Sites for Reinvestment



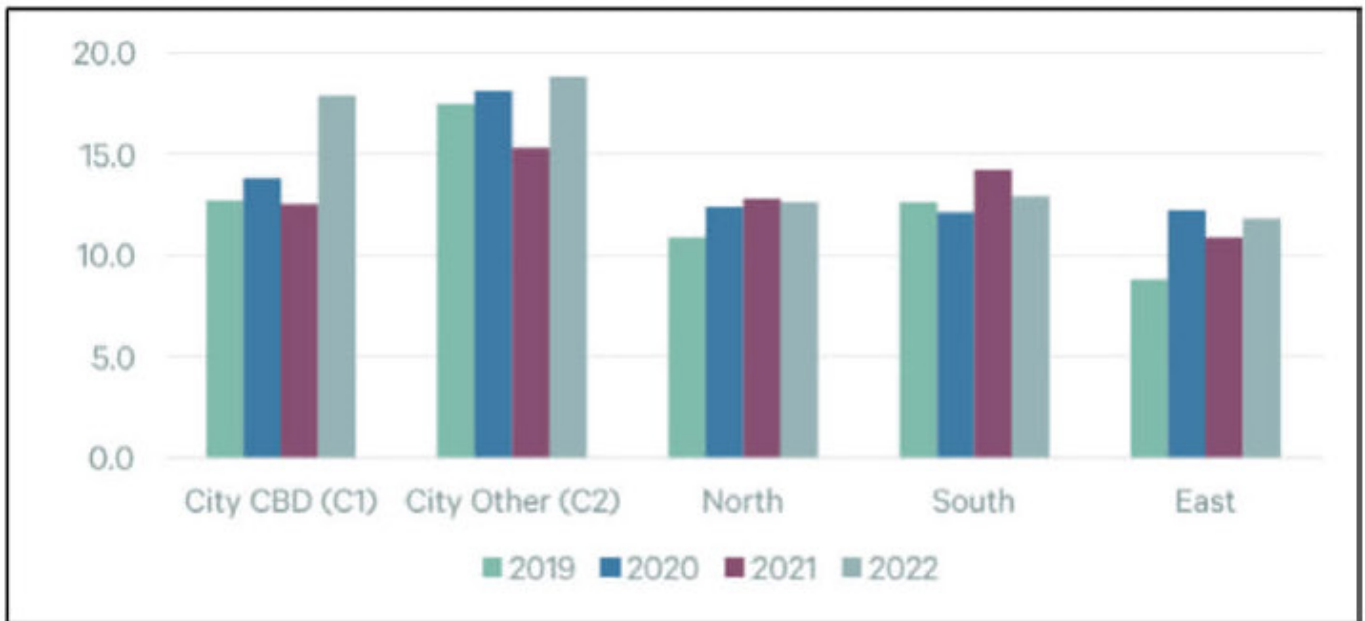
Unit Distribution of Existing Housing

(Source: ConsultEcon)



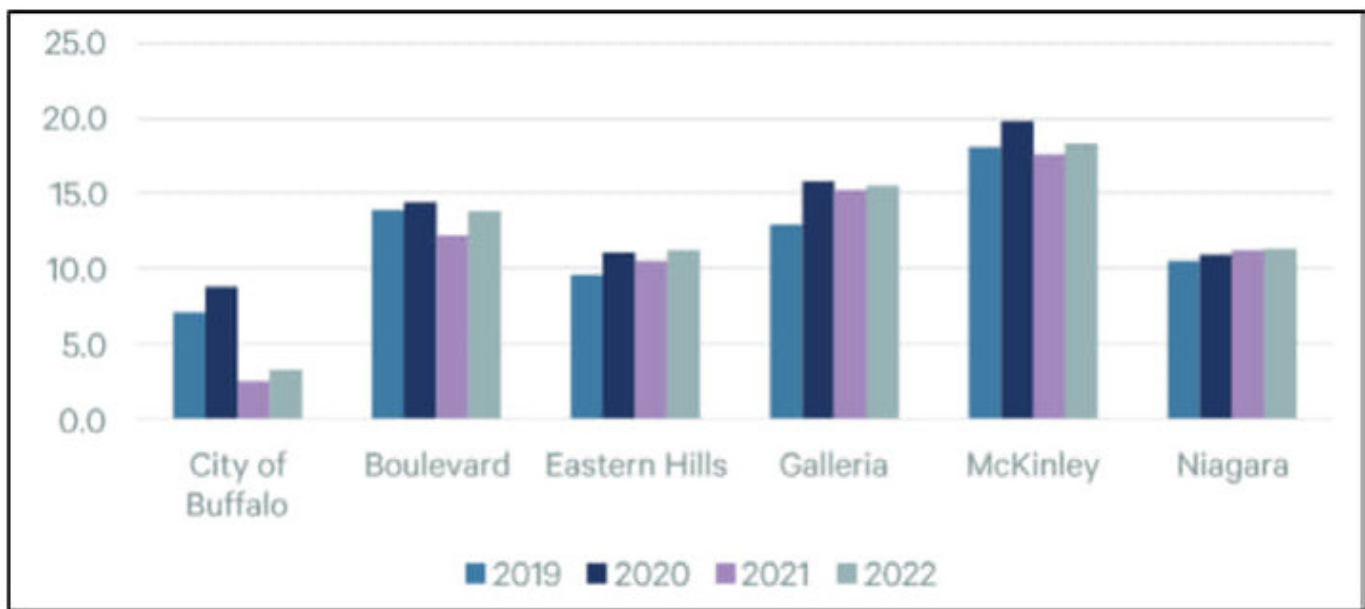
Age of Existing Housing

(Source: ConsultEcon)



Buffalo Region Office Market Vacancy Rate

(Source: CBRE Buffalo, Q4 2022)

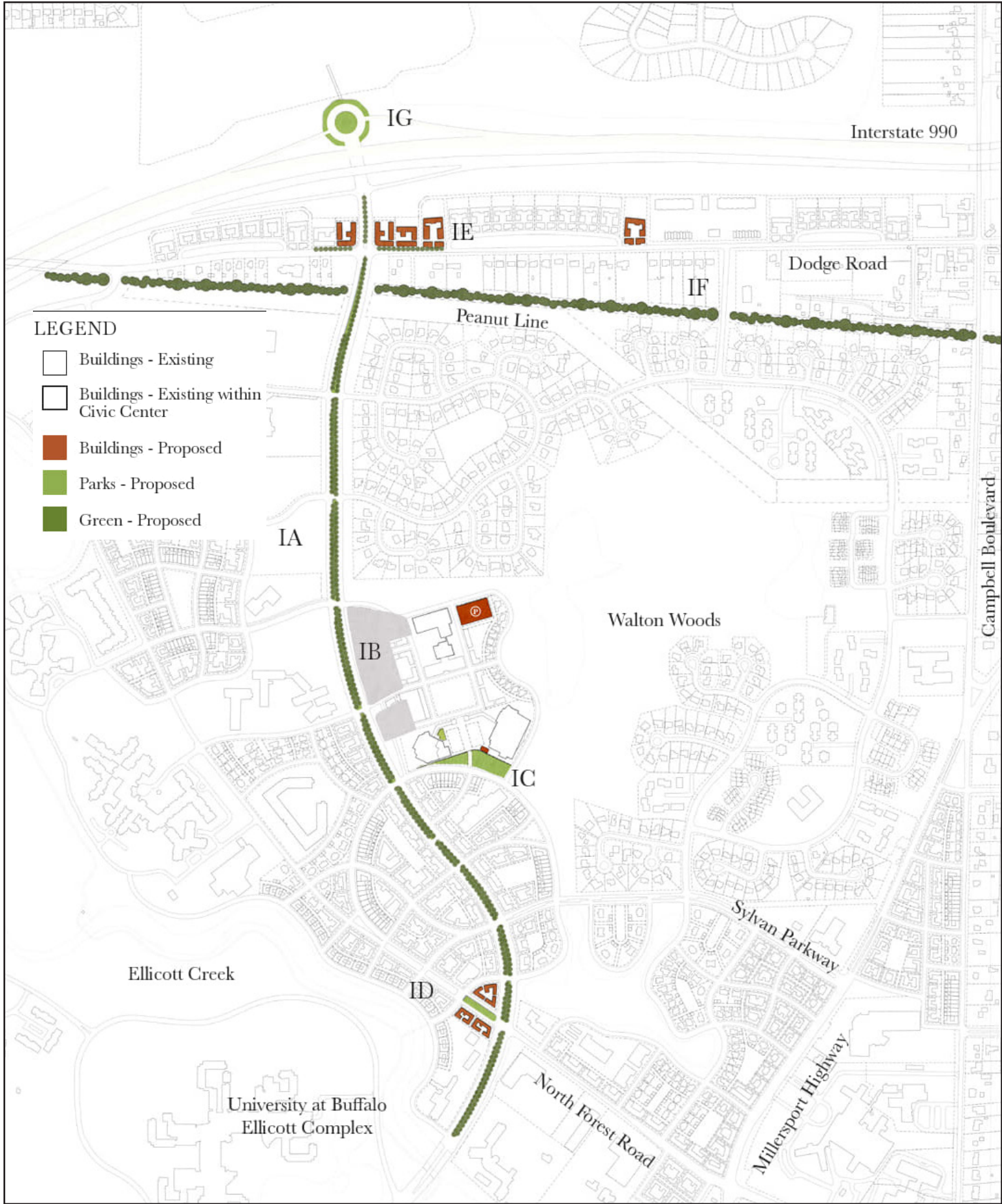


Buffalo Region Retail Market Vacancy Rate

(Source: CBRE Buffalo, Q4 2022)

REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Build Concept 1



New Development

- IA Audubon Parkway enhancement
- IB Temporary surface parking along Audubon Parkway at Civic Center
- IC Park between Library and Senior Services to create visual connection to the south
- ID New retail development at corner of North Forest Road and Audubon Parkway
- IE New multifamily development and retail intersection along Dodge Road
- IF Peanut Line to be developed as potential trail
- IG New Roundabout

Program	Phase I	Total
• New Development Land Area:	8.5 ac	8.5 ac
• Residential Units:	60 units	60 units
• Commercial/Office Area - Net:	5,000 sf	5,000 sf
• Commercial/Office Area - Removed:	0 sf	
• Commercial/Office Area - Proposed:	+5,000 sf	
• Commercial/Mixed Use Area:	25,000 sf	25,000 sf
• Park Area:	1.4 ac	1.4 ac
• Parking (In Civic Center):	320 spaces	320 spaces

Build Concept 2



New Development

- IIA New development and public square with parking at Civic Center
- IIB New development between Audubon Parkway and North Forest Road
- IIC New development south of Sylvan Parkway
- IID New multifamily and single-family development along Dodge Road

Program	Phase II	Total
• New Development Land Area:	28 ac	36.5 ac
• Residential Units:	200 units	260 units
• Commercial/Office Area - Net:	100,000 sf	105,000 sf
• Commercial/Office Area - Removed:	-100,000 sf	
• Commercial/Office Area - Proposed:	+200,000 sf	
• Commercial/Mixed Use Area:	35,000 sf	60,000 sf
• Park Area:	4.0 ac	5.4 ac
• Parking (In Civic Center):	320 spaces	640 spaces

Build Concept 3



New Development

- IIIA New development around Police Station in Civic Center and expansion to Courthouse
- IIIB New neighborhood between Civic Center and Sylvan Parkway
- IIIC New neighborhood between Ellicott Creek and North Forest Road
- IIID New multifamily development along Dodge Road
- IIIE New neighborhood between Audubon Parkway and North Forest Road
- IIIF New neighborhood along Millersport Highway

Program	Phase III	Total
• New Development Land Area:	33 ac	69.5 ac
• Residential Units:	300 units	560 units
• Commercial/Office Area - Net:	-65,000 sf	40,000 sf
• Commercial/Office Area - Removed:	-115,000 sf	
• Commercial/Office Area - Proposed:	+50,000 sf	
• Commercial/Mixed Use Area:	5,000 sf	65,000 sf
• Park Area:	3.0 ac	8.4 ac
• Parking (In Civic Center):	0 spaces	640 spaces

Build Concept 4



New Development

- IVA New neighborhood between North Forest Road and Sylvan Parkway
- IVB New neighborhood between Audubon Parkway and North Forest Road
- IVC No development beyond Bryant Woods to preserve as natural buffer to residential

Program	Phase IV	Total
• New Development Land Area:	32 ac	101.5 ac
• Residential Units:	200 units	760 units
• Commercial/Office Area - Net:	200,000 sf	240,000 sf
• Commercial/Office Area - Removed:	- 200,000 sf	
• Commercial/Office Area - Proposed:	+200,000 sf	
• Commercial/Mixed Use Area:	0 sf	65,000 sf
• Park Area:	1.0 ac	9.4 ac
• Parking (In Civic Center):	0 spaces	640 spaces

REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL



Program	Total
• New Development Land Area:	101.5 ac
• Residential Units:	760 units
• Commercial/Office Area - Net:	240,000 sf
• Commercial/Mixed Use Area:	65,000 sf
• Park Area:	9.4 ac
• Parking (In Civic Center):	640 spaces

TOWN MUNICIPAL CENTER CONECEPT

- As one of the key catalytic projects of this Plan, the transformation and infill of the Town Municipal Center site could help create a pedestrian-friendly multi-modal place as the new civic heart of the Audubon Community
- Currently, the Municipal Center has four important public buildings housing Town services, surrounding a large public parking lot. These include:
 - Amherst Town Police Department
 - Amherst Town Court
 - Amherst Center for Senior Services
 - Audubon Branch Public Library
- The Plan suggests an incrementally-implemented “park-once” environment within the Municipal Center that places many destinations within easy walking distance of one another. This allows a single parking space to serve multiple destinations.
- Elements of a traditional village design – a fine-grain mix of land uses, a network of small blocks, and the design of pedestrian-friendly streets.
- Creating new and enhancing surrounding neighborhoods within walking distance also allows households to make trips on foot or by bicycle, further reducing parking demand.

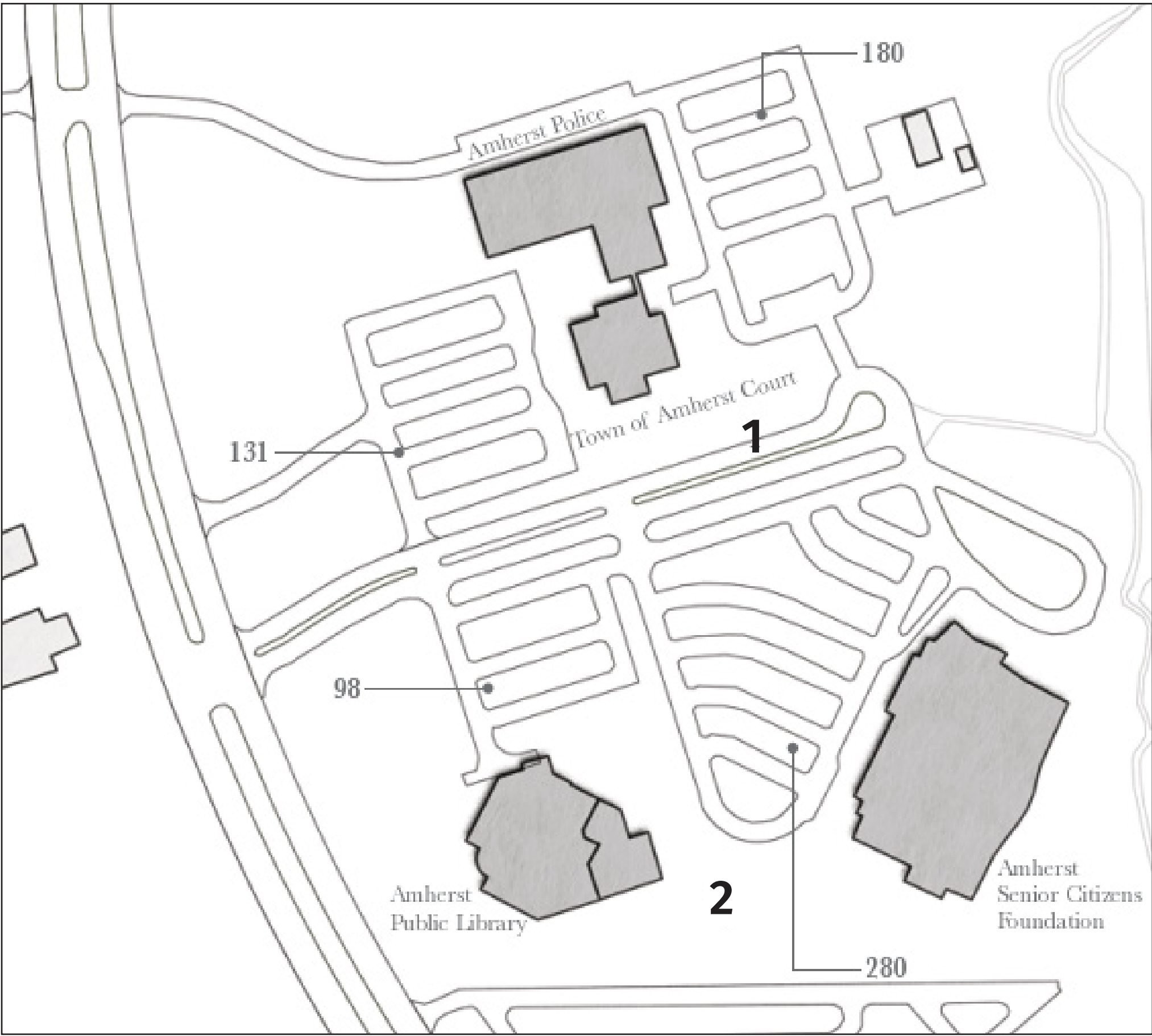


- Phase I**
- a. Proposed Park
 - b. New Surface Parking Lot (350 cars)
 - c. New Parking Structure 1 (300 cars)
 - d. Police Station and Courthouse Buildings Retained

- Phase II**
- e. New Green and Frontage Road
 - f. New Mixed-Use Development
 - g. New Parking Structure 2 (300 cars)

- Phase III**
- h. New Plaza
 - i. New Arcade to define Plaza
 - j. Single-family Housing (self parked)
 - k. Multi-Family Housing (self parked in lot and in rear)
 - l. Police Station/Courthouse Extension to define Plaza
 - m. Future Housing around Civic Center

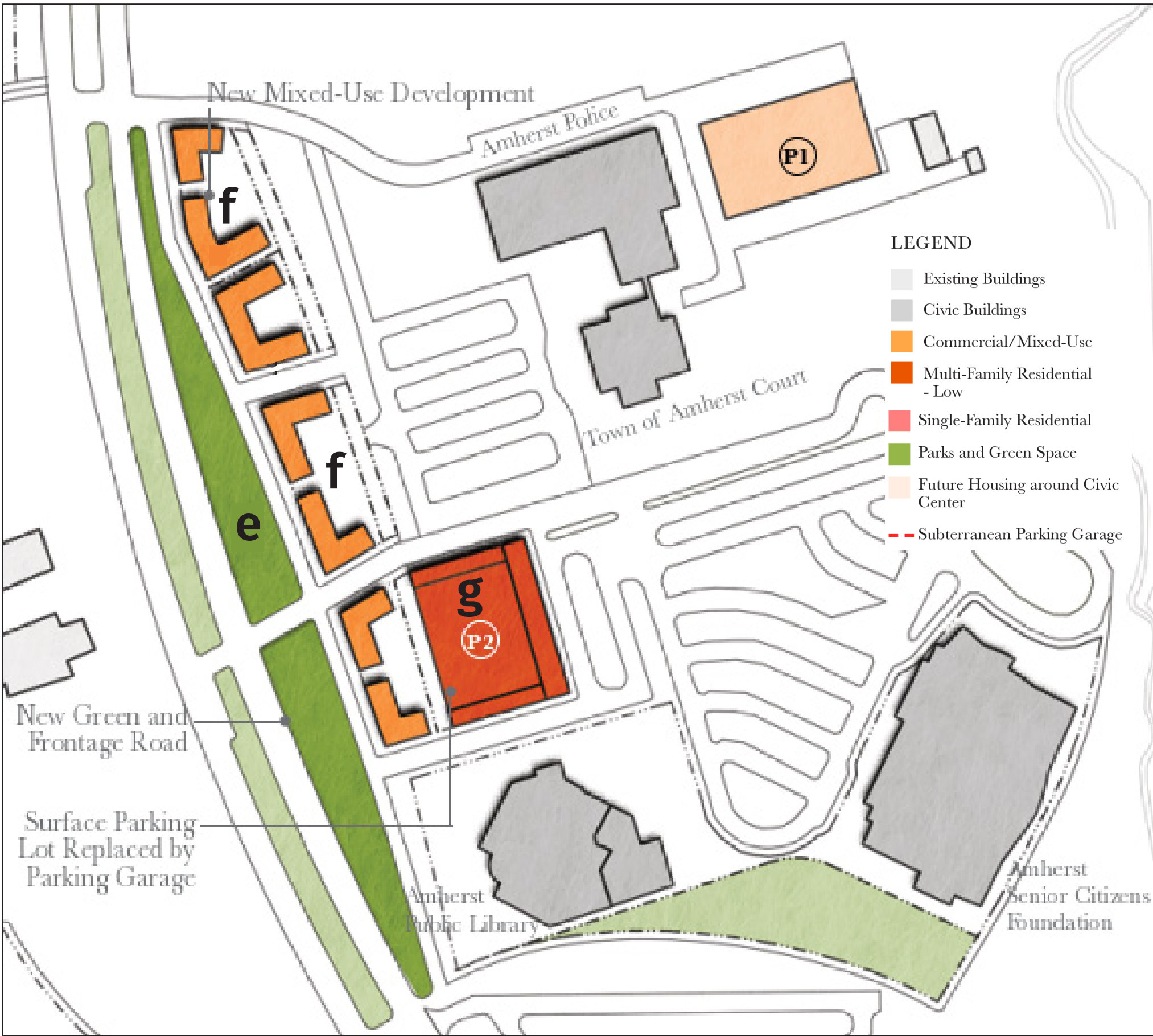
Existing



Phase 1



Phase 2



Phase 3



IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC REALM AND STRENGTHENING NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhood character is an important objective of this project as is the provision of a more walkable, pedestrian-friendly environment that is attractive and encourages more residents to walk or bike. The current physical condition of the Audubon area is auto-centric, but this planning effort sought to transform this condition into one where the pedestrian is the priority. There are several strategies that can be applied towards making the study area more walkable. These include:

- A mix of uses that encourages interaction
- A network and variety of types of interconnected streets with sidewalks
- Carefully located retail and mixed-use centers within walking distance of residential neighborhoods
- Development blocks not exceeding 300 feet in length
- A network of trails and pathways

Proposed development should infuse these strategies with an architectural character that is unique to the Study Area. The goal is to create “places” with their own building characteristics that distinguishes the Audubon area as its own place both for residents, employees and visitors. The NCD zoning allows for flexibility in design so new development can be properly designed and scaled to accommodate this goal. The relation of buildings to streets is also key and street improvements should be designed to enhance the “places” of Audubon.



CONTINUED CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF NATURAL ASSETS

Conservation and enhancement of natural assets in Audubon focuses on the ability of ecosystems to adapt to change and to continue to supply benefits. This includes consideration of waterways and water quality, wetlands, parks and open spaces, wooded areas, and other natural assets and how they serve the community. Planning opportunities regarding conserving and enhancing valuable natural assets in the study area include:

- Conserving and enhancing natural and open spaces
- Protecting wetlands
- Creating an integrated network of open spaces
- Linking new development (where feasible) to existing bike paths or trailways
- Introducing new natrual features in existing areas and on existing and new streets
- Encouraging the use of “green infrastructure”



UB North Campus Plan

Initiatives along Audubon Parkway intended to strengthen the connection from the University at Buffalo North Campus to the Audubon Community. UB has various plans to invest and reimagine portions of the North Campus as described below.

Campus Planning

- Realize the Sasaki 1970 Plan
- Strengthen the Spine
- Develop Lee Road
- Celebrate Lake LaSalle

Architectural | Landscape Architectural

- Wellness & Recreation Center
- Renovate Brutalist buildings with SHPO standards
- Rejuvenate the Promenade
- Rethink Mary Talbert Way
- Create a Student Oval
- Connect Pathways to Baird Point
- Rethink Greenspaces and Parking Lots

Programmatic

- Create a “Heart of the Campus”
- Consolidate and Strengthen University Libraries
- Grow College of Arts and Sciences | School of Engineering and Applied Sciences | School of Medicine | School of Law
- Modernize Athletics Facilities



UB NORTH CAMPUS PLAN

