

THE BUFFALO SKYWAY BUFFALO, USA

LONGUEUR DU TRACÉ	1,6 km
RÉALISATION	1966
MAÎTRISE D'OUVRAGE	New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
CAPACITÉ DU RÉSEAU	
TRANSIT APPROXIMATIF	43 400 véhicules / jour

CONTEXTE DE RÉALISATION

Construite au bord du lac Erie, la ville de Buffalo entretient des liens étroits avec ce contexte maritime

DESCRIPTION DU PROJET

RÔLE

COMPOSITION

TYPE DE STRUCTURE

DIMENSIONNEMENT

LIAISONS

PARTICULARITÉS DU PROJET

MISE EN OEUVRE

SOURCES

- <http://www.cnu.org/highways/>
- <http://www.cnu.org/sites/files/CNUBuffaloWaterfrontSummary.pdf>



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The Buffalo Skyway

Buffalo is a waterfront city with a deep history along the shores of Lake Erie. With more than half of the city's waterfront left vacant, the potential for revitalization is immense. Whole neighborhoods and commercial districts could be built with strong connections to downtown and the city's existing neighborhoods.

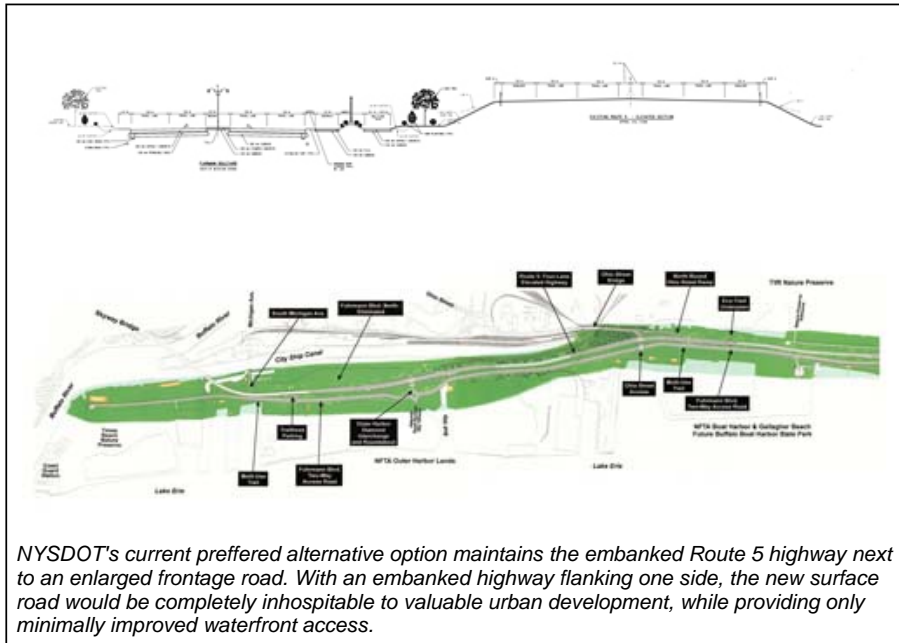
To achieve this vision, Buffalo needs to lay down the proper foundation. Good development is tied to good infrastructure. The form of the streets can seal the fate of vast amounts of land.

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) evaluated three infrastructure alternatives for the outer harbor. It selected the plan that will, in all likelihood, keep the waterfront vacant for another 50 to 100 years. This plan maintains the elevated skyway and the embanked Route 5 and expands a major frontage road, while consuming unnecessary amounts of land that could otherwise build the city's tax base.

But by simply choosing the boulevard alternative already developed by the department of transportation, Buffalo could build a single urban thoroughfare that would accommodate traffic demands and become a valuable destination in its own right. The new boulevard would significantly improve waterfront access and support the revitalization that Buffalonians have been fighting for.

Buffalo has two very different choices on the table. By choosing the boulevard alternative, the city will open the door to world-class development.

Read CNU's summary report, [Revitalizing Buffalo's Waterfront \(PDF 1.9MB\)](#).



NYSDOT's current preferred alternative option maintains the embanked Route 5 highway next to an enlarged frontage road. With an embanked highway flanking one side, the new surface road would be completely inhospitable to valuable urban development, while providing only minimally improved waterfront access.



The Boulevard option would allow for greater connections to downtown and could be lined with development, creating a more desirable place while still provide adequate traffic capacity.



A multi-way boulevard could also be considered. It allows through traffic to keep moving in the center lanes and local traffic -- the kind necessary for commercial development -- to continue at its own pace.



A network of blocks and streets would expand access and connectivity to the outer harbor.

Transportation Reports

Smart Mobility, Dec. 2007: [Development Opportunities Gained by a Multi-way Boulevard for Route 5](#)

Smart Mobility, Aug. 2007: [Summary of Current NYSDOT Plans for Buffalo's Waterfront](#)

Smart Mobility, Dec. 2006: [Assessment of Transportation Needs for Buffalo's Waterfront Redevelopment](#)

CNU News Releases

9/6/2007: [Buffalo's Potential for World-Class Waterfront Threatened by State Plans to Expand Freeway Infrastructure Along Outer Harbor](#)

7/2/2007: [Buffalo Council Members Tour Milwaukee's Riverfront Redevelopment](#)

12/14/2006: [Transportation Report: Remove the Buffalo Skyway](#)

Correspondence

[Letter from Buffalo Council members Michael Kearns and David Franczyk to Governor Eliot Spitzer, 9-28-07](#)

[Letter from Smart Mobility transportation engineer Lucy Gibson responding to NYSDOT commissioner Astrid Glynn, 9-26-07](#)

[Letter from NYSDOT commissioner Astrid Glynn to Congressman Brian Higgins, responding to report by Smart Mobility urging DOT shift to its boulevard-only option, 9-19-07 \(attachment\)](#)

Media Coverage

[Buffalo News Apr. 16, 2008 *Opinion: Complete the Outer Harbor Parkway*](#)

[Buffalo News Apr. 1, 2008 *John Norquist: DOT has no intention of removing Skyway*](#)

[Buffalo News Feb. 22, 2008 *Boulevard alternative would give Buffalo a great place*](#)

[Buffalo News Feb. 1, 2008 *Donn Esmonde: Higgins seems to have lost his way*](#)

[Buffalo News Jan. 30, 2008 *Donn Esmonde: Route 5 barricade heads to court*](#)

[Buffalo News Jan. 22, 2008 *Opinion: Open the Waterfront*](#)

[Buffalo Rising Oct. 18, 2007 *Will The Ghost of Robert Moses Continue To Haunt Us?*](#)

[Buffalo News Oct. 17, 2007 *Buffalo council unanimous in opposing high-speed Southtowns Connector*](#)

[Buffalo News Oct. 2, 2007 *Spitzer urged to overrule state plan for Route 5*](#)

[Buffalo Business First Sept. 24, 2007 *DOT: Connector no detriment to Skyway*](#)

[Buffalo News Sept. 8, 2007 *Planner says Fuhrmann/Route 5 project is obsolete*](#)

[Buffalo News Opinion Sept. 13, 2007 *Review highway decision*](#)

[Artvoice Video Interview with John Norquist and Scott Bernstein December 2007](#)



A well-connected boulevard could restore value and life to the waterfront. Rendering by Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists.

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HIGHWAYS TO BOULEVARDS INITIATIVE

CONGRESS FOR THE NEW URBANISM
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TWO VERY DIFFERENT CHOICES

BUFFALO IS A WATERFRONT CITY WITH A DEEP HISTORY ALONG THE SHORES OF LAKE ERIE. WITH MORE THAN HALF OF THE CITY'S WATERFRONT LEFT VACANT, THE POTENTIAL FOR REVITALIZATION IS IMMENSE.

WHOLE NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS COULD BE BUILT WITH STRONG CONNECTIONS TO DOWNTOWN AND THE CITY'S EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS.

TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION, BUFFALO NEEDS TO LAY DOWN THE PROPER FOUNDATION. GOOD DEVELOPMENT IS TIED TO GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE. THE FORM OF THE STREETS CAN SEAL THE FATE OF VAST AMOUNTS OF LAND.

THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NYS DOT) EVALUATED THREE INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE OUTER HARBOR. IT SELECTED THE PLAN THAT WILL, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, KEEP THE WATERFRONT VACANT FOR ANOTHER 50 TO 100 YEARS. THIS PLAN MAINTAINS THE ELEVATED SKYWAY AND THE EMBANKED ROUTE 5 AND EXPANDS A MAJOR FRONTAGE ROAD, WHILE CONSUMING UNNECESSARY AMOUNTS OF LAND THAT COULD OTHERWISE BUILD THE CITY'S TAX BASE.

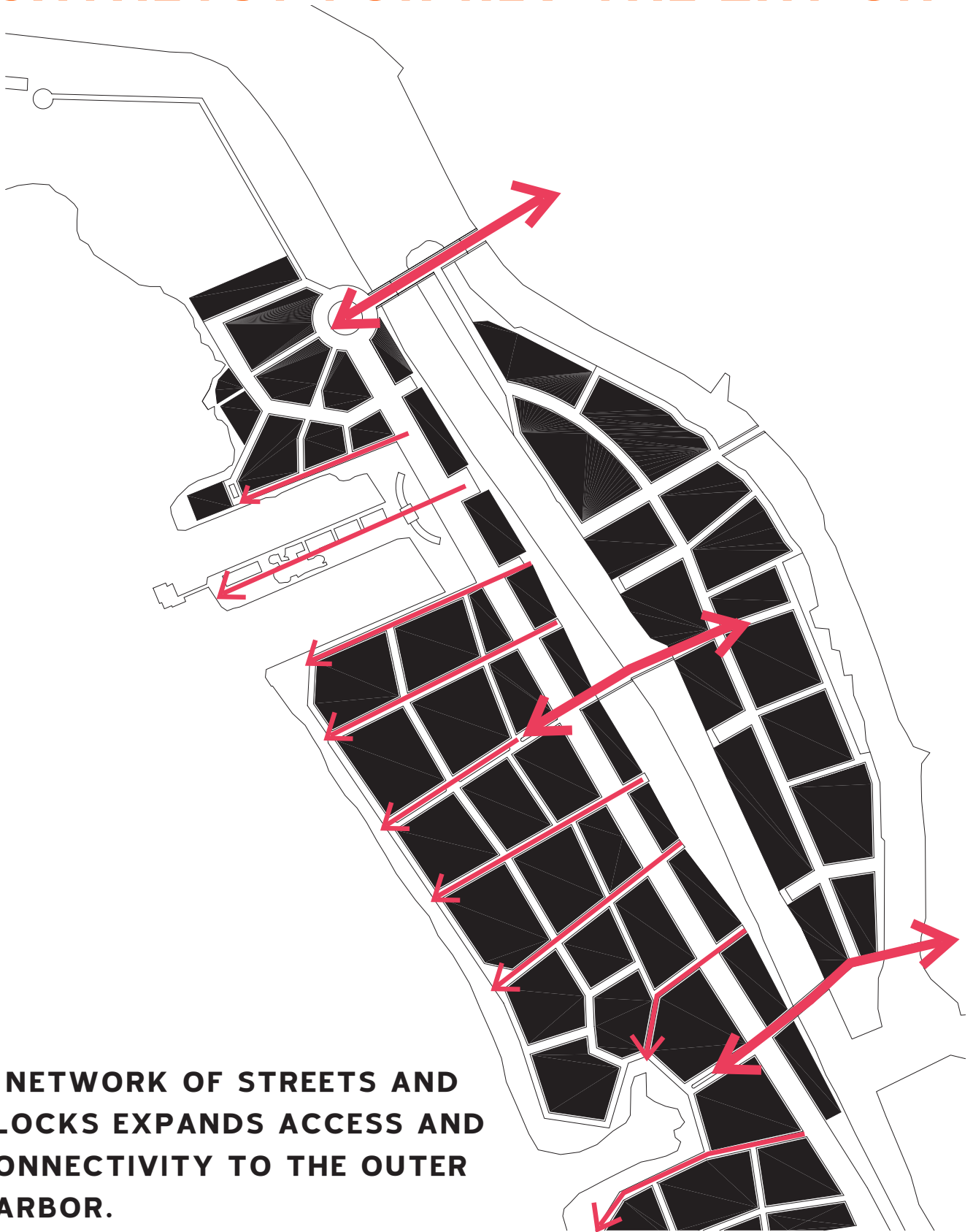
BUT BY SIMPLY CHOOSING THE BOULEVARD ALTERNATIVE ALREADY DEVELOPED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, BUFFALO COULD BUILD A SINGLE URBAN THOROUGHFARE THAT WOULD ACCOMMODATE TRAFFIC DEMANDS AND BECOME A VALUABLE DESTINATION IN IT'S OWN RIGHT. THE NEW BOULEVARD WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE WATERFRONT ACCESS AND SUPPORT THE REVITALIZATION THAT BUFFALONIANS HAVE BEEN FIGHTING FOR.

BUFFALO HAS TWO VERY DIFFERENT CHOICES ON THE TABLE. BY CHOOSING THE BOULEVARD ALTERNATIVE, THE CITY WILL OPEN THE DOOR TO WORLD-CLASS DEVELOPMENT.

THE FOLLOWING SERIES OF IMAGES DEMONSTRATES WHAT COULD HAPPEN ALONG THE WATERFRONT WITH THE RIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLACE. IT CONTRASTS THAT FUTURE WITH WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE NYS DOT IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE WITH ITS CURRENT PLANS.



STREETS AND BLOCKS: A CATALYST FOR REVITALIZATION



**A NETWORK OF STREETS AND
BLOCKS EXPANDS ACCESS AND
CONNECTIVITY TO THE OUTER
HARBOR.**

**A MIXTURE OF COMMERCIAL, OFFICE,
AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT,
ALONG WITH PARK SPACE, WOULD
MAKE THE WATERFRONT A REAL
DESTINATION EXPLORED BY
RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ALIKE.**

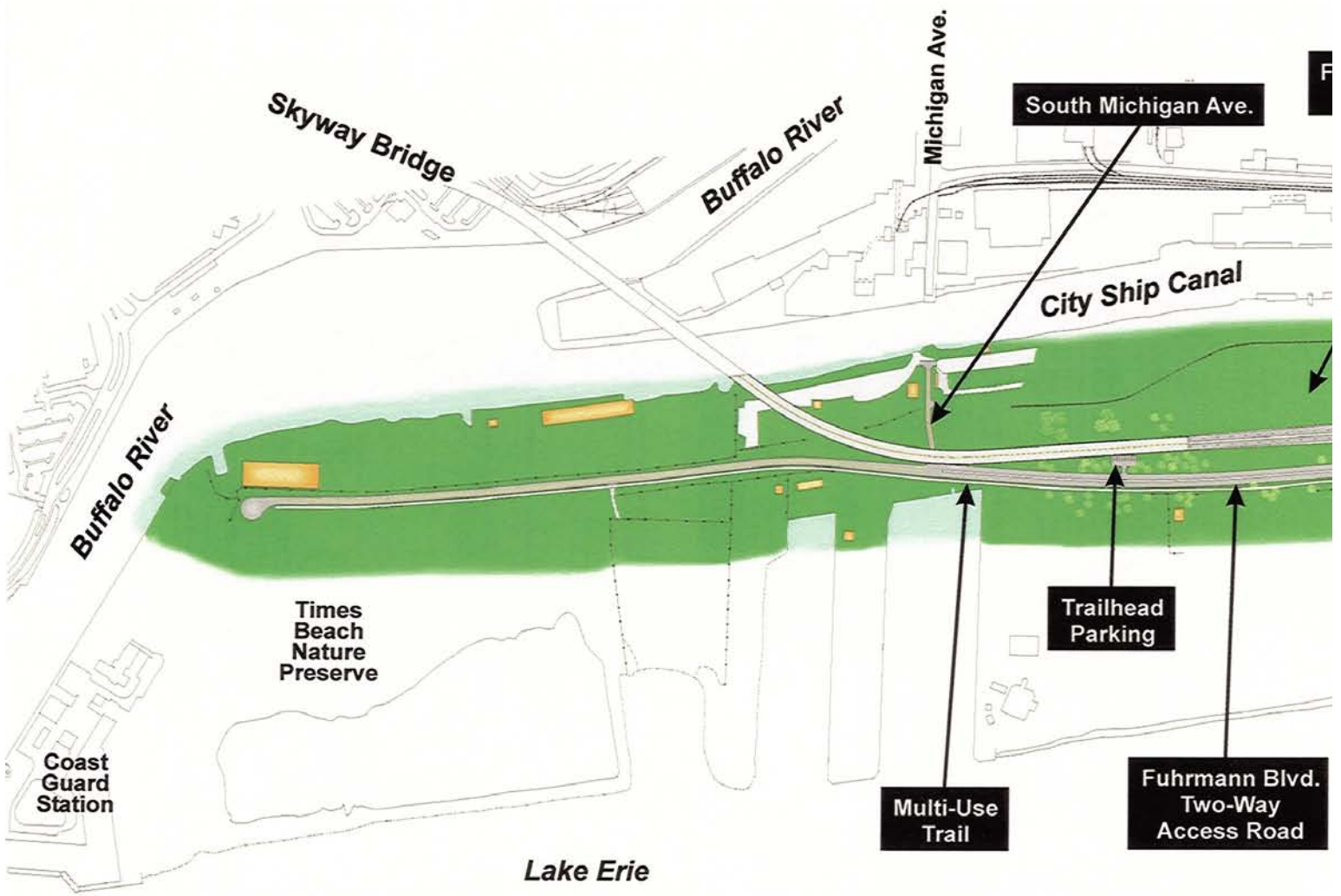
**WITH A BOULEVARD
INSTEAD OF AN EMBANKED
HIGHWAY, THE THOROUGHFARE
CAN BE CONNECTED TO A
SERIES OF SMALLER BLOCKS
AND NARROW STREETS THAT
INCREASE WALKABILITY.**



SUBURBAN-STYLE PARKWAY: MORE OF THE SAME

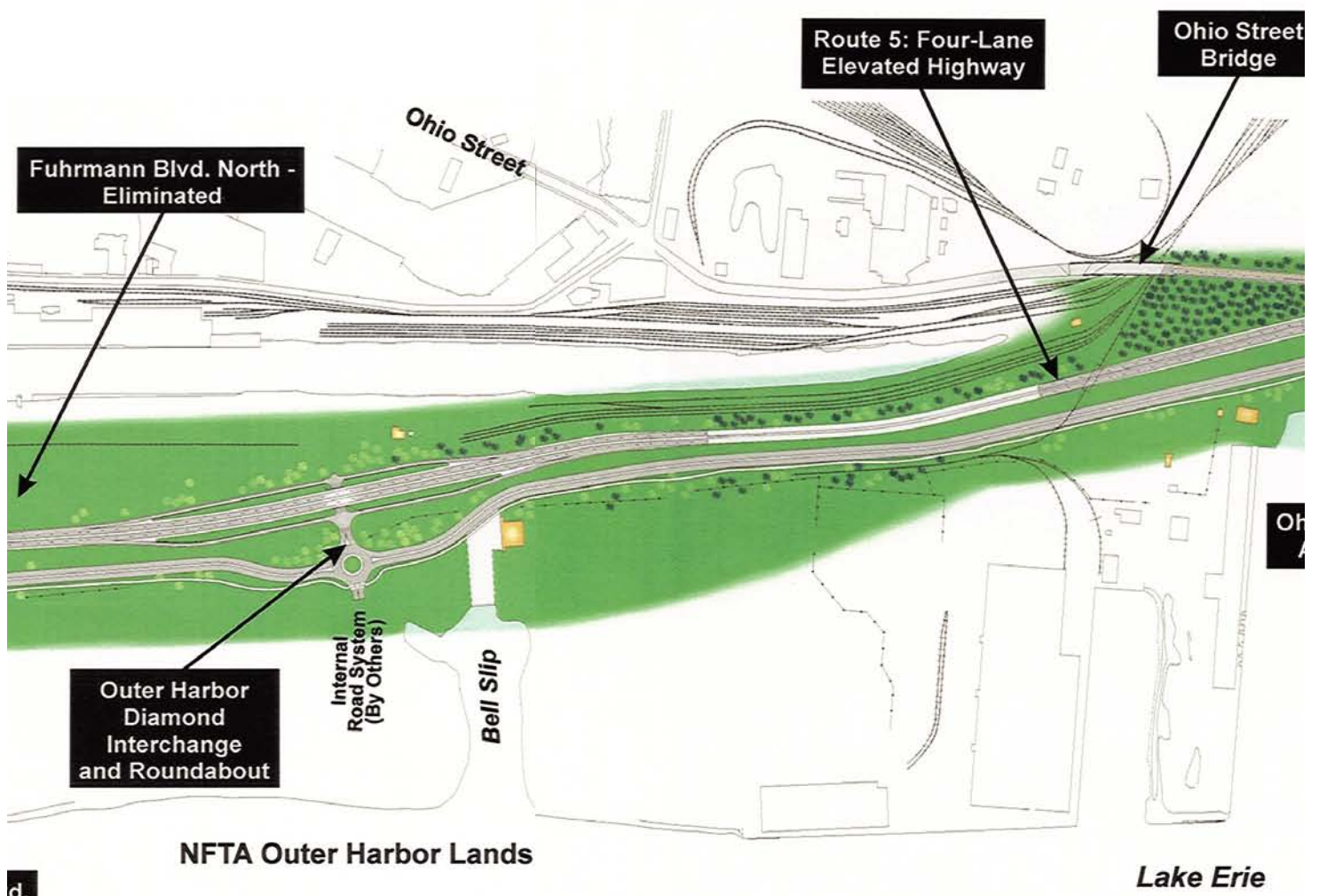
THE CURRENT PLANS ARE TO EXPAND FUHRMANN BOULEVARD INTO A FOUR-LANE PARKWAY ON THE LAKE SIDE OF THE EMBANKED ROUTE 5. ADDITIONAL MONEY WILL BE SPENT RECONSTRUCTING TWO INTERCHANGES BETWEEN FUHRMANN BOULEVARD AND THE HIGHWAY.

BECAUSE THESE PLANS RETAIN THE EMBANKED HIGHWAY, ALONG WITH THE ELEVATED SKYWAY BRIDGE, THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE WATERFRONT WILL BE NOT BE REALIZED.

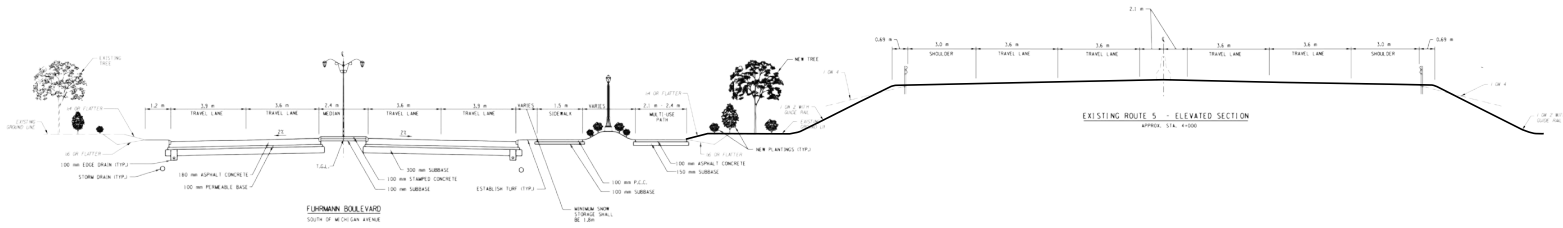


WITH AN EMBANKED ROAD ON ONE SIDE, DEVELOPMENT ALONG FUHRMANN WILL CONTINUE TO BE LOW-VALUE AND AUTO-ORIENTED, YIELDING MINIMAL SHORT-TERM GAINS INSTEAD OF A LONG LASTING WATERFRONT NEIGHBORHOOD.

AND DESPITE THE MILLIONS INVESTED, LACK OF CONNECTIVITY WITH THE REST OF BUFFALO ESSENTIALLY REMAINS THE SAME.



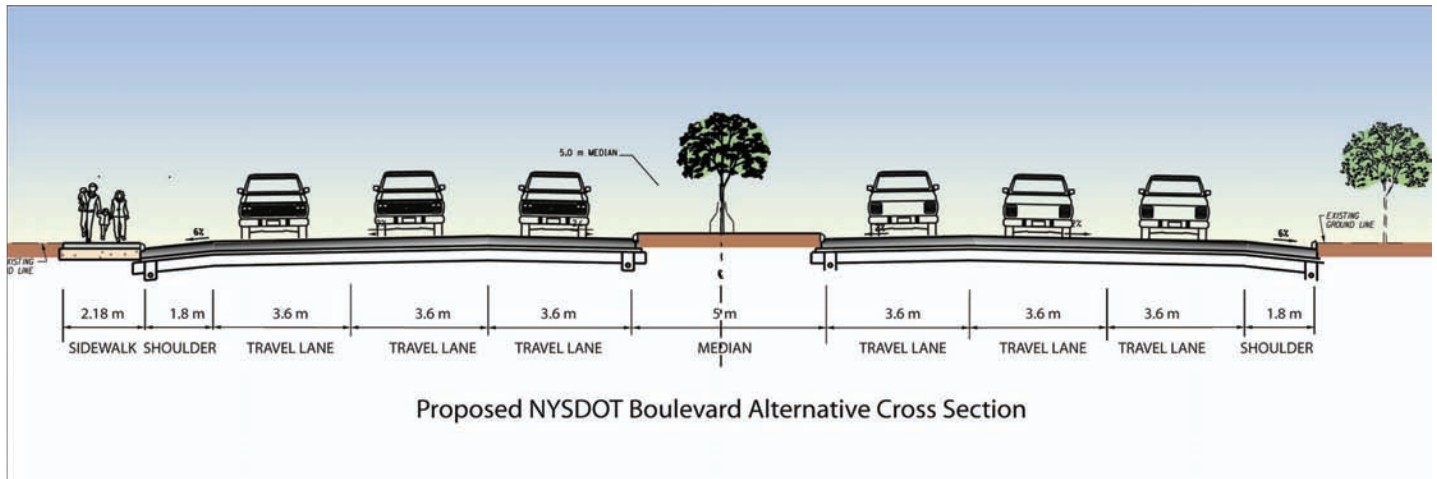
WASTING SPACE



THE CURRENT PLANS CREATE TWO PARALLEL ROADS VERY CLOSE TOGETHER--OCCUPYING AN UNNECESSARILY LARGE SWATH OF VALUABLE WATERFRONT REAL ESTATE.

THE LAYOUT MAKES DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE STREET EDGE HIGHLY UNLIKELY. ONE SIDE IS COMPLETELY OCCUPIED BY THE EMBANKED HIGHWAY, THE OTHER SIDE IS ONLY LIKELY TO SUPPORT ISOLATED SUBURBAN-STYLE DEVELOPMENT.

THE BOULEVARD OPTION: DOT HAD IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

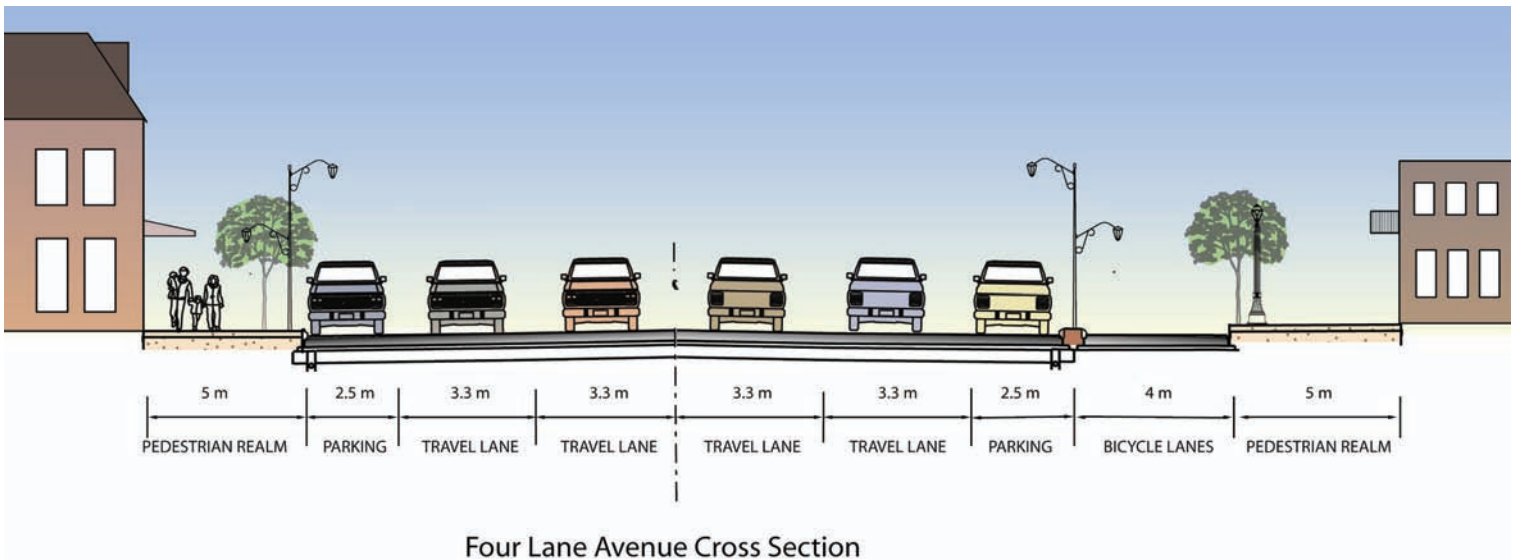


THE BOULEVARD ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPED BY NYS DOT SHOULD BE USED INSTEAD OF THE COMBINATION OF ACCESS ROAD AND EMBANKED HIGHWAY. IT BRINGS ROUTE 5 DOWN TO SURFACE LEVEL AND ALLOWS FOR THE SKYWAY BRIDGE TO BE REPLACED WITH AT-GRADE BRIDGES.

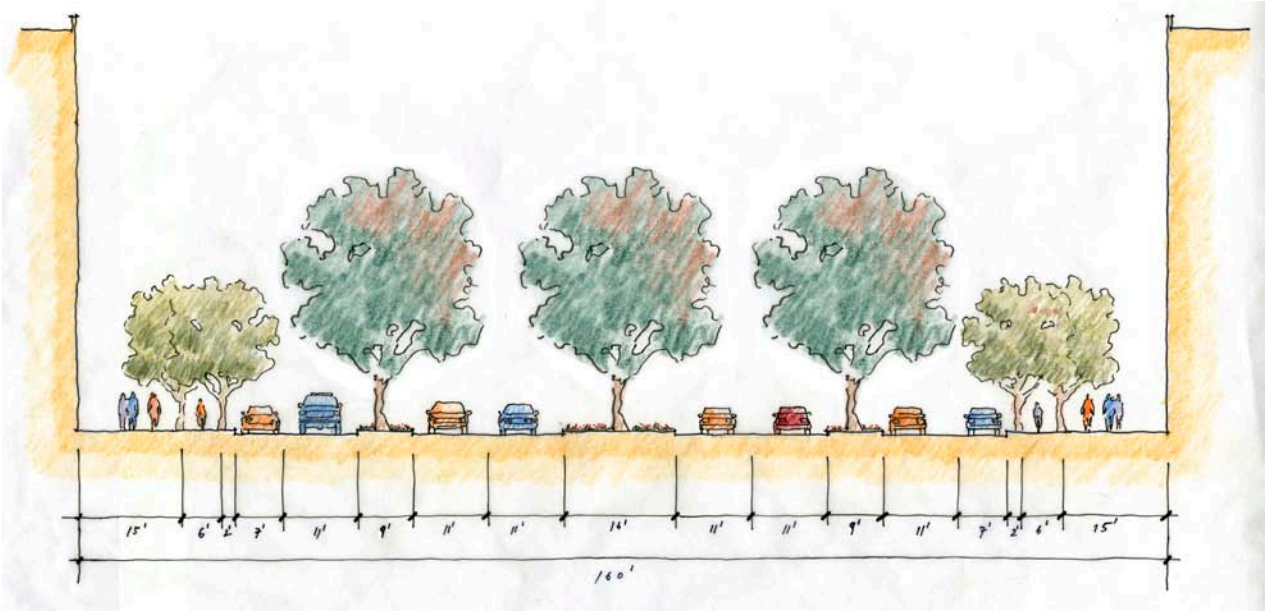
WITH SLIGHT DESIGN CHANGES, THIS BOULEVARD COULD BE TRANSFORMED FROM ONE THAT SERVES ONLY THROUGH TRAFFIC TO ONE THAT SUPPORTS ENDURING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROOTED IN A STRONG SENSE OF PLACE.

STREET DESIGN OPTIONS

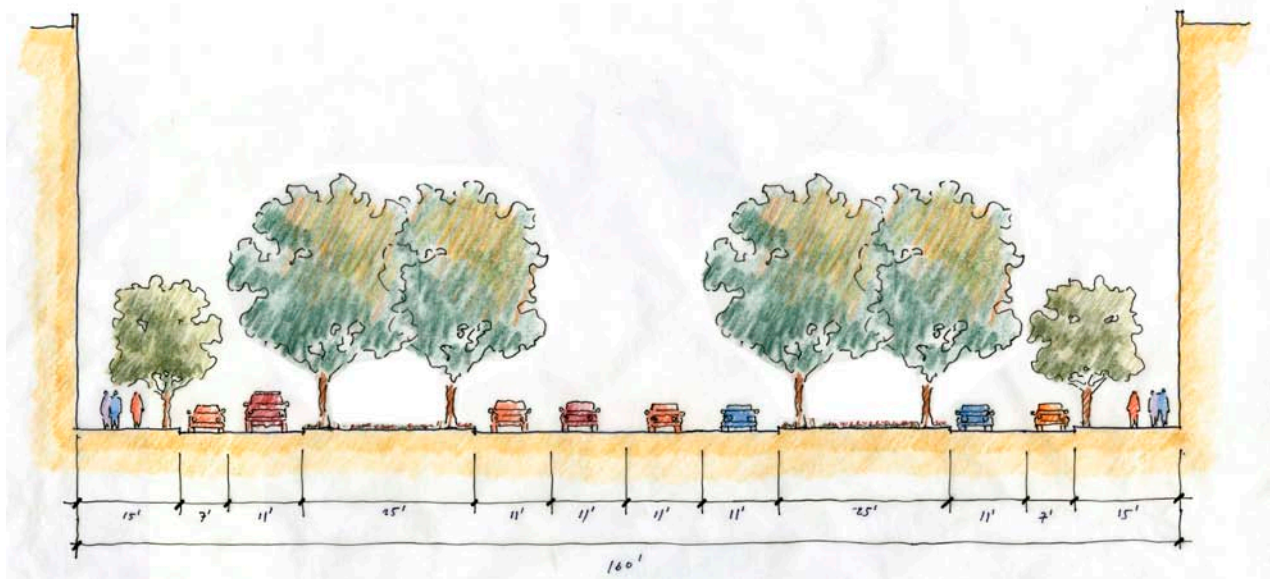
FUHRMANN AND ROUTE 5 SHOULD BE REPLACED WITH ONE THOROUGHFARE THAT HAS DEVELOPMENT LINING THE STREET. THE THOROUGHFARE COULD THEN BE CONNECTED WITH SEVERAL CROSS STREETS ALL ALONG THE WATERFRONT.



GIVEN CURRENT TRAFFIC VOLUMES, AN AVENUE WITH FOUR MOVING LANES AND TWO PARKING LANES COULD EASILY PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRAFFIC CAPACITY. WITH A BICYCLE LANE, LARGE SIDEWALKS, AND BUILDINGS ALONG THE STREET EDGE, THIS STREET COULD ATTRACT A VARIETY OF USERS.



A MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD COULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED. IT ALLOWS THROUGH TRAFFIC TO KEEP MOVING IN THE CENTER LANES AND LOCAL TRAFFIC--THE KIND NECESSARY FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT--TO CONTINUE AT ITS OWN PACE.



RETURNING TO THE WATERFRONT



HARKENING BACK TO THE GREAT DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS FOUND IN BUFFALO'S DOWNTOWN AND NEIGHBORHOODS, THE WATERFRONT COULD BE BUILT UP WITH BUILDINGS THAT MATCH THE LOCAL VERNICULAR.

THE BOULEVARD OPTION WITH A STREET NETWORK WOULD OPEN UP AN ADDITIONAL 235 ACRES FOR DEVELOPMENT. CURRENTLY, THESE UNDERUTILIZED ACRES ARE ONLY ASSESSED AT \$17.6 MILLION--WELL BELOW THE CITY AVERAGE. CREATING A VALUABLE PLACE CONNECTED TO THE CITY WOULD RAISE PROPERTY VALUES UP TO THE CITY AVERAGE, YIELDING \$82 MILLION IN ASSESSED VALUES.

AND THERE'S NO REASON TO THINK THAT THE VALUES WOULD STOP THERE. FOLLOWING MILWAUKEE'S FREEWAY CONVERSION EXAMPLE, THE SAME DEVELOPMENT RATES COULD RAISE THE ASSESSED VALUES TO \$168 MILLION.



THE LONG TERM HORIZON LOOKS EVEN BETTER. PORTLAND REMOVED THEIR WATERFRONT FREEWAY IN THE 1970S. IF BUFFALO FOLLOWS PORTLAND'S EXAMPLE, THE VALUE OF THE RESTORED WATERFRONT ACREAGE COULD REACH \$1.3 BILLION.

