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1. Scajaquada Expressway Downgrade

Background

The Scajaquada Expressway (State Route 198) follows the path of the creek bed from Delaware Park to its mouth and poses barriers to public access and threatens water quality. The proposed downgrade/redesign of the expressway is an opportunity to restore ecosystem and community resiliency within the creek corridor. The proposed downgrade/redesign of the expressway started in 2010 and was led by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYDOT).

Through various discussions, community stakeholders came together to form the Scajaquada Corridor Coalition (SCC). SCC is an advocacy group focusing its efforts on the enhancement, restoration, and improvement of the lower Scajaquada corridor. Many local organizations are involved in SCC, including Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper (BNW), Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Go Bike Buffalo, Black Rock Riverside Alliance, and Trinidad Neighborhood Association. In 2021, Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) took over the planning of this project. Over 18 months, GBNRTC researched, planned, conducted community outreach and analysis and developed the Preferred Scenario for Region Central. The Preferred Scenario was shared with the public in 2023 and represents a range of possibilities for the future of mobility in the Scajaquada Corridor.

Geography

Region Central is the area centrally located within the Scajaquada Creek corridor that includes Delaware Park, Buffalo State College, Forest Lawn Cemetery, and numerous cultural institutions. Buffalo neighborhoods in this area include Black Rock, Delavan Grider, Elmwood Bidwell, Fillmore-Lovejoy, Grant-Amherst, Hamlin Park, Masten Park, Parkside, and Upper West Side.

Entities involved

GBNRTC, NYSDOT, SCC

Timeline + Status

The GBNRTC released the Preferred Scenario for Region Central in January of 2023.

2. US Army Corps of Engineers, Feasibility Study

Background

Feasibility Study that aims to identify opportunities for ecosystem restoration within the Scajaquada Creek watershed that enhance or offset the footprint of a historic federal Flood Risk Management project in the Town of Cheektowaga.

Geography

The Scajaquada Creek Flood Risk Management (FRM) project is located within the Town of Cheektowaga, New York. The FRM project includes approximately 1.8 miles of the main stem of Scajaquada Creek and 4.3 miles of tributaries. The project is bordered by Pine Ridge Road to the west, the Kensington Expressway (State Route 33) to the north, Dick Road to the east, and Galleria Drive to the south.

Entities involved

USACE, NYSDEC, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Town of Cheektowaga

Timeline + Status

Completion in December 2025

USACE has prepared the Scoping Document to elicit public and agency concerns, clearly define the environmental issues and alternatives that should be examined, and identify federal, state, and local requirements that may need to be addressed in the study of the proposed project modifications for improvement of the environment in the Town of Cheektowaga, New York. This Scoping Document describes the proposed implementation of ecosystem restoration measures to improve the environment and to offset negative impacts of the Scajaquada Creek Flood Risk Management (FRM) project.

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3. Town of Cheektowaga Consent Order

Background

Under a Consent Order that has been agreed to by the State Government, the Federal Government, and the Town of Cheektowaga, the Town of Cheektowaga is required to improve and modernize their sewage treatment system to reduce sewer overflows that result in raw sewage draining into area waterways, such as Scajaquada Creek.

The consent order calls for the Town of Cheektowaga to prioritize the elimination of inflow and infiltration. Infiltration refers to water that has improperly entered the sewer system through deficiencies such as cracked and damaged sewers, while inflow refers to improper connections to the sewer system, such as illegal downspout connections. Inflow and infiltration results in increased amounts of water in the sewage system during heavy rain; resulting in an overload to the system that must be alleviated by releasing untreated diluted sewage into area waterways.

Geography

Town of Cheektowaga

Entities involved

Town of Cheektowaga, NYSDEC

Timeline + Status

The draft 2025 Clean Water Intended Use Plan (IUP), through NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, lists the Town of Cheektowaga SSO Sewer Rehab project. The funding request would support planning, design and construction of infiltration and inflow correction to improve water quality in Scajaquada Creek. Total cost is $20,000,000; IUP Amount is $15,000,000.

4(a). USDA Tree Grant: City of Buffalo

Background

In 2023, Erie County and the City of Buffalo were both awarded funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Grant which is supported by the Federal Inflation Reduction Act.

The City of Buffalo Equity in Street Trees Program (B.E.S.T.) seeks to achieve an equitable urban tree canopy for all residents to benefit from the social, health, and environmental impacts of trees. The program will increase tree planting and maintenance efforts and focus on education and community outreach exclusively within disadvantaged communities.

Geography

City of Buffalo neighborhoods

Entities involved

City of Buffalo, USDA

Timeline + Status

To be determined.

4(b). USDA Tree Grant: Erie County

Background

In December 2023, Erie County released the Erie County Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) to help guide and prioritize the County's climate actions. The CCAP had several action items that called out the need to plant trees in disadvantaged communities. It was created with the help of over 100 volunteers, which led to essential community conversations and helped foster relationships with local organizations and municipalities allowing Erie County to quickly develop the Community Forestry Partnership Project proposal when the USDA funding was announced.

This includes the following engagement that will overlap the Scajaquada Creek corridor:

- The Black Rock Riverside Alliance will create two fruit orchards to address the food insecurities of residents in food desert neighborhoods within their community. The Black Rock Riverside Alliance will also create a community educational arboretum along the Jesse Kregel Pathway along Scajaquada Creek and the Niagara River Trail up to the City of Buffalo line. The arboretum will be used as a teaching tool for environmental programs at Buffalo State University, local environmental and conservation high school programs, and the public.
- Monarch of Infinite Possibilities will steward the relationship building process with churches on the East Side of Buffalo, educate about the importance of trees regarding climate change, connect congregants to workforce development/training, coordinate tree planting projects, and conduct outreach and engage the community in this project.

Geography

Municipalities in Erie County with a focus on disadvantaged communities

Entities involved

Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, Erie County Department of Parks and Recreation, Black Rock Riverside Alliance, Monarch of Infinite Possibilities, Buffalo Freedom Gardens, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Town of Tonawanda

Timeline + Status

To be determined.

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5. Waterfront Revitalization Plan

Background

The City of Buffalo Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is a locally prepared comprehensive land and water use plan for the City's natural, public, and developed waterfront resources along Lake Erie, Hoyt and South Park Lakes as well as the Niagara and Buffalo Rivers and Scajaquada and Cazenovia Creeks.

The City of Buffalo LWRP refines and supplements the New York State's Coastal Management Program and provides a comprehensive framework within which critical waterfront issues can be addressed, and planned waterfront improvement projects can be pursued and implemented.

Geography

Includes the coastal upland area and all surface waters that lie within the jurisdiction of the City of Buffalo, as described in the June 2018 City of Buffalo Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

Entities involved

City of Buffalo

Timeline + Status

Plan was approved in April 2019 and projects/programs are being implemented in accordance with the LWRP.

6. Niagara River Greenway

Background

The New York Power Authority's (NYPA) fifty-year operating license for the Robert Moses Plant was due to expire in 2007.

Under the licensing process managed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), public hearings are run to receive input and achieve consensus among stakeholders.

Environmental and conservation groups joined local municipalities, the Tuscarora Nation, and local businesses in seeking compensation for NYPA's use of our water. The Niagara River Greenway Plan was created as a result of the relicensing settlement.

The Niagara River Greenway Plan establishes a vision and a set of principles to guide the various entities working toward building a world-class Greenway corridor along the Niagara River. The plan was developed through the work of various stakeholders, interest groups and the public. It sets priorities, suggests actions and describes system-wide approaches and strategies for creating the Greenway. Goals and priorities set forth in this plan continue to guide the project review and work of the Commission.

The NYPA Relicensing Settlement Greenway funds were established as part of the federal relicensing of the Power Project. This funding may be available to support projects along Scajaquada Creek and the Greenway plan can guide visioning of restoration along the creek.

Geography

Niagara River Greenway Municipalities

Entities involved

Niagara River Greenway Commission

Timeline + Status

Completed plan; ongoing funding streams through the Greenway Standing Committees.

7. Buffalo Sewer Authority Long Term Control Plan

Background

The Buffalo Sewer Authority's (BSA) Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) was accepted and approved on March 18, 2014, by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

The approved document outlined a multi-year plan for implementing projects to reduce overflows in the BSA sewer collection system to target levels. Potential projects included a mix of in-line storage (ILS), off-line storage (OLS), real time control (RTC), and green infrastructure (GI).

Geography

City of Buffalo

Entities involved

Buffalo Sewer Authority

Timeline + Status

Ongoing

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8. BNW's City of Buffalo Coastal Resiliency Study

Background

An assessment of shoreline resiliency, flood potential, and asset risks along the City of Buffalo shoreline on Lake Erie, the Niagara River, as well as the lower reaches of the Buffalo River and Scajaquada Creek.

Geography

City of Buffalo Lake Erie shoreline, the Buffalo River and Scajaquada Creek

Entities involved

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, City of Buffalo, Ramboll Engineering, Danish Hydrological Institute.

Timeline + Status

A multi-model approach has been developed and completed. Analysis sharing is forthcoming.

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9. Great Lakes Legacy Act Remedial

Background

The Great Lakes Legacy Act Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for Lower Scajaquada Creek is a project initiated under the Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA). This Act was established to address the problem of contaminated sediment in Areas of Concern (AOCs) around the Great Lakes. Lower Scajaquada Creek is one such area designated as an AOC due to historical industrial activities that have led to contamination of its sediments.

The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) is a crucial step in the cleanup process. It involves comprehensive investigations to determine the nature and extent of contamination in the creek sediments, as well as the potential risks posed to human health and the environment. The feasibility study then evaluates various cleanup options and technologies to develop a remediation plan that is both effective and feasible.

The goal of the RI/FS for Lower Scajaquada Creek is to gather data and information necessary for making informed decisions about how to address the contamination and restore the health of the ecosystem. This may involve dredging contaminated sediments, capping them with clean material, or implementing other innovative cleanup techniques.

Overall, the Great Lakes Legacy Act RI/FS process is an important tool for protecting the Great Lakes ecosystem and ensuring the long-term health and well-being of both the environment and the communities that depend on it.

Geography

Niagara River AOC source area boundary

Entities involved

NYSDEC, EPA

Timeline + Status

To be determined.

10. GOBike - East Side Trails Project

Background

Planning project to connect residents of Buffalo's East Side to the existing system of trails such as the existing off-road Scajaquada Creek Path in Cold Springs, greenways, and on-street bicycle facilities in Buffalo, and invest in safe infrastructure within East Side neighborhoods.

Geography

East Side neighborhood of Buffalo

Entities involved

Go Bike Buffalo, East Side neighborhood community organizations

Timeline + Status

The final East Side Trails Feasibility Study was completed in Summer 2023. The Request for Proposals is currently out for bid with a final trail design to be completed by October 2025.

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11. Restoration Planning Project

Background

The development of an actionable community-driven watershed-wide plan for Scajaquada Creek restoration. Also includes the creation of the Scajaquada Creek Restoration Community Advisory Group (CAG) to guide the creation of the restoration plan and ensure it is as transparent and accessible as possible and is driven by the needs and concerns of those closest to the creek.

Geography

Scajaquada Creek Corridor

Entities involved

BNW, Community Partners, Scajaquada Community Advisory Group

Timeline + Status

A three-year project that began in June 2023 and will conclude in June 2026.