Reinvigorating Buffalo’s Cultural Assets
Fostering investments in the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor
509 Michigan Avenue Property Redevelopment

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Abstract

The Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor (MSAAHC) Management Plan prepared by Huntley Partners consisted of a detailed three (3) phase revitalization framework that includes a number of provisions to ensure the preservation of the Corridor’s rich historic heritage. The premise of the Management Plan is to establish ephemeral connections between adjacent disconnected neighborhoods, generate multi-ethnic pedestrian activity through engagement, and to create an aesthetic of cultural heritage that emphasizes the role of Buffalo as an incubator for the national and international establishment of African American heritage.

The extensive draft plan takes into extreme consideration regarding the maintenance of the Corridor’s historic integrity. Upon review the plan fails to mention the extremely dilapidated property of 509 Michigan Avenue. The property is in dire need of rehabilitation, especially because of its proximity to the historic Michigan Street Macedonia Baptist Church, which is the oldest extant African American religious structure in Buffalo. Tentative redevelopment plans were discussed to ensure cohesiveness with the primary themes of the Corridor as outlined in the management plan.

MSAAHC Profile

Nationally recognized for its unique cultural resources and historically significant buildings as well as its association to the historic role of Buffalo in the establishment of African American history, cultural, and activism. The MSAAHC emphasizes the role of Buffalo in the Underground Railroad, the Civil Rights Movement, as well as the height of the Jazz Age.

Heritage Corridor Anchors:
(i) Michigan Street Macedonia Baptist Church
(ii) J.E. Nash House
(iii) Colored Musicians Club

• Approximately 2.5 miles, from East Ferry St to South Division St, including nearby artillery streets
• Buffalo is comprised of 11 historic districts, and is home to a total of 233 State and National Landmarks
• 793 parcels, of which; 40% are Vacant, and 41% are Residential

Opportunity Analysis

• Emphasis on the revitalization of Buffalo’s Waterfront, Downtown, as well as the expansion of the Buffalo-Niagara Medical Campus
• In lieu of these projects, an added emphasis on the Corridor’s ability to facilitate connections between these developments create an interesting opportunity
• Adaptive reuse projects in Buffalo development are the driving force in revitalization and economic growth.
• Recent reuse projects like H.H. Richardson’s Buffalo State Asylum, and Bethune Lofts
• Initiatives focused on providing incentive for job growth, economic development, and improvements to Buffalo’s Public Realm; namely Governor Cuomo’s, Buffalo Billion Initiative

North Corridor Node
Predominantly Residential, with few commercialartilleries

Medical Center Node
Separated clusters of Residential pockets, accompanied by the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, and Buffalo General Hospital

Route. 33 Transition
Kensington Expressway

Heritage Impact Area
Considered to have the most potential for Residential Development & Growth in the MSAAHC

South Node
Dense clusters of affordable public housing on the East side of the Node

Heritage Impact Area

509 Michigan Avenue Property

J.E. Nash House
36 Nash Street

Langston Hughes Institute
136 Broadway Avenue

Colored Musicians Club
145 Broadway Avenue

Michigan Street Macedonia Baptist Church
511 Michigan Avenue

Sketch of 509 Michigan Ave
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Site Specifics
- 2,262 sq ft Property size
- 20’ Width, 126’ Depth
- Built in the early 1900’s

Heritage Impact Area

Taken from GoogleEarth
Imagery Date: 6/5/2015
lat: 42.88
lon: -78.86

Legend
- Corridor Development Segments/Nodes
- Michigan Avenue
- Langston Hughes Institute
- Colored Musicians Club
- Michigan Street Macedonia Baptist Church
- J.E. Nash House
- 509 Michigan Avenue
- 609 Michigan Avenue
- 36 Nash Street

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