

BIKE BUFFALO NIAGARA

Regional Bicycle Master Plan 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



GBNRTC
Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Buffalo Niagara Regional Bicycle Master Plan was a collaboration between the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), the consultant team led by Alta Planning + Design, the GBNRTC's Bicycle Subcommittee and interested residents and stakeholders.

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Cover photo of North Grand Island Bridge by Mary Masse



INTRODUCTION

The network of bicycle infrastructure continues to grow in the Buffalo Niagara Region as the total miles of bike lanes, routes and greenway trails nearly tripled since 2001. In recent years, the region has seen the development of the City of Buffalo's and City of Niagara Fall's Bicycle Master Plans, upgrades and gap closures to the Shoreline Trail, construction of the Tonawanda Rails to Trails project and the Empire State Trail. In addition to this, a number of municipalities throughout the region have adopted complete streets policies in support of active transportation. Though more plans and projects are underway, there are still missing links and unconnected communities that present a critical need to take a collective, holistic approach to bicycle and trail planning in the region.

Expanding bicycling opportunities for residents and visitors has increasingly become a regional priority. Moving Forward 2050, the region's metropolitan transportation plan, aims to accelerate recent progress by modernizing and expanding bikeways and greenway trails throughout the two county region and to neighboring trail networks in Ontario, the Genesee Finger Lakes region and Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties. Bike Buffalo Niagara emphasizes and reinforces the direction established in Moving Forward 2050 and other relevant planning documents to provide a safe

The purpose of Bike Buffalo Niagara is to guide the development of a comprehensive network of on-street and off-street pathways, bike lanes, greenway trails and other facilities that safely connects neighborhoods to key destinations.

and comfortable environment for bicycle travel and promote bicycle use as a sustainable and healthy mode of transportation.

The purpose of Bike Buffalo Niagara (Plan), is to guide the development of a comprehensive network of on-street and off-street pathways, bike lanes, greenway trails and other facilities that safely connects neighborhoods to key destinations. The Plan identifies current and future desired conditions for bicycling in the region. It will serve as a guide for GBNRTC, state agencies, counties, municipalities, advocacy groups and private businesses and foundations to work together to provide a transportation system that safely accommodates bicyclists in a coordinated and holistic manner. It is an action oriented document designed to help bridge the gap between current conditions and what residents and visitors envision for safe, equitable, comfortable and connected bicycling facilities, both on-road and off.

Photo by GOBike Buffalo

BENEFITS OF BICYCLING

TRANSPORTATION

Because a significant percentage of trips made by automobile are under two miles, improved bicycle facilities can replace short motor vehicle trips and promote mobility options for those who do not have access to a car due to age, economic status, disability, temporary impairment and for those who simply prefer not to drive.

ECONOMICS

Developing a more contiguous greenway network in Western New York was the Wilson Foundation's likely motivation to grant tens of millions of dollars for investment in trail construction and maintenance. Combined with state funding for the Empire State Trail, the expansion of the greenway network comprised of the Niagara River Greenway, the Erie

Improving bicycling conditions in the GBNRTC region will bring transportation, safety, economic and health benefits to residents, employees and visitors to Western New York.

SAFETY

While the region's existing greenway trails provide a comfortable environment for novice bicyclists and children (not to mention walkers, runners and skaters), for many, access to many regional destinations involves driving to avoid cycling along local roads. A greenway network would not be complete without safe bicycling connections to it from adjacent neighborhoods, business districts and other municipalities. To replicate a greenway trail's sense of separation from traffic, developing on-street bikeways for all users, no matter their age or cycling ability, is an important goal and critical challenge.

Canalway Trail, the Shoreline Trail and potential new corridors being looked at south of Buffalo has the potential to draw thousands more visitors and bicycle tourists to the region. This will promote economic revitalization in the cities and towns along the existing trail routes, with potential for a new development in communities where new greenways are planned.

HEALTH

Bicycling provides an opportunity for people to integrate into their daily lives the recommended 150 minutes of weekly aerobic activity, recommended in 2015 by the Centers for Disease Control for improved health.

BIKE BUFFALO NIAGARA VISION

The Buffalo Niagara Region strives for a modern, well-supported, all-season greenway trail and on-street bicycle network that provides residents and visitors of all ages and abilities direct, safe and intuitive connections to and from the places residents and visitors want to go. The plan is built upon four key goals:

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Buffalo Niagara Region will plan, design, build and sustain high quality bicycle infrastructure that increases safety, appeals to a wide range of people and accommodates a wide variety of trip purposes.

- Improve connections to key regional destinations using high quality – ideally separated – bicycle facilities and greenway trails.
- Strive for a Vision Zero region by reengineering key roadway corridors to slow traffic, prevent dangerous collisions and encourage multimodal use.
- Maintain and expand the bike share system to increase access to bicycles and the number of trips taken by bikes.
- Include bicycle-related amenities such as bike racks, benches, rest stations, bicycle maintenance stands and end-of-trip facilities with the implementation of greenway trails and critical on-street connections.

CONNECTIONS

The Buffalo Niagara Region will build a bicycling network that connects people to where they want to go whether it be for work, school, daily errands, recreation, or fitness.

- Create safe and seamless connections between regional, interregional and binational destinations and existing and future greenway trails, improving mobility locally and enhancing tourism opportunities.
- Connect bicycling with transit services to improve transit accessibility by providing a solution for the first and last mile.
- Connect to public parks, open spaces and waterways to promote healthy, active lifestyles and improve environmental quality.
- Connect to key employment centers and educational institutions to ensure workforce access and increase viable commuting options in the region.

INNOVATION

The Buffalo Niagara Region will incorporate new and evolving technology to improve safety and navigation, increase access to bicycles, improve data collection/quality and attract new riders to the network.

- Integrate evolving e-bike technology, pedal-assist equipment and e-bike share to promote bicycling as a transportation option for a greater range of people.
- Promote the use of route-finding apps and “smart” info kiosks to improve bicycle wayfinding throughout the region.
- Incorporate automated bicycle count technologies to track the number of bicyclists at locations throughout the region (and potentially Canada).
- Integrate bicycle infrastructure with planned high-tech mobility hubs to encourage multi-modal transportation connectivity and access to real-time travel information and mobility amenities.

CULTURE

The Buffalo Niagara Region will support a regional culture that respects and embraces bicycling as a legitimate form of travel and an integral part of daily life.

- Establish policies and dedicated funding for development and maintenance of the greenway trail network and on-road bicycle facilities.
- Partner with local advocacy groups and organizations (i.e. GObike, healthcare industry, etc.) to encourage more bicycling using public education campaigns, with a focus on geographic and cultural equity including within Tribal Nations.
- Promote local and county land use policies that encourage bicycling (i.e. regulations related to complete streets, street connectivity, on-street bike facilities, curbside management and bike parking).
- Establish improved coordination between NYSDOT, GBNRTC and municipalities early in the roadway planning/design process to ensure consistency with regional bicycle planning efforts.



February 5, 2020 public meeting at Erie Community College South Campus

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful community engagement and input is critical to the development of a successful, publicly-supported and implementable plan. To facilitate a community engagement process that captured the needs of a large and diverse region, outreach efforts included a mix of subcommittee meetings and stakeholder interviews, community workshops, a project website, an online survey and photo contest, an active social media strategy and a virtual presentation of the draft plan.

BICYCLE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Bike Buffalo Niagara Bicycle subcommittee provided oversight and critical input to the project team throughout the planning process (see acknowledgements for members).

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The core project team conducted interviews with various stakeholders from a variety of agencies and organizations to gather input and insight into existing conditions and proposed facility ideas. This included representatives from cities and towns in both Niagara and Erie Counties, NYS institutions and agencies, along with bicycle, trail and environmental advocates.

ONLINE INPUT MAP

An interactive online public input map was developed to gather public input on proposed facilities in Erie and Niagara Counties. Map users were asked to place lines or points on the map to identify:

- Problem corridors (e.g., high traffic speed/volume, no shoulder, etc.)
- Desired bike routes
- Problem spots (e.g., difficult crossings, potholes, etc.)
- Desired bike parking locations

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

At the events, community members were able to review mapping and analyses developed to date. This typically included large scale maps for marking up with local knowledge as well as interactive exercises. Input from all four meetings, as well as the online input and stakeholder meetings were critical to helping the project team develop the recommended bicycle network and treatments.

PHOTO CONTEST

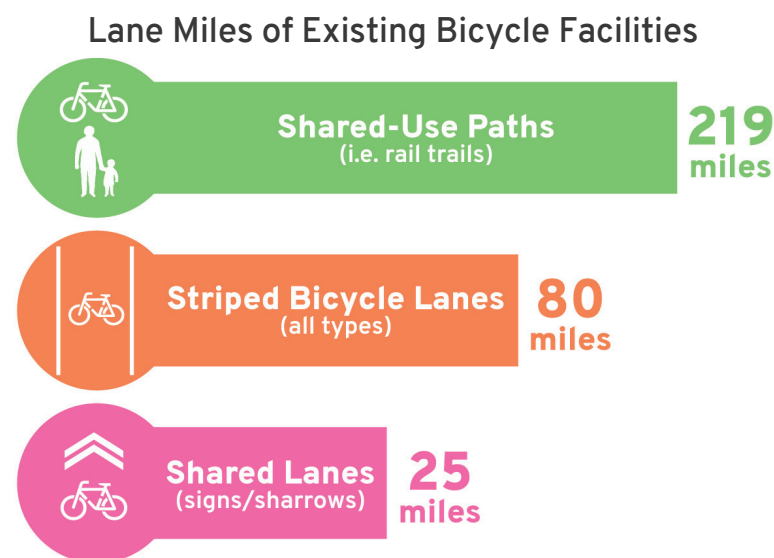
A photo contest was held requesting residents and visitors to submit their best bicycle related photo. The winning entry is featured on the cover of the Plan.

ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was used to gauge residents and visitors preferences for bicycling and bicycle infrastructure.

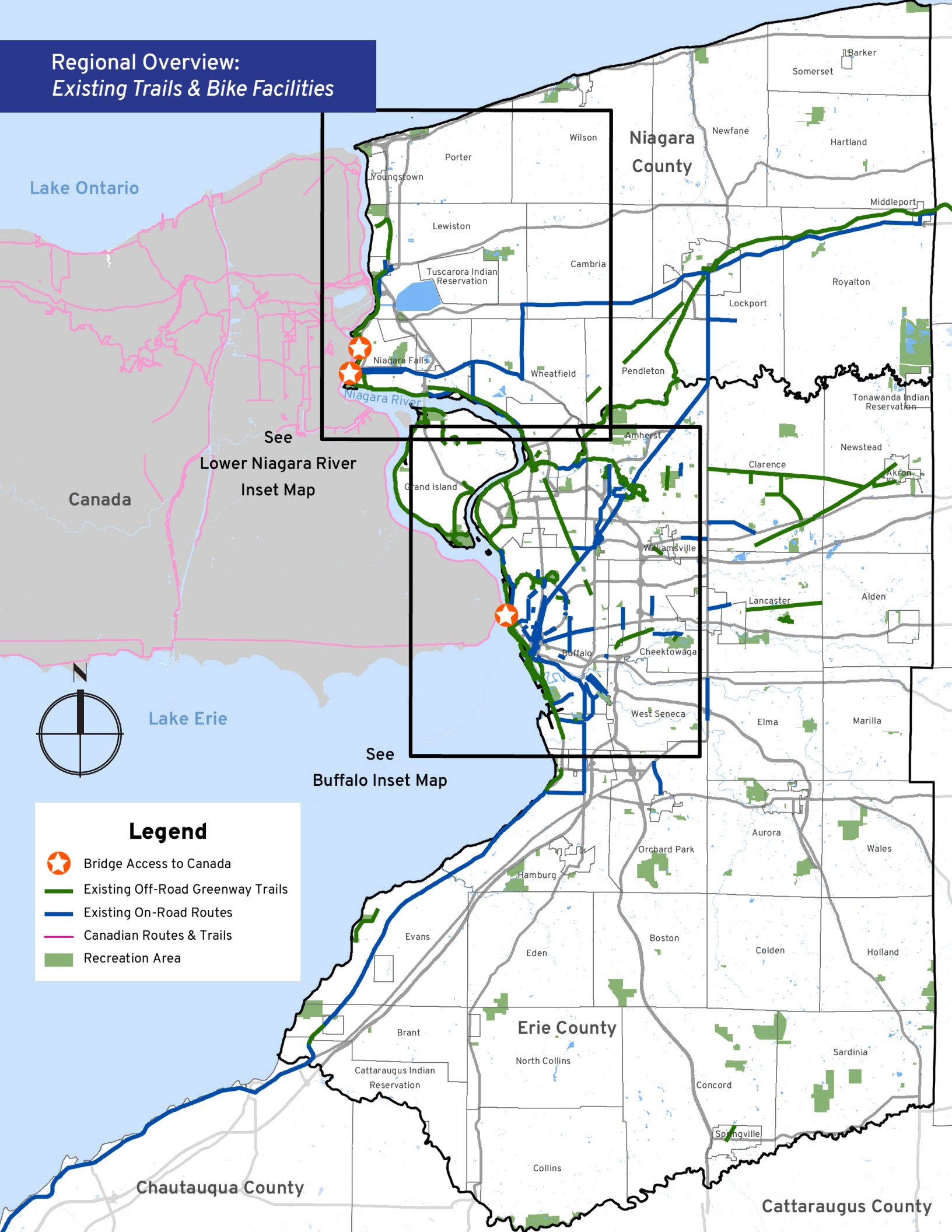
EXISTING BICYCLE FACILITIES

The region's established and unofficial bicycle network includes a variety of facilities on state highways, county roads and local arterial and collector streets. Most of this network includes striped shoulders, some bike lanes and shared lane markings, providing varying levels of comfort for experienced road riders and/or bike commuters. Greenway trails are clearly the backbone of the regional network and will be complemented by on-road facilities in the future. In aggregate, the two facility types will provide a more comfortable bicycling environment for nearly all ages and abilities.







An inventory of current greenway trails and on-street bicycle facilities in the Buffalo Niagara region are shown on the subsequent maps. These form the bulk of the bicycle-facility design options that will be part of the recommended regional bicycle network developed later in the planning process.

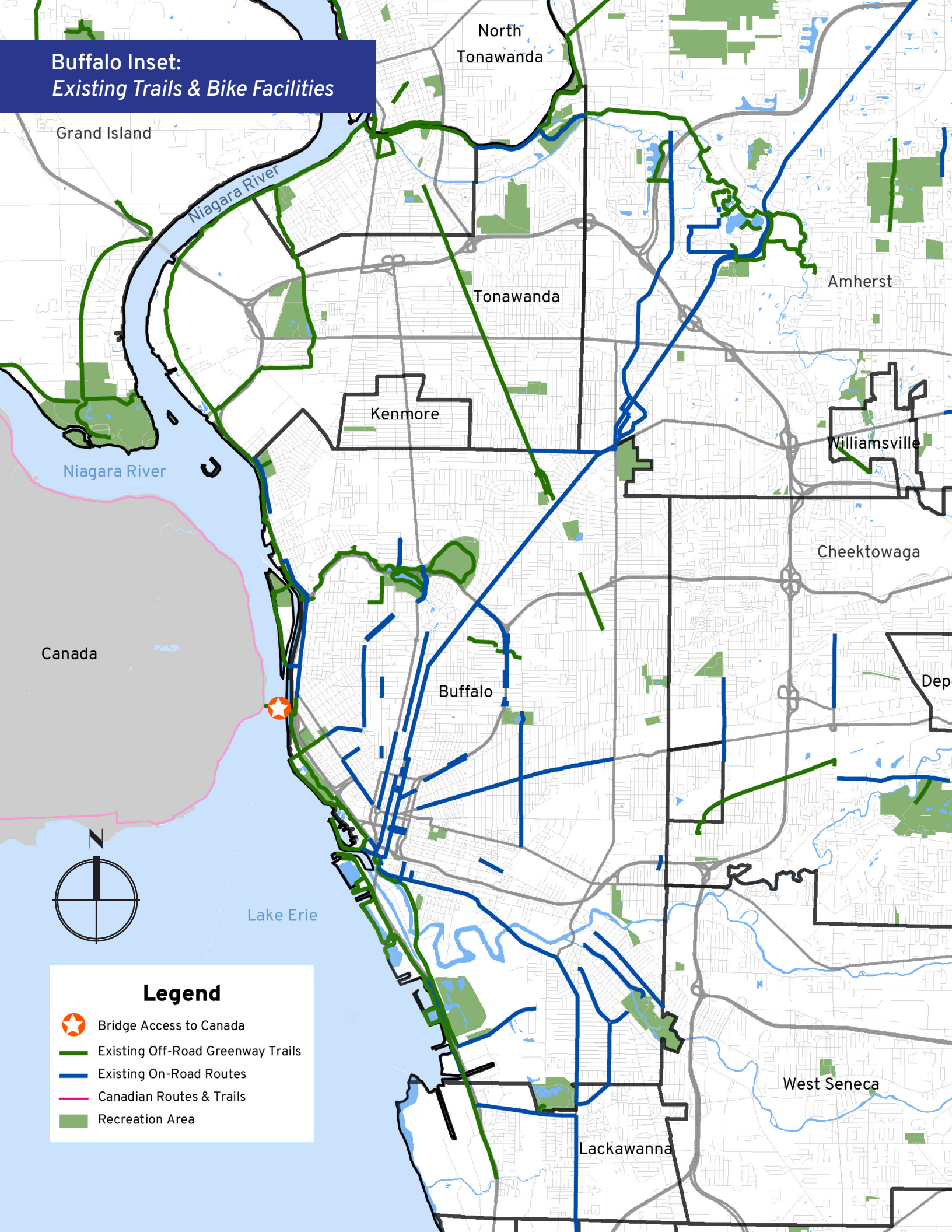
Regional Overview:
Existing Trails & Bike Facilities



Legend

-  Bridge Access to Canada
-  Existing Off-Road Greenway Trails
-  Existing On-Road Routes
-  Canadian Routes & Trails
-  Recreation Area

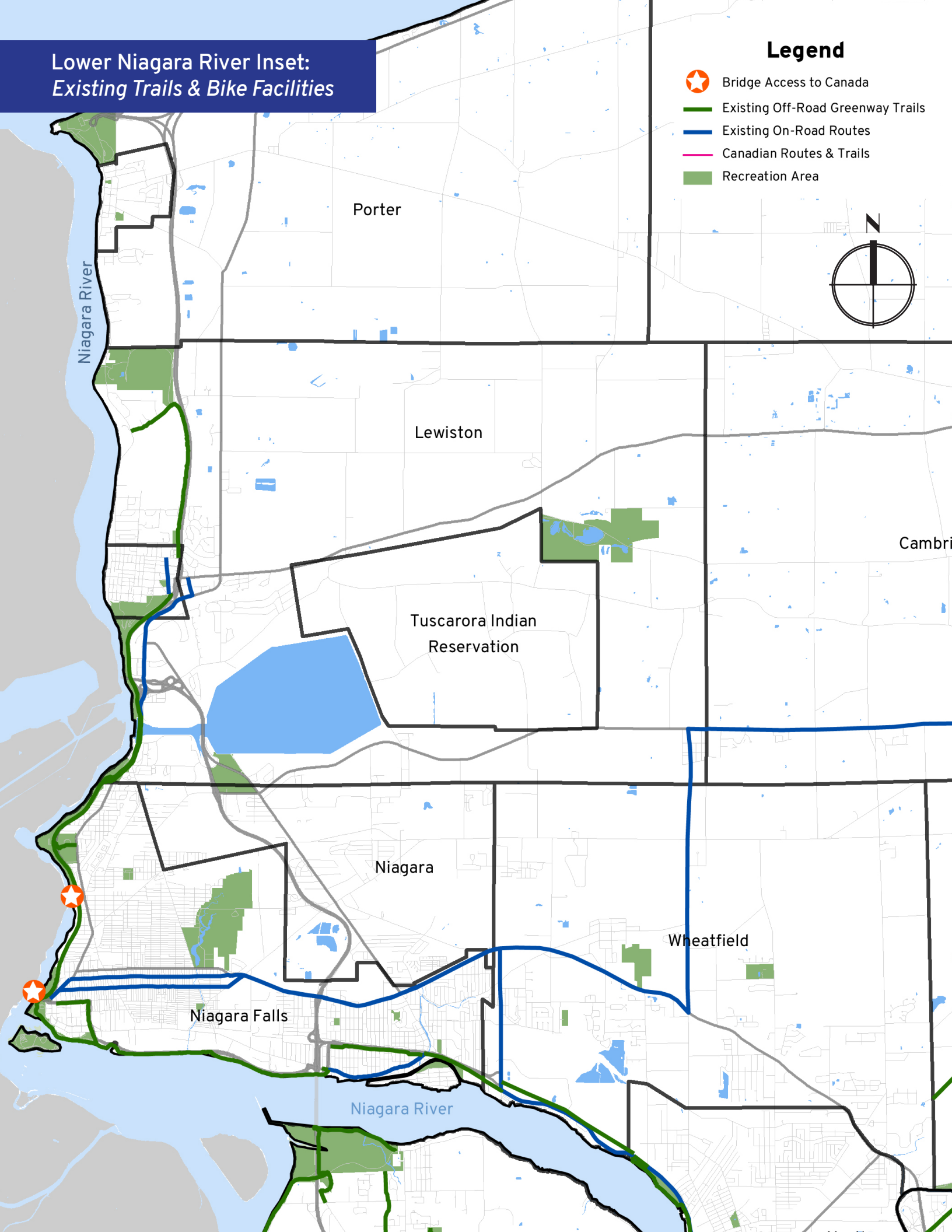
**Buffalo Inset:
Existing Trails & Bike Facilities**



Lower Niagara River Inset:
Existing Trails & Bike Facilities

Legend

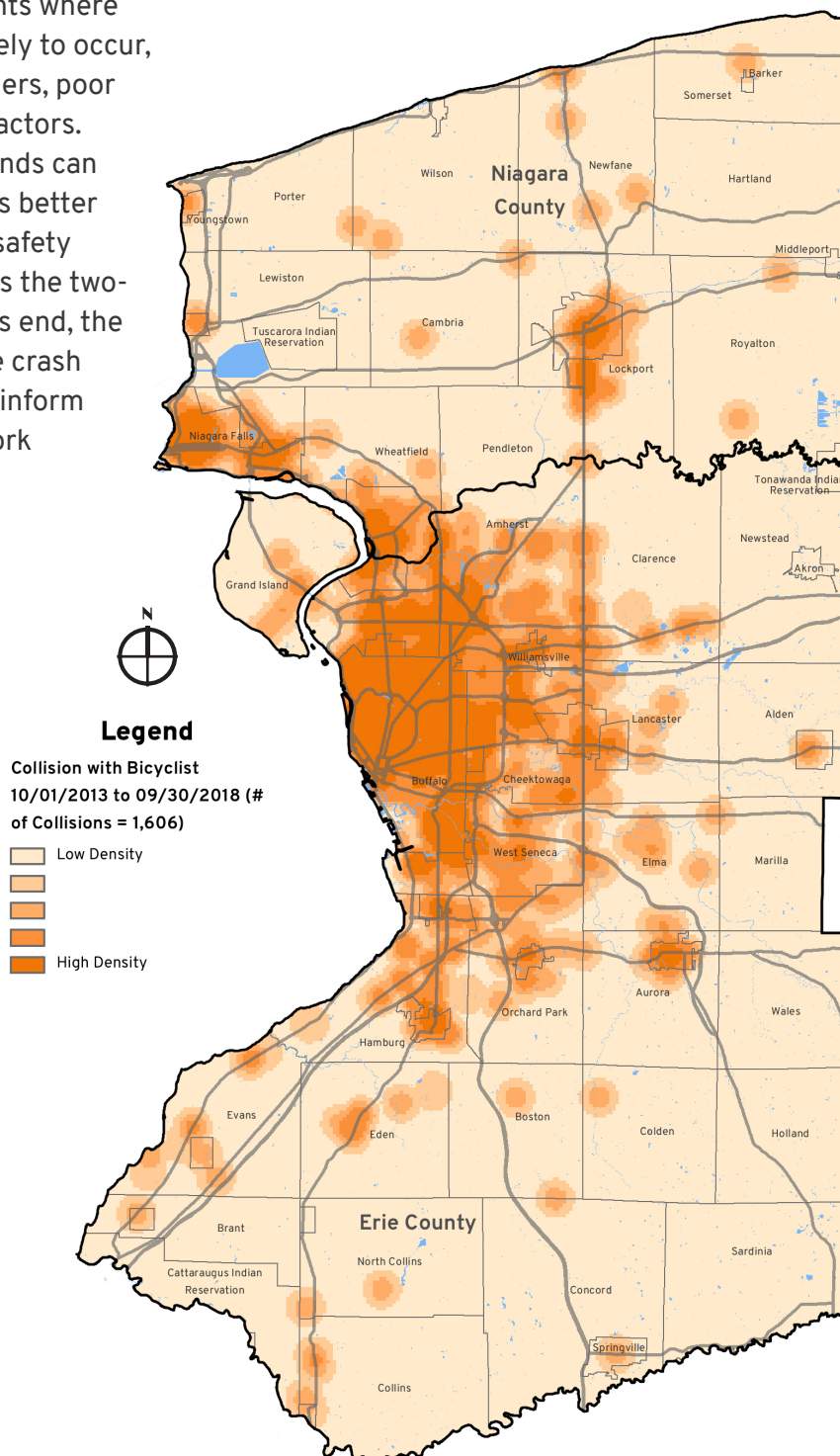
- Bridge Access to Canada
- Existing Off-Road Greenway Trails
- Existing On-Road Routes
- Canadian Routes & Trails
- Recreation Area



CRASHES INVOLVING BICYCLISTS

Tracking crashes that involve bicyclists is important to identify potentially hazardous intersections and roadway segments where crashes are more likely to occur, due to lack of shoulders, poor sight lines or other factors. Comparing crash trends can help decision-makers better understand needed safety improvements across the two-county region. To this end, the Plan includes bicycle crash maps that helped to inform planning-level network recommendations.

Regional Overview: *Bicycle-Involved Crash Locations*



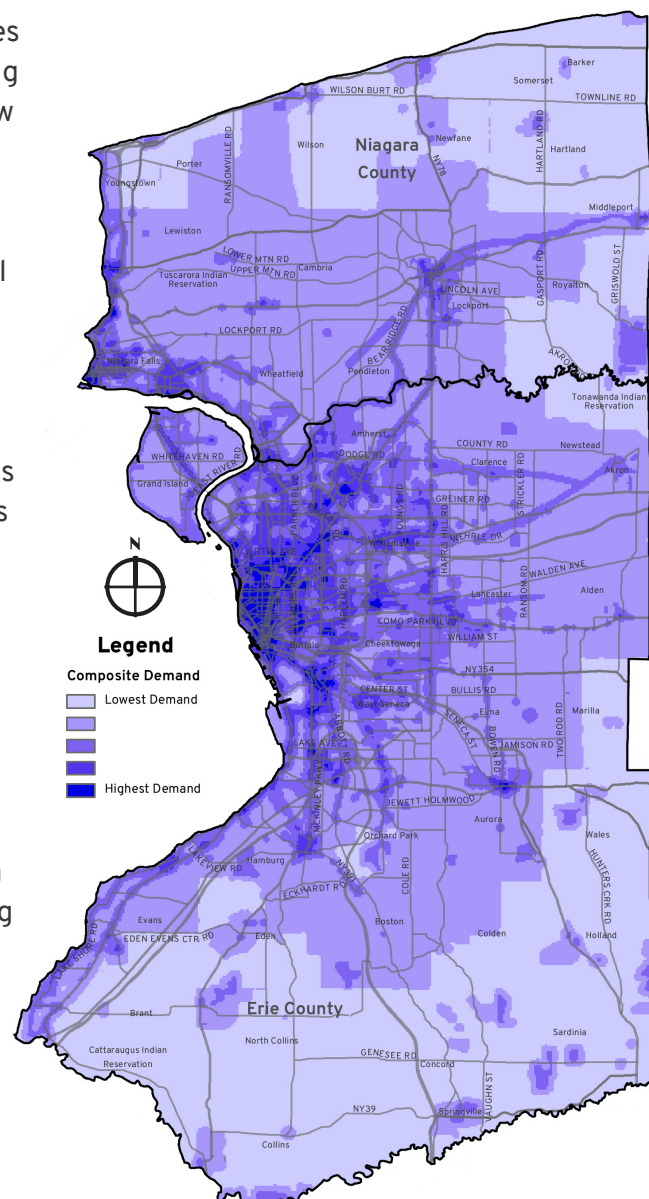
NETWORK ANALYSIS

Various analyses, including a bicycle facility supply/demand analysis and gaps analysis was performed to help develop an understanding of opportunities and challenges related to the development of a regional bike network. This includes the use of analysis tools to:

- Highlight areas of demand for bicycle facilities based on residential and employment density and the presence of destinations
- Wide-enough rights-of-way to potentially accommodate separated bicycle lanes or side paths
- Existing striped shoulders or bike lanes
- Pavement width that could accommodate new on-road bike lanes without impact to parking or reducing the resulting travel lane widths below 11'
- Pavement width that could hypothetically accommodate new bike lanes but would require removal of on-street parking and/or a reduction of a travel lane
- Highlight areas that demonstrate a relative need for transportation investments based on concentrations of historically vulnerable populations
- Map out current gaps in the on and off-road bike network

Regional Overview: Demand Analysis

A key goal of the Plan is to create a connected bicycle network within Erie and Niagara Counties as well as connect to other networks and destinations in adjacent regions such as the Finger Lakes and Ontario, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties. In addition to identifying existing demand for bicycling, the various supply and demand analysis maps were used to determine recommended corridors for which to achieve this goal.



EQUITY ANALYSIS

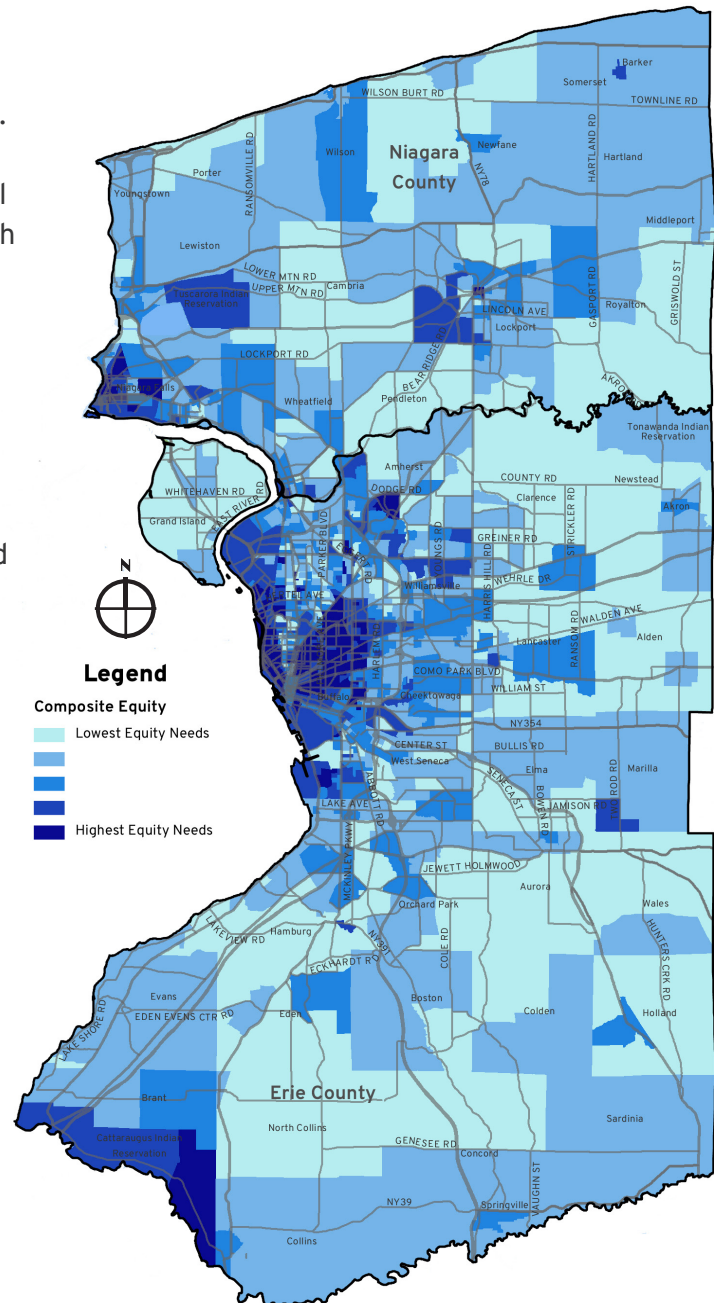
Without access to good transportation options, many people in the GBNRTC region have a harder time getting to work, buying healthy food, seeing a doctor, going to school, or connecting with others. Not everyone has equal access to a wide range of convenient, safe and affordable means of transportation.

Working towards equity may mean prioritizing bicycle and trail facility funding in areas with a greater concentration of disadvantaged populations instead of distributing funding equally based on geography. Investing in active transportation facilities in areas of highest need will likely improve access to public health and economic/ job opportunities. It is important to note however, that development of a bicycle network is just a start. Though beyond the scope of this Plan, other cultural, economic, law-enforcement and political changes are needed in black, Hispanic, Native American and immigrant communities to ensure people have full access to safe bicycling.

Concentrations of Historically Disadvantaged Communities based on:

- Non-white populations (Black and Native-American)
- Seniors (>65 years old)
- Low-income (below 200% median household income)
- Limited English proficiency households
- Lack of access to a motor vehicle

Regional Overview: *Equity Analysis*

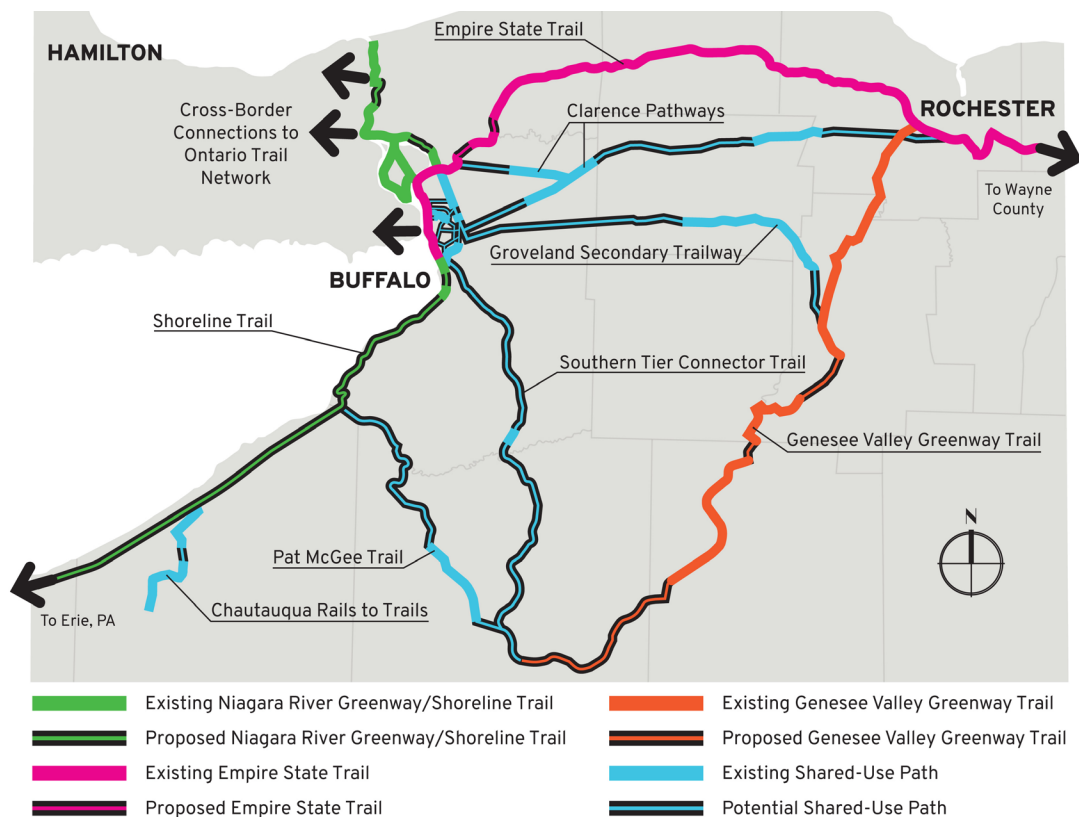


REGIONAL GREENWAY TRAIL NETWORK

A high priority for the Regional Bicycle Network development is to fill gaps in the Greenway Trail Network. The Buffalo-Niagara region is currently blessed with a number of local and regional trails that offer tremendous opportunities for bicycle commuting, utility trips and for recreation. These include:

- **Empire State Trail** that provides links east to Rochester, Syracuse and Albany
- **Shoreline Trail** that runs along the length of the Niagara River and Lake Erie, to Erie PA and Ohio
- **Peanut Line Trail/Clarence Pathways** that link east towards the Genesee Valley Greenway
- **Southern Tier Connector Trail** that connects the region to Western PA
- Improved links to Canada's **Friendship Trail** and **Niagara Parkway Trail**

The completion of these greenway trail corridors will provide a nearly unparalleled network of off-road bicycle facilities in the U.S. and fit seamlessly into the National Bike Route System developed by the Adventure Cycling Association. Supplemented by an on-road network of bike lanes and shoulders, the network will improve safety and promote economic development opportunities. With a marketing and promotional campaign, the enhanced network can also induce a major increase in bicycle tourism in Western New York. In aggregate, these changes will improve livability and public health outcomes for the over one million residents in the region.





Facilities such as greenway trails are ideal ways to encourage cycling by people of all ages and abilities

RECOMMENDATIONS

Development of the recommended bicycle network in the region stems from a variety of factors. Cumulatively, the various steps in the process lead to a fully-integrated bicycle network that aims to provide safe and direct connections between cities, towns, villages and other destinations. After incorporating the

inventory of existing and funded off-road trails and on-road bicycle facilities, the project team used the four steps below to craft the recommended on- and off-road network that aspires to provide access for people of all ages and abilities, throughout the region and to neighboring trail networks.

Previous Regional & Local Planning

This included consideration of trail corridor planning and advocacy (e.g. linking gaps in the Empire State Trail, or ongoing work to improve the Shoreline Trail) to better understand the primary greenway trail connections that will form the backbone to the regional bicycle network.

Identification of Key Destinations

Mapping the large variety of destinations that generate bicycling activity—including existing trails, schools, university/college campuses, major parks, shopping districts, libraries, hospitals and transit hubs—helped inform the needs for improved corridors for bicycle accessibility.

Demand, Gap, & Equity Analysis

The analysis of residential and employment density helped the team discern where high levels of demand for bicycle infrastructure exist. Identification of gaps in the off-road and on-road network, along with considering Equity-related issues led to recommending both off-road and on-road corridors for new bicycle facilities.

Public Engagement

Supplementing the critical factors at left were the comments and input received from the community during the course of the planning project. This included suggestions made at the four public meetings, comments from Bicycle Subcommittee and from key stakeholders and route ideas identified on GBNRTC's online input map.



Tier I



Tier II Urban



Tier II Rural



Tier III Urban

RECOMMENDED BIKEWAY TREATMENTS

Bike Buffalo Niagara includes recommendations for design treatment of recommended bikeway corridors, along with complementary design guidelines. Corridors recommendations include Tier I (physical separation from traffic), Tier II (generous visual separation) and Tier III (minimal visual separation). The network maps and Design Guidelines are intended to be used by GBNRTC staff, along with county and municipal planners to improve the bikeability of roadways and ensure good design for all off-road greenway trails.

The bicycle facility treatments are important because they represent

the tools for creating bicycle-friendly, safe and accessible communities. The guidelines are not a substitute for a more thorough evaluation by transportation and traffic engineers, however. They are general in nature. In nearly all cases, further analysis and professional engineering judgment will be required per local conditions (topography, cost, right of way constraints) and community concerns. Most importantly, the guidelines are intended to complement other state and national design manuals, such as the Empire State Trail Design Guide or MUTCD, that provide a higher-level of detail for the treatments developed for the region.



Regional Overview: *Bicycle Network Tier Treatments*

Table ii: Summary Table of Existing Bicycle Facilities and Proposed Corridors by Treatment Type

EXISTING	PROPOSED
Off-Road Trails 219 miles	Tier I Corridors 208 miles
On-Road Bike Routes 80 miles	Tier II Corridors 394 miles
	Tier III Corridors 245 miles

*See Lower Niagara
River Inset Map*

Canada



Legend

-  Tier I Treatment (Off-Road)
-  Tier I Treatment (On-Road)
-  Tier II Treatment
-  Tier III Treatment
-  Existing Off-Road Greenway Trails
-  Existing On-Road Bike Facilities
-  Existing NYS On-Road Bike Routes
-  Canadian Bike Routes & Trails
-  Recreation Area

*See Buffalo
Inset Map*

Lake Erie

Chautauqua County

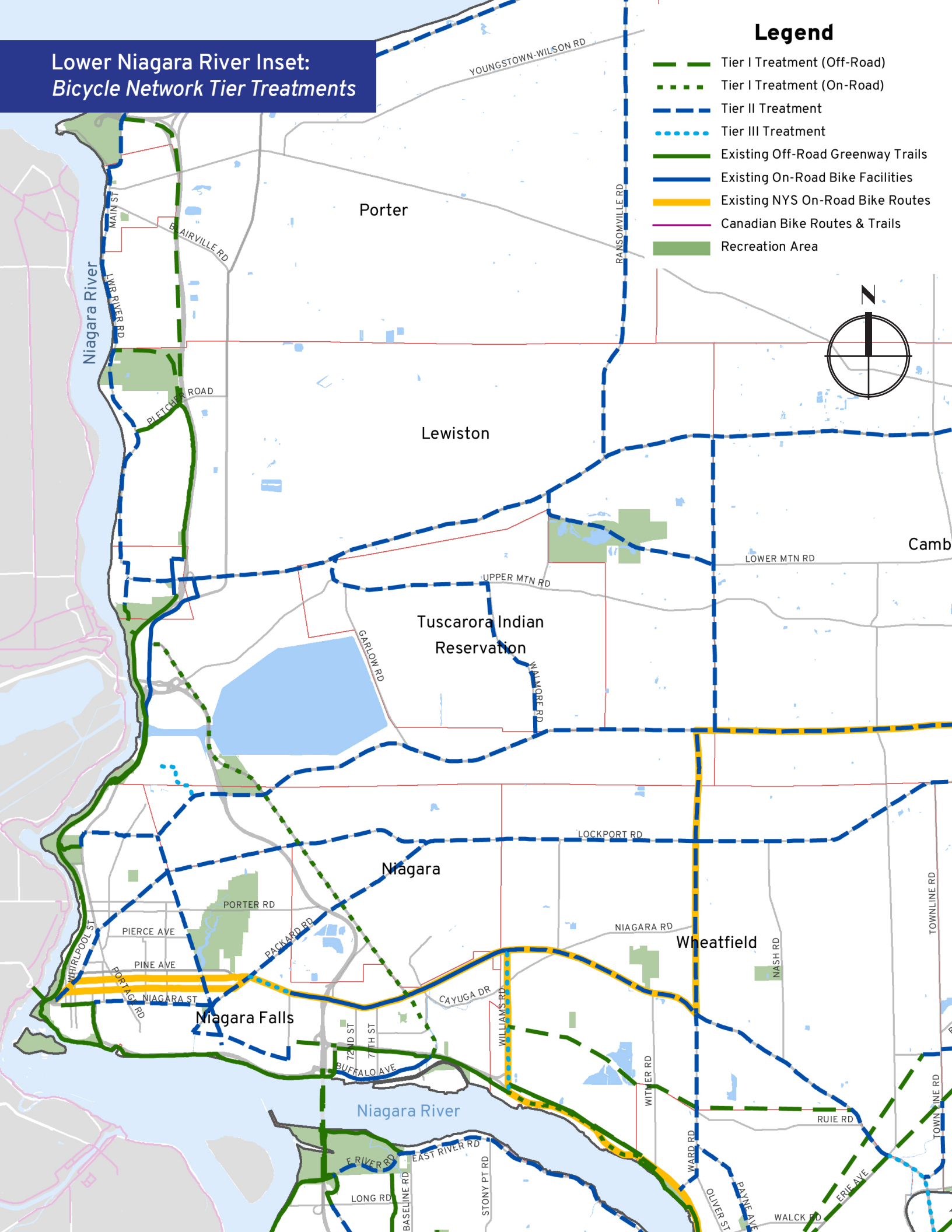
Erie County

Cattaraugus County

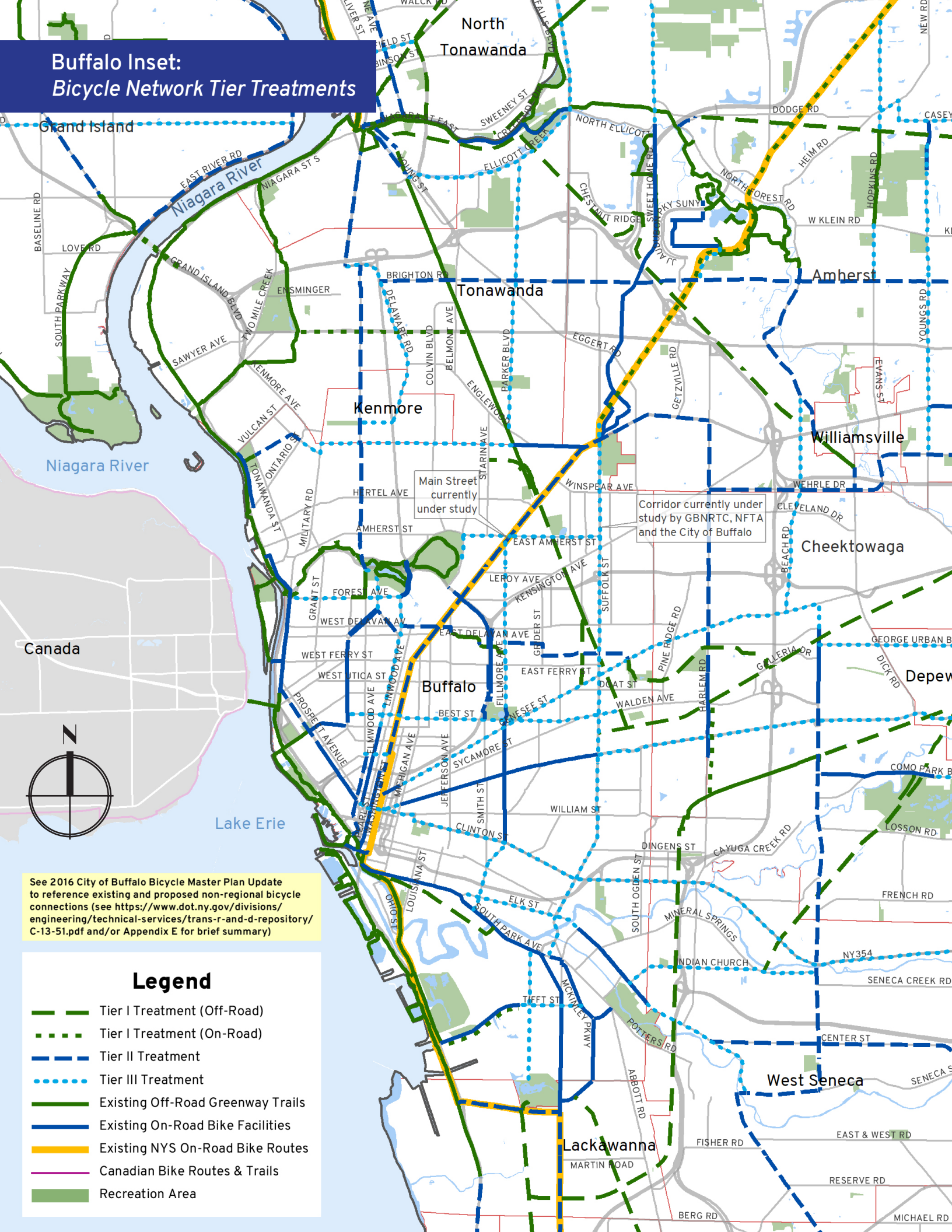
Lower Niagara River Inset: Bicycle Network Tier Treatments

Legend

- Tier I Treatment (Off-Road)
- Tier I Treatment (On-Road)
- Tier II Treatment
- Tier III Treatment
- Existing Off-Road Greenway Trails
- Existing On-Road Bike Facilities
- Existing NYS On-Road Bike Routes
- Canadian Bike Routes & Trails
- Recreation Area



Buffalo Inset: Bicycle Network Tier Treatments



PRIORITIZATION

Nearly 200 recommended bikeway corridors in the Buffalo Niagara region were prioritized using six criteria to evaluate, score and rank each corridor.



SAFETY

Does the proposed corridor focus improvements along a roadway with a history of crashes involving motor vehicles and bicyclists?



REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Does the proposed corridor connect communities and destinations by expanding the network of trails and on-road bike routes?



EQUITY / HEALTH / ENVIRONMENT

Does the proposed corridor encourage bicycling within disadvantaged communities, where improved public health and environmental justice is critical?



ECONOMY

Do bicycle improvements along the proposed corridor encourage economic development, workforce access and bicycle tourism?



DESIGN

Does the proposed corridor recommendation include “all ages and abilities” (aka protected or separated) bicycle facilities?



GAP CLOSURE

Does the proposed corridor close a gap in the regional greenway trail network or does it expand the network?

TOP 15 HIGHEST SCORING OFF-ROAD CORRIDORS - REGIONWIDE -

PROJ #*	CORRIDOR	TIER	MUNICIPALITY	OWNERSHIP	MILEAGE	COST	PRIORITIZATION SCORE (MAX 100)
1	Northeast Greenway Initiative Trail	I	Buffalo	Buffalo	3.5	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	100
2	Perry Blvd/ Marine Drive Link Trail	I	Buffalo	Buffalo	0.2	\$\$	98
5	The Riverline	I	Buffalo	NFTA	1.7	\$\$\$\$	89
13	Scajaquada Creek Extension to Cheektowaga	I	Buffalo, Cheektowaga	TBD	2.5	\$\$\$	85
18	Clarence Pathway Buffalo Extension	I	Cheektowaga	TBD	7.8	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	81
33	Amherst I-290 Path	I	Amherst, Williamsville	NYSDOT	6.4	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	78
34	Lasalle Expressway Trail Extension	I	Niagara Falls	NYSDOT	1.0	\$\$	76
40	South Buffalo Rail Trail	I	Lackawanna, West Seneca	TBD	6.6	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	73
48	Empire State Trail Gap	I	Amherst	Amherst	1.3	\$\$ - \$\$\$	71
49	Peanut Line Trail	I	Amherst	Amherst	4.6	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	71
50	Lancaster Heritage Trail West Extension	I	Depew	TBD	5.1	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	71
56	Twin Cities Memorial Sidepath	I	North Tonawanda	NYSDOT	1.2	\$\$	68
60	Tonawanda- Lockport Rail Trail North	I	North Tonawanda	TBD	3.9	\$\$\$- \$\$\$\$	68
62	Lackawanna- Hamburg Trail	I	Hamburg (T)	TBD	7.9	\$\$\$- \$\$\$\$	68
65	North Grand Island Bridge Path	I	Grand Island, Niagara Falls	NYSTA	3.5	\$\$\$\$	66

*Project number corresponds with the project's regionwide ranking, relative to all 182 off-road and on-road corridors

TOP 10 HIGHEST SCORING ON-ROAD CORRIDORS - METRO BUFFALO COMMUNITIES ONLY -

PROJ #*	CORRIDOR	TIER	MUNICIPALITY	OWNERSHIP	MILEAGE	COST	PRIORITIZATION SCORE (MAX 100)
3	Main St, NY198, NY5	II	Amherst, Buffalo	NYSDOT, Amherst, Buffalo	4.7	\$\$\$	95
4	Young St	II	Tonawanda (C)	Tonawanda (C)	0.7	\$\$	90
6	Oliver St, Sweeney St, Webster St	II	North Tonawanda, Tonawanda (C)	North Tonawanda, Tonawanda (C)	0.7	\$\$	88
7	NY263	I	Amherst	NYSDOT	5.2	\$\$\$\$	88
8	Dodge St, E Utica Ave To NY33 WB, Herman St, Humboldt Pkwy, Northampton, West Parade Ave	II	Buffalo	Buffalo	0.8	\$\$	85
10	Erie St, Erie St Access, Lower Terrace, South Elmwood	II	Buffalo	Buffalo	1.2	\$\$	85
11	Grider St, Kerns Ave, Northland Ave, Scajaquada St	II	Buffalo	Buffalo	1.9	\$\$	85
12	NY324	I	Tonawanda (T)	NYSDOT	2.4	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	85
14	Bailey Ave, US62	II	Amherst, Buffalo	TBD	3.2	\$\$\$	85
15	Elmwood Ave	II	Buffalo, Kenmore, Tonawanda (T)	Buffalo, Erie County	4.2	\$\$\$	85

*Project number corresponds with the project's regionwide ranking, relative to all 182 off-road and on-road corridors

TOP 10 HIGHEST SCORING ON-ROAD CORRIDORS - COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE METRO BUFFALO -

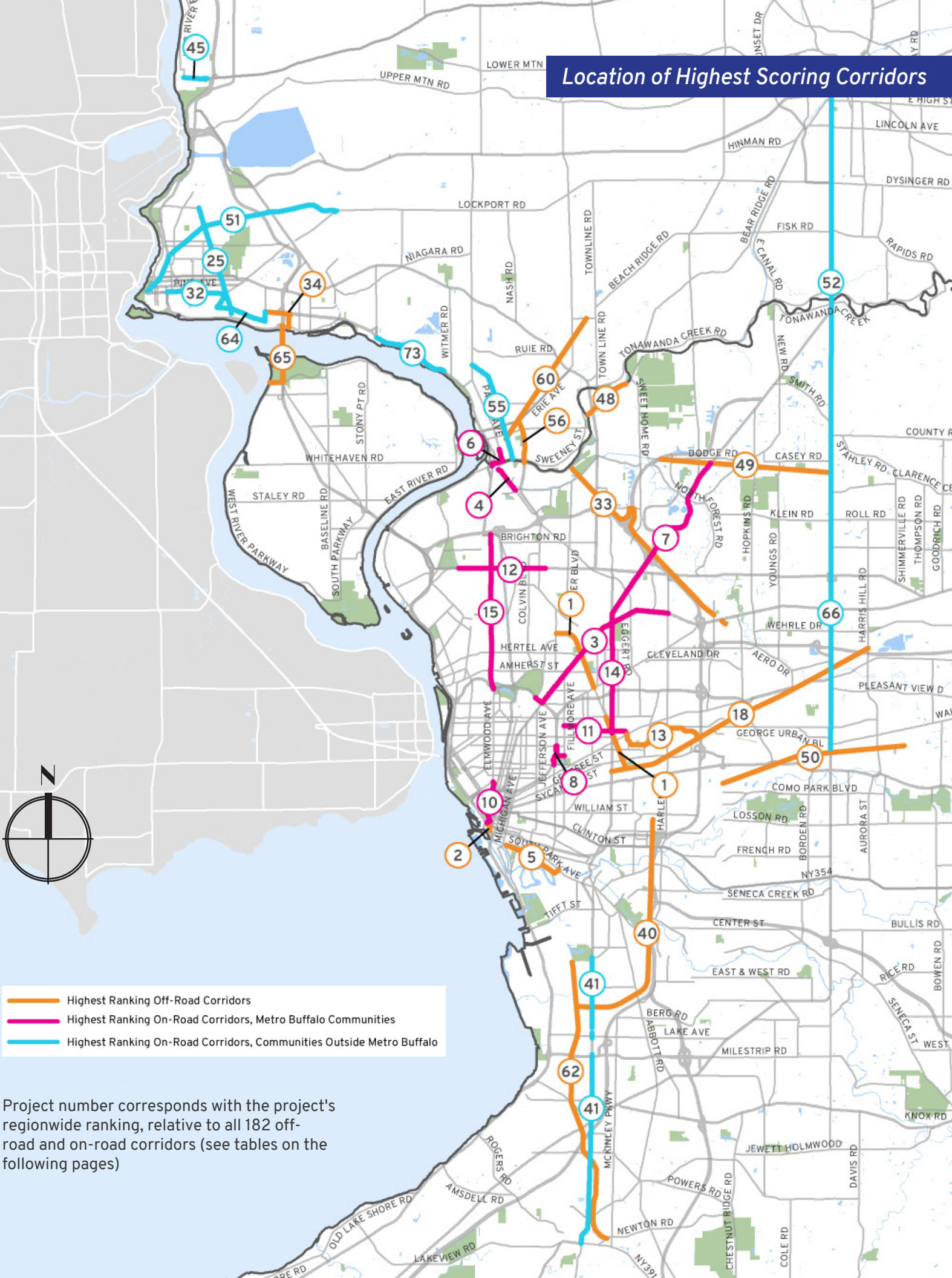
PROJ #*	CORRIDOR	TIER	MUNICIPALITY	OWNERSHIP	MILEAGE	COST	PRIORITIZATION SCORE (MAX 100)
25	Hyde Park Blvd, NY61	II	Niagara Falls	NYSDOT, Niagara Falls	3.0	\$\$	80
32	Niagara St, Portage Rd	II	Niagara Falls	Niagara Falls	1.6	\$\$	78
41	S Park Ave, US62	II	Blasdell, Hamburg (T), Hamburg (V), Lackawanna	NYSDOT	7.2	\$\$\$	73
45	Center St, NY18F	II	Lewiston (V)	NYSDOT	0.6	\$\$	71
51	Lockport Rd, Lockport St, Main St, NY104	II	Niagara, Niagara Falls	Niagara, Niagara Falls	6.1	\$\$\$	71
52	North Transit Road, NY 78	I	Amherst, Clarence, Lockport (C), Lockport (T), Pendleton	NYSDOT	10.5	\$\$\$\$+	71
55	Payne Ave	II	North Tonawanda	North Tonawanda	2.9	\$\$	70
64	56th St, Buffalo Ave, Packard Rd, Veterans Dr	II	Niagara Falls	Niagara Falls	2.1	\$\$	66
66	Transit Road NY78	II	Cheektowaga, Clarence, Depew, Lancaster	NYSDOT	7.4	\$\$\$	66
73	NY265	I	North Tonawanda, Wheatfield	NYSDOT	2.1	\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$	64

*Project number corresponds with the project's regionwide ranking, relative to all 182 off-road and on-road corridors

Location of Highest Scoring Corridors

- Highest Ranking Off-Road Corridors
- Highest Ranking On-Road Corridors, Metro Buffalo Communities
- Highest Ranking On-Road Corridors, Communities Outside Metro Buffalo

Project number corresponds with the project's regionwide ranking, relative to all 182 off-road and on-road corridors (see tables on the following pages)





Reports from throughout the U.S. indicate that bicycling levels have increased substantially during the COVID -19 pandemic

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The Bike Buffalo Niagara: Regional Bicycle Master Plan report is one step in the overarching goal to make the region safer and more accessible for bicyclists. The Plan is a guiding document that will aid in future decision making. The bicycle treatment recommendations can be seen as being aspirational in nature, with the goal of providing a regional network to be used by all residents and visitors to the region, no matter their age or bicycle-experience level.

This is especially critical as Western New York and the United States in general, emerges from the pandemic created by the Coronavirus in early 2020. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that the number of people riding bicycles during the pandemic period increased significantly and many planners and advocates feel that the high demand may continue indefinitely. There are also concerns that the depressed level of demand for transit may continue in the near future,

with more people—especially those with limited access to personal automobiles—wishing to bicycle for commuting and everyday transportation. The following Next Steps* may take a number of years and involve numerous local, county and state agencies working in partnership, but should begin right away to fulfill the goals of the Plan.

PLAN ADOPTION

The Regional Bicycle Master Plan should be adopted by the GBNRTC Policy Board. The adoption by elected officials within these jurisdictions will be key to implement the plan, ensure system equity and incorporate safety and mobility improvements in all parts of the region.

REGIONAL TRAIL AND BIKEWAY COALITION

As described in the Planning for Maintenance section of Chapter 5, GBNRTC should establish the Regional

Trail and Bikeway Coalition and participate in regular coordination meetings, as needed, to expedite implementation of the plan. Beyond establishing priorities and identifying funding opportunities, the role of the coalition could also include the development of policies and programs aimed at improving maintenance of facilities, tracking Plan progress and promoting geographic equity for bicycling investments.

ASSET MANAGEMENT INVENTORY

To help the coalition track current conditions and implementation progress, GBNRTC should create an Asset Management Inventory for all existing and recommended bikeways so there is a clear understanding of jurisdiction, ROW needs (if any), desired improvements, fundraising progress and other issues.

PROPERTY OWNER COORDINATION

In the limited number of cases where additional right-of-way is needed to provide space for a recommended Tier I greenway trail, outreach to adjacent land-owners early in the process is highly recommended. If necessary, meeting on-site with a licensed surveyor to determine the precise property line can help determine the easement needs for the project. These recommendations relate not only to individual property owners, but for corporations and public utility companies such as NYPA who control power line and/or gas line corridors that

have been recommended for future trail use.

COORDINATION WITH NYSDOT

Because a significant number of the recommended bikeway corridors lie along state-owned roadway, partnership with New York State DOT Region 5 will be critical. This includes the need to coordinate the regional plan's bikeway recommendation with the NYSDOT's mill-and-paving and/or road reconstruction schedule for the next 5-10 years. In some cases, fiscal support from other sources may be needed to supplement NYSDOT's anticipated budget in order to provide the recommended bike facility.

COORDINATION WITH TOURISM OFFICIALS

As one of the stated goals of the Plan is to promote bicycle tourism within the region, GBNRTC, municipal officials and advocates should partner with the NYS Office of Tourism and the Empire State Development office. This could include coordination on marketing campaigns directed at both U.S. communities and Canadians interested in visiting a region where bicycling is one of the focal points.

Photo by Benjamin Pawlik