



**RAINBOW RESEARCH
REVISED LITERATURE #1
REVIEW FOR EAST
BUFFALO COMMUNITY
RESPONSE FUND**

Revised February 4, 2023

ABSTRACT

What does the existing literature say about patterns and possibilities on the Eastside of Buffalo?

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This literature review examines the research collected by various state, private, and community organizations about the impacts of segregation and structural racism on the East Side of Buffalo. The ways in which the cumulative impact of white supremacy's legacy of cultural and economic violence on the East Side can now be countered to foster legacy wealth creation within the Black communities of the East Side and mutual thriving and prosperity region-wide is the question this literature review prompts us to investigate further.

Community revitalization and investment can bring people and public, private, and civic institutions together to create shared visions of local development and pathways forward. On the East Side of Buffalo the objective of the East Buffalo Together Community Response Fund is to discern how to operationalize a development pathway that results in beneficial community development without displacement.

Substantial investments have been made over the last few years on the East Side. In response to the white supremacist massacre on May 14, 2022, additional investors and funders have committed resources to improve the quality of life for existing residents in the community. However, with the existing policy and financial tools commonly applied, it is not likely that a further increase in investments will inevitably lead to the desired development without displacement.

The Rainbow Research team¹, recognizing the challenges of anchoring a comprehensive community investment strategy that facilitates development without displacement, determined it was necessary to scan the literature for insights on the challenges and elements we learned would be necessary to bring into our community investment strategy. The underlying question we pose for our work (November 2022 through December 2023) is – what revitalization and investment strategies improve life outcomes for low to moderate income (and all other) residents on the East Side by operationalizing a development without displacement approach?

To realize that outcome, it is critical to facilitate a process of self-determining community development that links the voice, vision, and evolving capacities for development in the community directly to streams of the forms of investment prioritized by community residents. Further, and at the core, the East Side of Buffalo will need to discern how to leverage diverse community and financial assets to invest in itself, now and across future generations.

Patterns and Prospects

Like other cities that have cycled through industrialization, de-industrialization, and post-industrial revitalization with a sizable historic and growing Black population, Buffalo embodies the racial scars of racial steering and segregation, redlining, and devaluation of Black lives and spaces. The challenges posed by the intersections of policy, finance and investment mechanisms not designed for development without displacement, and a community looking for a better

¹ Team members are listed in an Appendix at the end of this document.

future, are further ...exacerbated with diverse siloed efforts not yet working for common purpose, radical imagination and capacity to design and operationalize a strategy until it produces mutually beneficial desired results.

Buffalo has the highest poverty rate in the Erie and Niagara Counties Area, and it is the East Side of Buffalo, where the majority of African Americans live, where racialized poverty does its most devastating work. The poverty rate for the city of Buffalo is almost 14%, whereas for the East Side it is over 32%. The seven major problems identified by the University of Buffalo Center for Urban Studies are: 1) racial residential segregation; 2) the underdevelopment of East Side neighborhoods' 3) structural joblessness; 4) low wages; 5) limited educational attainment; 6) gentrification; and 7) poor health.

When a region develops in a way that perpetuates racialized income and wealth inequality, it offers unfair positive returns to privileged communities while draining life and opportunity out of economically disadvantaged communities. The Black community on the East Side of Buffalo has higher poverty rates, lower homeownership rates, higher unemployment rates, lower median household income, lower net worth, higher homelessness, higher incidences of asthma, diabetes, child poverty and the associated challenges of adverse childhood experiences with success across the lifespan.

Recently, major investments have been made on the East Side. A leading example is the East Side Avenues Project, which is investing \$65 million into the community – focused on commercial corridors. Now, following the May 14, 2022 massacre, the Buffalo Community Together Response Fund has mobilized a number of investors to shape a future for the East Side, in which it will no longer be economically or socially vulnerable again. The investors cannot invest until a clear, coherent community revitalization and investment strategy has been defined.

Focal Points of this Literature Review

The literature review describes why and how it is important to build local knowledge and capacity in order to facilitate an effective development initiative. It documents some of the expressed visions for the East Side and what diverse initiatives are doing to bring that vision alive. This is followed by an examination of some of the unanswered and un-addressed questions that other literature indicates is critical to consider in the context of a comprehensive community revitalization and investment strategy.

Because it was the robust response to the white-supremacy-induced massacre on May 14, 2022, that led to significant additional investment commitments in the region, the literature review also considers hate crimes, stress, and the relevance of these in the context of an effective community engagement and development strategy.

What are we going to do with it?

The East Side needs a strategy that links its vision of change with two things: a) a critical analysis of the patterns that generated current realities; and b) a clear investment and revitalization strategy that moves us toward the vision. This literature review marks our beginning as we work with others to midwife that future.

Literature Review

Community revitalization and investment efforts can bring people and public, private, and civic institutions together to create shared visions of local development and pathways forward. Recent events—including economic shifts, the COVID-19 pandemic, and trends of highly visible racial violence—have increased public social and political consciousness. The communities of East Buffalo had unique experiences of those and other events. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the research collected by various state, private, and community organizations about the unique challenges that underserved communities face on the East Side of Buffalo, within the context of the entire city and the nation. In addition, this review assesses the strategies and pathways forward that various institutions have proposed to advance the East Side and how these strategies and pathways compare to one another.

Buffalo, New York, has a unique and familiar legacy of economic boom, industrial decline, recent revitalization, and continued struggles with racial equity. This is particularly true of the city's East Side. East Buffalo has a strong postindustrial, working-class, and immigrant identity similar to those of Detroit and Pittsburgh (East Buffalo Good Neighbors' Planning Alliance [GNPA], 2007; Gjesfjeld & Jung, 2014). The area has survived the impacts of deindustrialization and suburbanization and a recent economic shift toward investment in health care, advanced manufacturing, and tourism (City of Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency, 2016). Its recent history includes struggles with increased out-migration, housing vacancy, and decreased educational attainment (East Buffalo GNPA, 2007). Moreover, the map of economic opportunity has been redrawn so that income levels have plummeted, the number of manufacturing workers has fallen dramatically, and jobs have shifted to the suburbs (East Buffalo GNPA, 2007). These concerns are especially pronounced among racially underrepresented groups: 78% of the population of Buffalo's East Side is people of color, while 63% are African American (Local Initiatives and Support Corporation [LISC], 2022). These conditions, including the concentrated, racialized poverty, which particularly separates Black and Latinx residents from opportunity, are also consequence of decades of racially discriminatory public policies implemented by governments, banks, and others (Magavern, Bergsten, Clayton, Davenport, Dickson, Kathan, & Ross, 2018; Wooton, & Hagsma, 2022). Buffalo has the highest poverty rate in Erie and Niagara counties (Levine, 2018). The poverty rate for Buffalo–Niagara was 13.8% in 2016, but the rate for African Americans was 32.3% (Magavern, Bergsten, Clayton, Davenport, Dickson, Kathan, & Ross, 2018). Women are overrepresented among those in poverty in the region (Make Communities and Neewater & Associates, 2017). And although Black people are only 11% of the Western New York population, they represent nearly half of the homeless population (Homeless Alliance of Western New York, 2018). Moreover, the high rates of child poverty in the region are linked to increased asthma, diabetes, developmental delays, learning difficulties, and behavioral problems.

At present, Buffalo is experiencing a resurgence, yet the East Side remains underserved. The city's population growth is outpacing all other cities in Upstate New York (Office of Strategic Planning [OSP], 2022). The area has experienced unprecedented residential sales and added thousands of new residential housing units and billions of dollars in real-estate investments as part of its place-based development efforts. It has also made progress in remediating its properties, expanding its

medical infrastructure, and preserving its historic landmarks. However, despite the creation of jobs in East Buffalo, residents are still at risk of displacement and other forms of continued marginalization. The concentrated racial poverty in the region is a force that is preventing more widespread benefits of economic growth (Blatto, 2018). But several organizations have offered pathways forward or neighborhood investment plans, which are examined in this review of literature. This review will begin by covering surveys results from investigations of the top priorities of East Buffalo residents. Next, it will include an examination of neighborhood investment plans and their relationship with Buffalo residents' priorities. Finally, there is an examination of the significance of the hate crime committed Tops supermarket and its possible implications for future community engagement in the region.

Seeking Local Knowledge in Buffalo

Sometimes local challenges are treated narrowly as technical issues, and their solutions come from the minds of subject experts and policymakers (Homsy & Hart, 2021). Local knowledge consists of the perspectives and knowledge of residents that come from their living and engaging with their surroundings (Homsy & Hart, 2021). Failure to engage residents and their knowledge and directly involve them in the development of policies and initiatives can lead to the failure of initiatives that might otherwise seem well thought-out (Homsy & Hart, 2021). This involves considering the unique physical ecosystems, cultural expectations, and economic opportunities in a particular place (Homsy & Hart, 2021). Efforts to gain local knowledge about the needs and priorities of communities in Buffalo, particularly on the East Side, have shown that many of the concerns have remained the same for nearly two decades, even while new issues have emerged. According to the East Buffalo GNPA's (2007) community-engagement research, East Buffalo residents have prioritized particular needs in their communities, including (1) police and public safety, to make the streets safe; (2) parks and the environment, to serve as well-maintained public spaces; (3) public works, to make the environment clean; (4) economic development and historic preservation; (5) schools, libraries, and youth; (6) housing and vacant lots; and (7) transportation. The plan was to create action groups to work on each issue as part of the larger "Queen City in the 21st Century" comprehensive plan for Buffalo (East Buffalo GNPA, 2007). This report is referred to here as a benchmark.

Similarly, the city of Buffalo's OSP (2022) engagement of more than 600 residents indicated that their top priorities, in rank order, were (1) housing affordability and quality; (2) economic development and job creation; (3) improved public safety; (4) improved roadways and maintenance; (5) improved and increased parks, recreation facilities, and community centers; (6) investment in green and renewable energy, and reduction of the city's carbon footprint; (7) investment in technology and infrastructure, such as broadband; (8) racial equity and closing of the racial wealth gap; (9) improved and increased pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and (10) upkeep, reuse, and development of city-owned vacant land. The University of Buffalo Center for Urban Studies conducted a survey of community leaders, private developers, and city planners and identified seven major problems that much be addressed to advance the state of Black Buffalo: (1) racial residential segregation; (2) the underdevelopment of East Side neighborhoods; (3) structural joblessness; (4) low wages; (5) limited educational attainment; (6) gentrification; and

(7) poor health.

Although many of the issues have remained the same, others have shifted. For example, the concern over racial justice and equity in the city, particularly on the East Side, has become more prominent, and health care has emerged as an even greater concern, as have the demands for broadband investment and bridging of the digital divide (between those who do and don't have reliable broadband service) (Taylor, Jung, & Dash, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic revealed how the digital divide could have major impacts on work, economic opportunity, education, and healthcare—particularly with the emergence of telehealth, online work, and online learning. The advent of 5G technology is likely to lead to a generation of more remote workers and students (Ahmad, 2019), and with access to high-speed internet and online technology differing significantly by race and income, Black communities will be placed at a disadvantage. In addition, increased national calls for racial justice are reflected in Buffalo, given that African Americans faced the dual pandemic of COVID-19 and anti-Black racism (which touches all other social institutions). This has intensified calls for criminal justice reform.

Visions for Change: Complementary Interests and Competition

East Buffalo has seen a variety of strategic plans from private, public, and civic organizations with complementary and potentially conflicting interests. For example, the City of Buffalo's 2022 four-year strategic plan focuses on using once-in-a-generation funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other sources for the purpose of reinvigorating the local economy (OSP, 2022).

A major component of the city's plan is the commitment to a place-based development strategy centered on building preservation as a tool for the revitalization of Buffalo's East Side neighborhoods (OSP, 2019). The vision is to stabilize and restore at-risk historic buildings, identify buildings in need of preventative maintenance, and preserve structures for private investment. The idea is that this place-based strategy might lead to a resurgence of East Side communities (PlaceEconomics, 2022). The investment in historic districts is based on the logic that such areas bring higher property values and attract tourism and business investment, which generate direct and indirect jobs.

An example is the Michigan Street African American Cultural Corridor, which boasts a rich history involving the abolitionist movement, the Underground Railroad, the Jazz Age, and the civil rights movement (PlaceEconomics, 2022). Future planning for the area will include adaptive reuse, creative storytelling, traffic-calming measures, and improvements to open spaces, to reimagine the corridor as a destination that celebrates Buffalo's African American cultural legacy (PlaceEconomics, 2022).

East Buffalo citizens have specific interests regarding any place-based plan. For example, will the plan involve environmentally sound housing and buildings? Will they be family-friendly models of housing (Silverman, Taylor, Yin, Miller, & Buggs, 2019)? Will it specifically involve improving the quality of housing around schools? Will it involve affordable housing for elders?

Will it include foreclosure-prevention programs? Will the city pursue non-public funding for homeowners at 80% or more of the median income guidelines for housing rehab (GNPA, 2007)? These questions will be critical, because even though many of the proposed projects by the city and private organizations express concern about environmental contamination, it is not entirely clear what formal steps will be taken in construction projects to ensure that environmental contamination does not occur or is minimized. Moreover, East Buffalo citizens expressed specific concerns about the locations of new housing and about housing specifically for elders. It will be important to evaluate projects on these and other more specific factors.

The East Side Avenues Initiative presents a vision for East Buffalo that is remarkably comprehensive in its coordination of multiple partners and yet targeted in its approach to change-making in the area. One barrier to regenerating disinvested and disengaged communities is the disconnect between vertically organized, siloed congressional committees in government and local communities that are horizontally organized by public, private, and civic institutions. For this reason, Katz and Higgins (2021) of the Nowak Metro Finance Lab recommended that local communities create specialized development playbooks for cities that put together holistic, integrated, multidimensional initiatives to revitalize disadvantaged communities. In fact, the authors lauded Buffalo's East Side Avenues Initiative (a product of New York's 2019 Buffalo Billion effort) as a model investment playbook because it bridges the vertical–horizontal gap and leverages public, private, and civic investments.

The East Side Avenues Initiative focusses on small businesses, placemaking, and workforce development. The program's small-business efforts include real-estate training for local business owners so that they can make the most of their real estate while seeking alternative financing from public, private, and civic sources, because the East Side Corridor Economic Development Fund is not enough (Buffalo Billion, 2019). The initiative's placemaking efforts focus on economic and other catalytic development projects, including the restoration and reuse of the Broadway Market (one of the oldest public markets in the United States), the Central Terminal (a former train station), the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor, and the East Side portion of the Buffalo Olmstead Park System (James Lima Planning and Development, 2020). The workforce training efforts involve bringing together employers, educational institutions (such as the Burgard High School Advanced Manufacturing Program and the Northland Workforce Training Center), community organizations, and state and local governments to help East Side residents gain skills for manufacturing-sector jobs (Buffalo Billion, 2019; Katz & Higgins, 2021). Part of the Buffalo Billion (2019) placemaking strategy involves dedicating \$65 million to restabilizing neighborhoods, increasing opportunities for homeownership, creating walkable districts, and supporting entrepreneurship.

Overriding the variety in the East Side Avenues Initiative's multi-actor approach to change-making in East Buffalo is the program's primary focus on commercial investment. The approach is holistic as a marketing strategy, and also touches base with various aspects of the lives of East Buffalo residents. However, the initiative does not cover the entirety of the vision set forth by East Buffalo residents based on community-engagement research. For example, the East Side Avenues Initiative's vision for educational investment involves much-welcomed workforce training and a

focus on real-estate education, but the offerings do not match the cradle-to-college vision of the East Side residents. This is significant, given the role that the attainment of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees play in reducing risk of poverty and increasing job mobility (Masson, 2014). In addition, in the still emerging knowledge economy, more than half of the newest jobs will require a bachelor's degree or higher (Taylor, Jung, & Dash, 2021). This leaves the much broader educational aspirations in need of additional investment. East Buffalo residents will be asked whether the workforce training model is sufficient, or they want other initiatives (local college and university scholarship commitments, or employer-based tuition payment or reimbursement) that would provide resources to help them overcome financial exclusion from higher education and which might compliment the proposed workforce training initiatives.

LISC (2022) Western New York (WNY), a community-development organization with a twenty-year history in the area, produced a vision for community revitalization in East Buffalo. The 2022 LISC WNY East Side Planning Report proposes an equity-based investment plan with eight goals aimed at ensuring that (1) East Side residents and businesses lead revitalization efforts in collaboration with partners to get projects done within an equitable development framework by establishing a shared leadership model and developing an equitable development scorecard to assess development; (2) an equitable, predominantly Black, inclusive and diverse community is built by preventing the displacement of current residents and building and rehabbing safe and high-quality homes; (3) residents are connected to family-sustaining jobs, and the racial income gap is reduced for East Side residents through contracting with local businesses owned by Black and indigenous people of color (BIPOC) and the creation of partnerships to drive dollars into local businesses; (4) BIPOC wealth is built and the racial wealth gap is closed through increases to residents' access to entrepreneurial capital and real-estate education; (5) place-keeping projects that amplify economic vitality and celebrate culture, neighborhood identity, history, and wellness are supported by investments in key business districts, arts, and cultural developments that will create jobs, and through support for local events unique to the area and increased access to safe public spaces; (6) support is provided for food access, infrastructure, and businesses that increase healthy food options, create neighborhood economic opportunity, and contribute to a shared vision of food sovereignty, through the backing of existing food-based industries and restaurants and the development of community-centered food-related real-estate opportunities with BIPOC leadership and ownership; (7) public infrastructure supports community health and sustainable economic revitalization by advocating for connection of residents to jobs and public spaces and by investing in streetscape and multimodal transportation; and (8) legacy contamination and environmental pollution no longer hurt East Side residents' health, and funding is provided for rehabilitation and repair of properties and the removal of toxins (LISC, 2022).

In comparison to the East Side Avenues report and its vision for East Buffalo, the LISC (2022) WNY report is far more forthright in integrating national and local calls for racial justice into its plan for the communities. At present, Buffalo residents, particularly African Americans, continue to report housing discrimination, and more goes unreported because some residents have no confidence that their reports will be followed up (Wooton & Hasgsma, 2022). This is particularly important for East Buffalo because, for example, the New York State investigation into redlining

in Buffalo between 2016 and 2019 revealed officially what many people already knew: that families of color, particularly African Americans, continue to face discrimination in the form of limited access to mortgage lending, and that the practice systematically hampers their abilities to build wealth and economic stability (Anstey, 2021). Overtly addressing calls for racial justice including but going beyond policing will open the door to conversations about how to merge investment in African American communities with safeguards against racial discrimination and advocacy for policy changes that will guard against racism in housing and other areas. For example, because the state's Community Reinvestment Act covers banks but not nonbank mortgage lenders, applying the act and amending New York State Banking Law §28-b for non-depository and nonbank mortgage lenders may help the city address the anti-Blackness and racist abuses of the residential loan market in Buffalo and in New York as a whole (Anstey, 2021).

The LISC report described a transportation outlook that included transportation reform with the intention of connecting East Buffalo residents to jobs, in addition to using housing to do so. Taking a different approach, the City OSP describes the rationale for investment in transportation as an effort to modernize, beautify, and expand choice (by way of multi-modal options). This may be an indicator of the crucial need to reinforce connections to jobs and job-growth areas as a priority for transportation planning in East Buffalo, especially given that a third of the city's households lack access to cars and only half the jobs in the city are accessible by public transit (Partnership for the Public Good, 2017). The poor in Buffalo, among whom African Americans are overrepresented, spend an increasing share of their income on transportation (Magavern, Bergsten, Clayton, Davenport, Dickson, Kathan, & Ross, 2018). Moreover, one-third of the refugees in New York State resettle in Buffalo, and their concerns include the availability of affordable housing, transportation, and language access (Rahbari, 2019). In addition to improved language accessibility, they too could benefit from improved transportation connections to top employers in the region. Ultimately, it will be important that future investors design transportation plans which prioritize access to jobs, food resources, schools, and medical care in the region.

According to the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable's (2022) Racial Equity Dividend Report, institutions, places, and people are the main factors in Buffalo's gaps in racial equity. However, they are also the keys to solving the equity problems and increasing opportunity and prosperity in the region. For example, service-delivery institutions such as healthcare, education, and housing contribute to quality of life but are also imbued with institutional racism. A place-based analysis of Buffalo showed that it is rich in talent, ideas, and culture but geographically divided in a way that makes its economic, educational, and civic resources inequitable. People affect equity because they are influenced by the country's history of race and racism, which continues to shape individuals' conscious and unconscious judgements about one another in ways that can either affirm or subjugate.

The strategy put forward in the report focused on investing in institutions, places, and people to close racial equity gaps in several key areas, including (1) education and job readiness, by reducing expenditures on social services and reinvesting in teachers, police officers, and other service providers, such as library, park, and recreation staff; (2) criminal justice and safety, through equitable treatment in arrests, convictions, and sentencing and increased investment in elementary

and secondary teacher salaries, increasing the number of library workers and park and recreation staff, and increasing the number of police officers for community building; (3) quality of life and neighborhoods, by increasing the value of homes and using the growing property-tax base to invest in education, public safety, health, and transportation; and (4) income and wealth, by expanding the economy, diversifying the workforce, and increasing homeownership (Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable, 2022).

The Dividend Report's institutions, places, and people design is holistic in ways that other approaches are not, given that its focus is more on ensuring equity, investing in social capital, eliminating racial equity gaps, and improving access to high-quality human services. The report discussed improving safety in holistic ways, which is in alignment with some grassroots movements. Research and policy institutes across the country have recommended a shift in investment away from punitive policies, which have destabilized a generation of families, and toward proportionate funding of the social safety net, including essential needs such as health, housing, infrastructure, and education (PolicyLink, 2020). This is based on the logic that the shift would take a preventative approach to making communities safe, which would particularly benefit the Black communities that were most harmed by systems of policing, criminalization, and incarceration in the 1990s (PolicyLink, 2020).

PolicyLink (2020), a research and policy institute, suggested that underserved communities would benefit in the long term from legislation such as the BREATHE Act, the Community Engagement Response Act, the Counseling Not Criminalization in Schools Act, and the Anti-Racism in Public Health Act, which all direct tax dollars toward more preventative investments. However, the LISC (2022) report also advocated for increased funding of police and police presence without addressing methods to improve quality of policing, such as enhanced mental health screening, changes to training protocols, and policies that might curtail police abuse and improve police accountability. This is critical for Buffalo. Police Scorecard (2022), an organization that provides nationwide public evaluation of policing, ranked Buffalo at 39% on a rubric that assigns high scores to police districts that spend less on policing, use less force, are more likely to hold officers accountable, and make fewer arrests for low-level offenses; Buffalo's lowest score was in the area of police accountability. It will be important to discuss with East Buffalo residents what they envision for police presence in their communities and the prospect of anti-discrimination policies in local law enforcement (Magavern, 2016).

Unanswered Questions and Under-Addressed Concerns

The aforementioned approaches to change in East Buffalo are extremely expansive and touch base with each of the broad areas of community concern outlined in the East Buffalo GNPA (2007) survey. However, the approaches also raise some questions, which might be easily answered or might provoke important considerations for future investment strategies. For example, the community survey of East Buffalo residents reflected their concern about early childhood education. However, the LISC (2022) report and the Buffalo Billion (2019) report make passing mentions of childcare, which is a significantly different model of child service. It is important to know the meaning that investors attach to childcare, given the community's apparent interest in

childhood education (e.g., their proposed early childhood center) and attention to overall learning and developmental milestones. It will be important to gain a clearer understanding through research into what investors see as childcare as compared to community concerns about childhood education and a cradle-to-college pipeline. According to Creighton, Fleron, and Weaver (2022) of the ILR Buffalo Co-Lab, steps to improve childcare in Buffalo might include increasing and expanding eligibility for subsidies, placing a cap on family co-pays, and increasing universal pre-K funding. Buffalo residents' more expanded vision also includes the engagement of teenagers, which could take the form of afterschool programs, summer employment, or internships, all of which have influences on teen violence, academic achievement, and health (Sosenko, Bramhall, & Jablonski, 2018).

Supplier diversity is another approach to business equity that might increase the East Buffalo Black community's benefits from future investment. For example, cities can invest in supplier diversity by intentionally relying on Black- and Brown-owned businesses for design, engineering, construction, and finance projects (Katz & Wiederwohl, 2022). Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a city with a similar legacy of industrialization and deindustrialization and a strong African American population, recently received a \$100 million investment to enhance its physical and social infrastructure, access to capital for individuals and businesses, and healthy, sustainable communities (PR Newswire, 2021). Because the fund is explicitly intended to close the racial wealth gap, it has committed to investment in Gateway Capital, an African American-led venture capital fund that targets both Milwaukee and the Wisconsin for investments. Several investment strategies in this report discuss their awareness of or and intention to partner with local businesses, but it is not clear if a preference for Black businesses and other supplier-diversity strategies will be a component of their approaches to development in East Buffalo.

Food access received scant attention in the City OSP four-year plan, although food security was a significant part of the Buffalo Billions plan. However, the issue is demonstrably important to the East Buffalo community. Grocery stores are not only a source of food and an influence on dietary habits, but they are also important locations of community engagement (Gjesfjeld & Jung, 2014). Increased movement out of cities to suburban areas is one force driving the growth of food deserts. Gjesfjeld and Jung's (2014) investigation of food access on the East Side of Buffalo used geographic visualization and geographic information systems and showed that predominantly Black areas had less access to grocery stores than areas with smaller numbers of Black residents. In Buffalo, African Americans are six times as likely to live in neighborhoods without grocery stores than their White counterparts (Magavern, Bergsten, Clayton, Davenport, Dickson, Kathan, & Ross, 2018). Grocery stores are also of critical importance to refugee immigrant populations, particularly those who have resettled in areas with an abundance of processed foods, where they are susceptible to the Americanization of their diets and further distancing from their culturally preferred foods (Judelsohn, Orom, Kim, Sa, Khan, DeVito, Diaz, Raja, 2017). Richardson et al. (2021) investigated the impact of neighborhood investments on the dietary habits of renters and homeowners in two low-income neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a city with an industrial economic history similar to Buffalo's. The authors found that neighborhood investments were associated with improved diet quality for renters and homeowners. Adding a new

supermarket to a low-income neighborhood increased commercial value and improved residential diets, while increases in residential prices were associated with poorer diets (Richardson et al., 2021). According to the Western New York Regional Food System Initiative (WNYRFSI), places like East Buffalo can benefit from initiatives that connect farmers with local purchasers, increased commitments to local purchasing from educational and health institutions, and increased investment in food and farm businesses (prioritizing BIPOC actors) (Flaccavento, Fisk, Rogers-Sipp, and Shuman, 2022).

The paths forward described in this literature review engage the subject of community oversight of development in East Buffalo. For example, the LISC (2022) report suggested that anti-displacement approaches might involve strategies such as locally contracted construction and community-benefit agreements for future development. This is particularly important in Buffalo, where residents have already expressed concern over rent increases and displacement resulting from the expansion of, for example, the Niagara Medical Campus (Blatto, 2018). However, it was not clear what if any local hiring provisions are actually in place in active investment projects that are currently underway.

Most of the proposals reviewed discussed physical-development initiatives that will involve breaking ground or starting construction work, but it is not clear whether any of the sites are legacy pollutant sites, or to what extent there are metrics for the environmental safety of current and future development projects in East Buffalo. Like in Chicago and other Rust Belt cities that bore the brunt of the decline of the steel industry, concerns remain about lingering soil pollution and drifting particulate matter, which are associated with respiratory problems (Rodriguez, 2022). Citizens in these regions have expressed concerns that developers need to clean sites of contaminants buried in the gravel and slag to passable levels in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency so that construction processes don't spread contaminants to residents (Rodriguez, 2022). This concern over environmental contamination is associated with the more recognized risks from the relatively high levels of lead exposure in the poorest areas of Buffalo; lead can cause harms ranging from loss of IQ to organ failure and death (Gardner, 2018). The fact that both soil contamination and lead poisoning overlap with areas of concentrated racialized poverty makes adopting the Environmental Protection Agency Renovation and Repair Program and more stringent inspection standards all the more critical (Magavern, 2018).

Cultural affirmation received attention in the proposals in ways that could be significantly expanded in future investment strategies. The LISC report, for example, like all the investment plans, celebrates the unique African American cultural institutions and contributions to the fabric of East Buffalo's identity. They go further to include planned investment in cultural institutions like the African American Cultural Center, the Hispanic Heritage Center, and the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor. However, an examination of several of the investment plans also shows that this commercial interest in identity affirmation does not appear to be present in the form of cultural relevance in education and healthcare. For example, investment plans might also incorporate the assurance of culturally competent care to improve accessibility and quality of medical care. This could take the form of interpretive services or the best practices of health service provision in partnership with the National Medical Association (NMA), for example (Catholic

Health Association, 2019). Similarly, local communities might be interested in educational investments that incorporate ethnic studies or Black studies in K–12 school curriculums, as both are related to increased academic engagement (Tintiangco-Cubales, Kohli, Sacramento, Henning, Agarwal-Rangnath, & Sleeter, 2015). Expanding the cultural relevance of investment plans could further humanize basic social services for African American, Latinx, and immigrant populations in East Buffalo.

Hate Crimes, Stress, and East Buffalo Community Engagement

After obesity, the most significant health concern in Erie County is mental illness, according to a Catholic Health Association survey (Catholic Health Association, 2019). This makes it important for research into investment plans in Buffalo to understand the implications of recent events in East Buffalo in particular. The mass-shooting hate crime committed at the Tops supermarket on Jefferson Avenue has implications for how the East Buffalo community should be engaged through trauma-informed approaches. Exposure to racial violence results in stress in the form of grief and trauma (Leath et al., 2022). It also increases the need for individual and collective means of coping. The people of East Buffalo have gone through a compounding series of stressful events, starting with the COVID-19 pandemic (Leath et al., 2022). Many of the residents have also had emotionally, physically, and psychologically taxing indirect experiences of violence by witnessing police violence against Black people, either in person or on social media—which has the double-pronged effect of raising awareness of police misconduct (Curtis et al., 2021; Leath et al., 2022). But the incidents themselves are stress producers, and the decisions not to prosecute are much the same. Both have local and national mental-health spillover effects, including elevated preterm birth odds and overall reproductive health effects for Black mothers (Curtis et al., 2021). Moreover, learning how pervasive racial violence is can give people feelings of sadness, anger, fear, and anxiety (Leath et al., 2022).

Hate crimes are carried out as a perceived means of informal social control (King & Sutton, 2013). The crimes are usually committed against an innocent third party and are more likely to occur when the target group is perceived as vulnerable or relatively unprotected by law (Black, 1983; King & Sutton, 2013). Historically, Black people have experienced this sort of racial violence when White people have experienced real or imagined erosion of racial privilege. The targets were often symbols of economic competition or Black success (Teague, 2018). Historically, formal law enforcement has either played an active role in carrying out racial violence against Black people, facilitated such violence, or played an intentionally passive role in it (Teague, 2018).

Hate crime perpetrators are triggered by particular events, such as acts of violence (e.g., terrorist attacks), widely publicized decisions (e.g., contentious trial verdicts or court decisions granting rights or rewards to historically marginalized groups), social movements, or shifts in the political environment that favor an outgroup (e.g., reconstruction and the civil rights movement; King & Sutton, 2013; Stacey, 2015). In any case, in the eyes of the perpetrators of anti-Black hate crimes and their sympathizers, the specific victims matter less than the larger Black community and other communities they symbolize (Lyons, 2007). Hate crimes continue because institutionalized racism and stereotypes define Black communities as symbolic threats to the social order that are linked to

social ills such as violence and poverty (Lyons, 2007). It is important to ensure that East Buffalo residents not only feel safe and protected during the research process but are also integrated into investment projects.

Across the country, Black communities engage in self-advocacy and activism in a number of ways, ranging from donating funds and attending community-organizing meetings to participating in frontline protests in emotionally charged situations. The activism that Black communities engage in has the ability to produce positive effects, provide activists with a sense of personal significance, self-determination, and hope, and create protectors against anti-Black racism or stress (Turner et al., 2022). However, certain types of activism (those motivated by individualism, opportunism, and divisiveness) can also lead to elevated stress and even burnout, and culturally centered healing processes are important to maintaining the well-being of activists (Turner et al., 2022).

Black psychologists have created several models designed to do this, such as the Black love activism and community (BLAC) model, which enhances protective community mental-health factors such as relationships, spirituality, identity, and active expression. Personal healing strategies are important, and so are family and community healing processes that focus on community strengths to restore health and balance within and between people (Chioneso et al., 2020). The community healing and resistance through storytelling (C-HeARTS) framework is designed to do that by bringing together the concepts of community and healing to achieve justice-informed outcomes. This framework makes use of the emotional emancipation circles (EECs) developed by the Association of Black Psychologists. In EECs, Black people come together to share their stories and engage in community reflection while exposing trauma and overturning myths of Black inferiority (Chioneso et al., 2020). EECs involve the use of narrative therapy to reprocess and reframe negative thinking into positive thinking. In this case, storytelling functions as a tool for resisting obstacles, affirming culture, building a sense of community, and refuting negative stories. In the C-HeARTS framework, resistance involves self-determination and defiance. Self-determination means choosing thoughts and behaviors that positively meet needs and destinies. Defiance involves engaging in intentional planning to find ways to achieve more adaptive community conditions. The overall purpose of the C-HeARTS framework is to bring about a community sense of connectedness, collective memory, and critical consciousness. As researchers and resource seekers, it is important to understand what the East Buffalo community has recently experienced in historic and contemporary contexts. This is not to suggest that East Buffalo is a vulnerable population technically, but it is certainly a population with recent experiences of collective trauma, and knowledge of the aforementioned resources may be of assistance in the research process.

Conclusion

Planning at the intersection of commercial investment, equity and inclusion, and racial justice would greatly benefit future investment approaches in East Buffalo. The strategies put forth by public, private, and civic bodies and examined in this review would be enhanced by greater emphasis on policing quality and accountability, clarity about environmental-approval procedures for project sites, community-benefit agreements for local hiring and contract awards, food security,

fuller approaches to educational attainment, including higher education and early childhood education, and annual evaluation of projects to ensure racial justice and equity throughout the process. Tracking the extent to which these concerns are addressed should also be a priority for residents in East Buffalo. Community needs and attitudes have likely changed over time yet may remain generally consistent, so a community participatory approach should begin by reassessing the needs of East Buffalo residents. This will be important for helping researchers avoid the pitfalls of universally applied approaches by seeking hyperlocal knowledge from residents in a variety of places and methods (Homsy & Hart, 2021).

Over the course of 2023, the Rainbow Research Team will work with the Steering Committee of the Buffalo Together Community Response Fund to listen to and learn with the East Side community, how to design and operationalize a strategic investment strategy that supports a future of inter-generational thriving for current residents and generations to come.

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Appendix: Rainbow Research Team

| Team | Roles |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Dr. Samuel Leguizamon Grant | Executive Director, Rainbow Research |
| Dr. JaNay Queen Nazaire | Co-Founder of Blckgrvty |
| Dr. Martha Eddy | Founder and Director of Moving for Life, Dynamic Embodiment and the Center for Kinesthetic Education |
| Dr. Serie McDougal III | Associate Professor of Pan African Studies at California State University Los Angeles and Co-Founder of Afrometrics |
| Dr. Sureshi Jayawardene | Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at San Diego State University and Co-Founder of Afrometrics Research Institute |
| Rahel Tekle | Spatial Analyst and Story-Mapper, Rainbow Research |
| Martha Hernandez Martinez | Director of Research, Training and Capacity Building, Rainbow Research |