



## University at Buffalo's UDC wins "Charter Award" from the CNU

June 19, 2009 - Upstate New York

The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), one of the foremost international advocates for the revival of cities, awarded its 2009 "Charter Award" to the city on June 13, during the CNU Annual Conference held from June 10-14 in Denver, Colorado.

The city received the award for an ensemble of plans produced by the Urban Design Project (UDC) of the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning, under the leadership of Robert Shibley, professor of architecture and urban planning and director of the UDC.

"On behalf of the residents of Buffalo, our partners at the University at Buffalo's Urban Design Project and my predecessor mayor Tony Masiello, I'm honored to receive this prestigious award from the Congress for the New Urbanism," said mayor Byron Brown.

The award is one of only two charter awards made this year by the CNU for projects at the scale of region, city and town. The city's entry won in competition with 125 plans submitted.

"Through the great talent and effort of Bob Shibley, city planners spanning two mayoral administrations and colleagues in organizations like Buffalo Place, the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy and many more, Buffalo's built environment finally has a set of urban plans it deserves," Brown said.

"With such a rich architectural and planning heritage, Buffalo is now better positioned than ever to move forward into the 21st century, building and developing according to urban plans that account for our glorious past, but provide the proper framework for our city's future," he said.

"To complement the excellent work of these plans," Brown said. "I have initiated the reform of the city's 50-year old zoning code and created a new City Planner position to help implement the city's comprehensive urban plan, "Queen City in the 21st Century," in ways that employ proven new urbanism principles and practices. And to further extend the city's transformative development activities, I'm looking for a City Planner to lead the application of these kinds of proven principles to low income neighborhoods and diverse communities, with a demonstrated commitment to public participation."

It comprises four documents:

1. "The Queen City in the 21st Century," Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan
2. "The Queen City Hub, Vols. I and II," A Regional Action Plan for Downtown Buffalo
3. "Queen City Waterfront," Buffalo Waterfront Corridor Initiative: A Strategic Plan for Transportation Improvements
4. "The Olmsted City," The Buffalo Olmsted Park System: Plan for the 21st Century, which also has received the 2009 Excellence in Historic Preservation Award from the Preservation League of New York State.

The ensemble of plans is the result of a long-running collaboration that has involved the City of

Buffalo (including two mayoral administrations and many planning directors); Buffalo Place, Inc.; Buffalo's Olmsted Parks Conservancy; the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council, and many others.

In applying for the award, the city noted that a decade ago, "Buffalo lacked any meaningful planning framework for stimulating the regeneration of the city or for organizing its progress. Today we have a plan for the whole and plans that address three crucial elements of our urban legacy: downtown, the waterfront and our parks."

Shibley says, "Buffalo's plans have gone head-to-head with the best in the world and won again. This award is a great honor for the city and a fantastic endorsement of the framework for the future that the city has laid out. It means the leaders of an international movement for urban revival have recognized our work as a model for the world."

The UDC, a small research center founded 20 years ago, continues to work for the recognition and implementation of Buffalo's comprehensive planning framework with city, community and business leadership.

Shibley says, "Past city development has been scattershot, a matter of 'throwing paint on a canvas,' whereas the new plans identify a critical mass of supporters, map critical resources, take into consideration the city's declining population, identify locations for strategic action and 'corridors of investment,' find ways to leverage those investments, and identify the tools necessary to manage the work."

The plan received crucial support from the John R. Oshei Foundation, the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, the Baird Foundation, the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo and many other partners, public and private.

In 2008, aspects of the comprehensive city plan won awards from the International Economic Development Council (for "Queen City Hub"), two Planning Excellence for a Best Practice Awards from the Upstate Chapter of the NYS American Planning Association (for "Queen City Waterfront") and The Planning and Analysis Honor of Excellence Award from the New York Upstate Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture (for "The Olmsted City").

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