

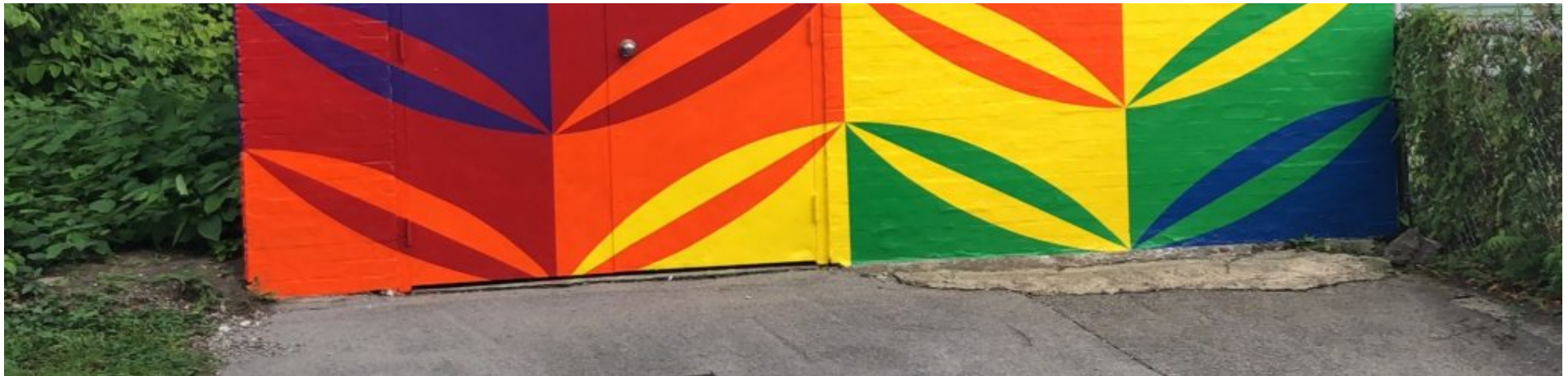
ARTISTS CULTURE METRO WATERFRONT

# Progress Update: The Riverline



by queenseyes August 27, 2020, 10:51 am 5 Comments





The Land Conservancy has announced that W Architecture and Landscape Architecture has been selected as the design firm that will lead the Concept and Schematic Design phase of The Riverline over the next year. To that end, the firm, based in Brooklyn, NY and founded by Barbara Wilks, will set out to establish ways to “connect people to place, and places to natural system.” They will do this by working in tandem with Hood Design Studio, a minority-owned business founded by MacArthur Genius Grant recipient Walter Hood; and urban ecologist Steven Handel. The team will now get busy looking at ways to ground the site, by incorporating its inherent assets and surroundings into the way that it will ultimately function. A number of factors must be taken into account, including the land’s terrain composition, its industrial legacy, its natural surrounding attributes, and its final purpose as a connector between diverse communities and the waterfront.

“The Riverline is a linear landscape that highlights and enmeshes remnants of Buffalo’s pre- and post-industrial landscape,” said Wilks. “The enormous scale of the industrial landscape, the intimacy of the Buffalo River and the scale of the surrounding communities, the monumental downtown, and the vastness of Lake Erie, all are part of the story of the changing relationships of people to their waters. Since it is situated in a place rich with heritage, natural resources, and a diverse public, The Riverline should not be homogeneous and tidy, a continuation of the Olmsted tradition, but rather idiosyncratic and diverse. It will feel at once remote and accessible, a part of nature yet urban in its mix of people and uses.”

Along with the appointing of the concept and schematic design lead, there has been an unveiling of a new mural that represents the collective demographic of people that will one day access The Riverline. The “Pride Mural” is the result of Buffalo-based artist Christopher Kameck, who

took students from the Old First Ward Community Center’s arts program under his wing. The vibrant work of art was painted on a utilitarian National Fuel building located alongside The Riverline, at the intersection of Mackinaw and Alabama Streets in the Old First Ward. The project, sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York’s Blue Fund, allowed the students to express their emotions and feelings pertaining to an escalating contentious national social climate.

“I truly hope this mural will start some positive conversations and leave you thinking,” said Jordan Johnson, one of the students in the program. “Through this project, it felt like we could bring some peace in a time with a lot of hate, and let our community enjoy a bit of love.”

Nancy Smith, the Executive Director of the Land Conservancy, said of the mural: “It is the perfect embodiment of The Riverline—our future ribbon of green that will connect Canalside with the Buffalo River just as it connects the Old First Ward, Perry, and Valley neighborhoods. On The Riverline, people of every race, sexual orientation, and ability will be welcomed. We are so grateful for the creativity and persistence these students demonstrated to make the mural and today’s ribbon-cutting possible.”

**“Community is built through connections.”**

“Community is built through connections,” said Congressman Brian Higgins. “When we walk alongside one another we grow in understanding of the world beyond our own. We commend the work of the student artists and look forward to advancing The Riverline as a place that connects our neighborhoods and our waterfront and a destination that brings people together.”

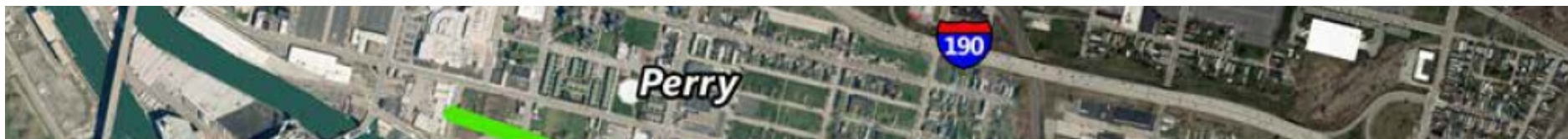
“This incredible new mural is one of many projects currently underway that are designed to enhance the Old First Ward, by both preserving our neighborhood’s history and creating a new foundation through innovations such as The Riverline,” said Senator Tim Kennedy. “I applaud the Land Conservancy for continuing to move this important vision forward, and thank Christopher Kameck and the students at the Old First Ward Community Center for bringing this impressive public art to life.”

“This mural created by these young people is a perfect example of the importance and the power of public art,” said Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes. “In addition to helping to transform The Riverline connecting Canalside with the Buffalo River, it also celebrates our LGBTQ Pride and the diversity of our community. Hats off to the Western New York Land Conservancy for its continued hard work in preserving our community’s historic beauty for generations to come.”

“At its core, the Riverline is about connecting communities and creating a vibrant public space that all can enjoy,” said Assemblyman Pat Burke. “This project is hopefully the first of many of its kind we will see on and along the Riverline. The students of the OFW Community Center designing a mural honoring the LGBTQ community is a great example of how the young people in our neighborhoods share this vision and truly care about creating a healthier and more welcoming future.”

**“Community-driven art has the power to boost our neighborhoods, instill pride in our city, and provide a valuable learning experience for youth.”**

“I am thrilled to congratulate the Old First Ward Community Center youth members, and their artist and mentor, Chris Kameck, for their completion of the mural at the corner of Alabama and Mackinaw Streets!” said Council member Mitch Nowakowski. “Community-driven art has the power to boost our neighborhoods, instill pride in our city, and provide a valuable learning experience for youth. By teaming up with the Western New York Land Conservancy and corporate support from BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York’s Blue Fund and National Fuel, we are all that much closer to re-imagining the former DL&W rail corridor which runs through the Fillmore District. Together we can and we will revitalize our neighborhoods to create a modern, sustainable Buffalo.”







*Funding for the Concept and Schematic Design phase comes in part through an Environmental Protection Fund grant administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Additional funding is provided by KeyBank in partnership with the First Niagara Foundation, BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York's Blue Fund, and individual community donors. The Land Conservancy continues to seek additional funding for The Riverline. To learn more about the project, visit the new website for The Riverline: [theriverline.com](http://theriverline.com). Or reach out to the Land Conservancy at (716) 687-1225 or [info@wnylc.org](mailto:info@wnylc.org).*

Tagged with: Barbara Wilks Buffalo NY Christopher Kameck Jordan Johnson The Riverline W Architecture and Landscape Architecture waterfront



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Newell Nussbaumer is 'queenseyes' - Eyes of the Queen City and Founder of Buffalo Rising. Co-founder Elmwood Avenue Festival of the Arts.



Co-founder Powder Keg Festival that built the world's largest ice maze (Guinness Book of World Records). Instigator behind Emerald Beach at the Erie Basin Marina. Co-created Flurrious! winter festival. Co-creator of Rusty Chain Beer. Instigator behind Saturday Artisan Market (SAM) at Canalside, Buffalo Porchfest, and Paint vs. Paint. Founder of The Peddler retro and vintage market on Elmwood. Instigator behind Liberty Hound @ Canalside. Throws The Witches Ball at Statler City, the Hertel Alley Street Art Festival, and The Flutterby Festival.

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**John Joyce** • 2 hours ago

A track abandoned is the lemon this project lemonade. The NYC paradigm lemon was closely bordered by densely populated neighborhoods with immediately accessible customers. The Riverline was industrial in purpose and sited in an industrial landscape. I predict if completed it will be a destination with little or no neighborhood revival as there are no neighborhoods save a slice of first ward to rejuvenate.

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**bettybarcode** • 17 hours ago

I like the mural. It'll be easy to maintain because it is flat areas or color.

^ | v • Reply • Share >

**Michael DiPasquale** • a day ago

I was fortunate to meet Walter Hood a few years ago....he's a great designer.

^ | v • Reply • Share >

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