



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 13, 2019

CONTACT:

Nancy Smith, Executive Director
(716) 687-1225 ext. 117
nancyrs@wnylc.org

Anthony Armstrong, Project Manager
(716) 238-1449
anthony@makecommunities.com

Land Conservancy's Design Ideas Competition for Buffalo's Urban Greenway Draws Interest from Around the Globe

More than 300 teams from all around the world have registered to participate in an international design ideas competition for Buffalo's DL&W rail corridor. The Western New York Land Conservancy kicked off the competition at the end of January and registrations rolled in from every continent except Antarctica.

In addition to more than 20 teams from Western New York, there are entries from 30 U.S. states and 147 international teams from 50 countries, including Brazil, Egypt, India, The Netherlands, and New Zealand. Each team is invited to submit visionary concepts for a juried competition that will lay the groundwork for transforming the abandoned 1.5-mile corridor into an iconic, innovative, and inspiring multi-use nature trail and greenway.

The corridor connects Buffalo's downtown with its waterfront through three distinct and historically-rich neighborhoods: the Old First Ward, Perry, and the Valley. The greenway will be transformational for Buffalo's neighborhoods and post-industrial waterfront and will contribute to the region's emerging renaissance. Once completed, it will bring people to nature, nature to people, and help build a healthy, inclusive, and opportunity-rich city with vibrancy in every neighborhood. The DL&W corridor will be a source of pride for the whole region as it builds a cohesive waterfront and downtown area. The goal of the competition is to develop both creative ideas and practical solutions that will be showcased to the public in an exhibition held in April in the atrium at M&T Bank on Main Street.

The design ideas are due by this Friday, February 15th, and winners of the competition will be announced this spring. Three of the four awards will be determined by a prestigious jury that includes: Charles Davis II, Assistant Professor of architectural history and criticism at the University at Buffalo; Ken Greenberg, who helped launch Toronto's Bentway and previously served as the Director of Urban Design and Architecture for the City of Toronto; Sara Heidinger, President of the Old First Ward Community Association and co-owner of Undergrounds Coffee House & Roastery; Chris Reed, Founding Director of Stoss Landscape Urbanism and Co-Director of the Master of Landscape Architecture Program at Harvard University; Bob Shibley, Professor and Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning, University at Buffalo and Senior Fellow at the UB Regional Institute; Janne Siren, Director of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; and Ana Traverso-Krejcarek, Manager of the High Line Network. A fourth award—the community choice award—will be selected with feedback from the public, the project committee, and input from the three neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor.

The Land Conservancy has hired Kishore Varanasi, an award-winning urban designer, strategist, innovator, teacher, and writer to advise the Design Ideas Competition. Kishore is the Director of Urban Design at CBT in Boston, MA, and his work has shaped countless communities around the country and the world. They have also hired Anthony Armstrong as Project Manager and Community Engagement Consultant. Co-founder and partner at Make Communities, Anthony provides vision and strategic planning, technical assistance and strategy formulation for non-profits, foundations, governments, and coalitions on issues related to equitable development, and community revitalization policy, projects, and programs both locally and nationally.

The Land Conservancy is also excited to announce that the community will begin to enjoy the benefits of the planned greenway this year. According to Executive Director, Nancy Smith, “Thanks to the financial support of BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York’s Blue Fund, our local non-profit partners will be leading nature walks for birdwatching, kayak tours on the Buffalo River, and programs for neighborhood youth to help shape the evolving vision for the corridor.” Partners include Buffalo Audubon Society, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Groundwork Buffalo, the Old First Ward Community Association, and the Valley Community Association.

For more than a year, the Land Conservancy has reached out to neighborhood residents, business owners, and community leaders to talk about the future of this corridor. Hundreds have participated in these discussions and the community’s vision is emerging. The goal is to create a trail system for walking and biking that celebrates our industrial and railroad heritage; creating a place that connects people with nature, and people with people.

Many of the ideas that have been incorporated into the development of the project were inspired by a visit to New York City’s High Line in the spring of 2017. The Land Conservancy led 25 community members on a tour of the High Line and met with members of the High Line Network; a group dedicated to sharing best practices among 19 of the nation’s most inspiring urban infrastructure projects. Traverso-Krejcarek shared that, “It has been fabulous to see the Land Conservancy team acting on those early ideas about participating in deep community listening and engagement, and really thinking about long-term planning for the DL&W Corridor project.”

In addition to BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York Blue Fund, the competition is also made possible through the generous support from M&T Bank, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Land Trust Alliance, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy through the Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund, and numerous individual Land Conservancy members and donors. The total funding raised for the project to date is close to \$1 million, including the recently announced \$369,000 grant from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation that will fund the next phase, which is concept and schematic design.

If you are interested in learning more about the project, the competition, or the Western New York Land Conservancy, please visit wnylc.org/dlw or reach out at (716) 687-1225 or info@wnylc.org. You can also support the Land Conservancy’s work by making an online donation at wnylc.org or by sending a check to P.O. Box 471, East Aurora, NY 14052.

The **Western New York Land Conservancy** is a regional, not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects land with significant conservation value in Western New York for current and future generations. The Land Conservancy envisions a future in which open spaces, working lands, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty are cherished and protected as part of the landscape and character of Western New York. The Land Conservancy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and is one of 1000+ land trusts nationwide, including 90 in New York State. Land trusts have protected 56 million acres of land. For more information on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, or the mission of the Land Conservancy, please call (716) 687-1225 or visit www.wnyc.org.

###