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## **The Land Conservancy and Its Design Team Seek Input on Early Design Concepts for The Riverline**

The Western New York Land Conservancy and its design team will display early concept designs for The Riverline during a livestreamed YouTube event at 7:00 p.m. on February 24. During the event, Western New Yorkers will see design alternatives for The Riverline and hear from Barbara Wilks of W Architecture and Landscape Architecture and Walter Hood of Hood Design Studio. To register and get a YouTube link to attend the event, please visit [this link](#).

The Land Conservancy and the design team are virtually exhibiting these early designs to get public feedback. This feedback will assist in developing preferred concept designs, which will be shared with the public this spring. The Land Conservancy recently requested photographs from the community, encouraging people to show us what they would like to see at The Riverline. We received more than 400 photos from across the region, which helped the design team with early designs that the public will now be able to view.

This Concept and Schematic Design phase of work follows a community visioning process, an international design ideas competition, and an equitable development framework. The Riverline is part of the Land Conservancy's efforts to transform the former DL&W rail corridor running from Canalside to the Buffalo River into an iconic, innovative, and inspiring nature trail and greenway.

"Getting the public's input on the initial concepts is a significant step in our design work," said Barbara Wilks of W Architecture and Landscape Architecture, the lead design firm, which is based in Brooklyn. "Not only will it give the community an opportunity to see different possible versions of The Riverline's future, it will also give the community a chance to shape that vision moving forward. Community feedback is critical during this phase, and we welcome it."

Walter Hood, MacArthur Genius grant recipient and principal of Hood Design Studio, agrees. "As designers, we rely on input from participating communities to shed light on what they value and want the future of the space to become. Weaving this input into our work results in a design that will be idiosyncratic and particular to Buffalo."

It's that sense of the idiosyncratic and particular that Nancy Smith, Executive Director of the Land Conservancy, is seeking to find in these designs. "Buffalo is a unique city with a rich history," she said. "The Riverline will reflect that shared past, especially that of the three communities it will pass through, and will point us to a shared future. Since the beginning of this project, our vision for The Riverline has been to develop a nature trail and greenway in the heart of downtown that fits Buffalo's identity in the same way that other projects in the High Line Network build on their home city identities. This is a great opportunity for Buffalo to tell us exactly how we can reflect Buffalo's unique story in designing and implementing The Riverline."

The DL&W corridor is owned by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). It runs from downtown Buffalo at the DL&W terminal to the Buffalo River across from Riverbend, and travels through the Old First Ward, Perry, and Valley neighborhoods. The Riverline will enhance walking, bicycling, and winter activities like snowshoeing and sledding. It will connect to parks and paddleboat launches along the Buffalo River, and it will connect to trails that go to Canalside and the Outer Harbor, as well as the Larkin District and beyond. By transforming the unused railroad corridor into The Riverline, the project will provide a model for how to connect people to nature right in the heart of the city.

The design for The Riverline is being developed in collaboration with neighborhood groups, many project partners, and ongoing community feedback. Once completed, The Riverline will be a vibrant, safe, and welcoming space for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to connect with each other, with nature, and with the waterfront. The Riverline will be an inspiring community gathering place alive with the history and voice of the surrounding Old First Ward, Perry, and Valley neighborhoods.

Funding for this phase of work comes in part through an Environmental Protection Fund grant (EPF #180842) administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Additional funding is provided by BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York Blue Fund; The First Niagara Foundation in partnership with KeyBank; Moog Inc.; an Erie Canalway IMPACT grant awarded by the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund funded in part through the generous support of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor; Nancy and Tom Smith; Peggy and Jay Elliott; Kathy Lasher and Scott Bieler; and other individual community donors. The Land Conservancy continues to seek additional funding for The Riverline.

If you are interested in learning more about this project, or donating to create The Riverline, please visit the new website for The Riverline: [theriverline.com](http://theriverline.com). You can also reach out to the Land Conservancy at (716) 687-1225 or [info@wnylc.org](mailto:info@wnylc.org).

**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 87 in New York State. Land trusts have protected over 56 million acres of land. To learn more about the Land Conservancy, visit [wnylc.org](http://wnylc.org).

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