

Construction Begins on the Buffalo Outer Harbor Greenbelt and Shoreline Improvement Project

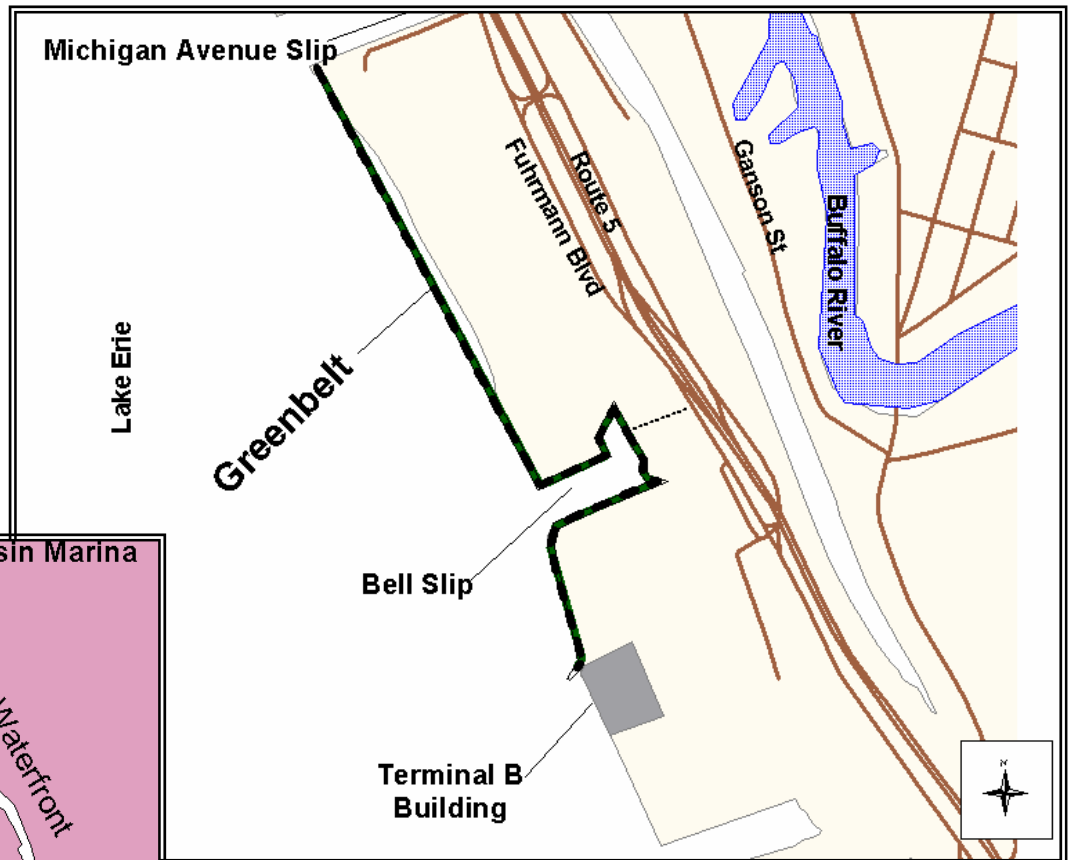
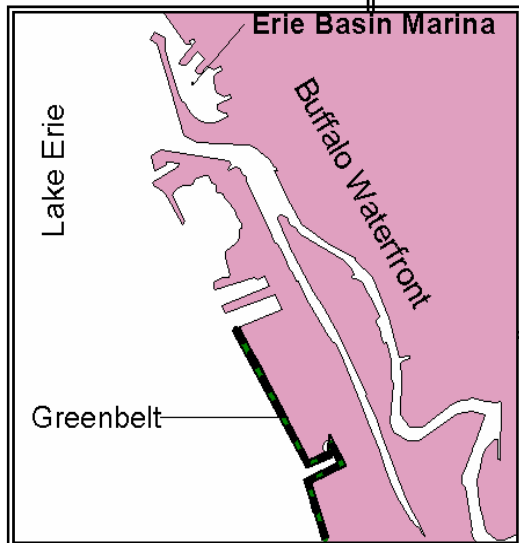
Environmental Restoration Program (ERP)

Site No. B-00164-9

INTRODUCTION

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) are pleased to announce that construction has started on Buffalo Outer Harbor's Greenbelt site. The Greenbelt project is a proposed 90-foot-wide green space to extend along approximately 6,600 feet of the Lake Erie Buffalo Outer Harbor shoreline, from the former Pier Restaurant to the Terminal "B" Building of Buffalo's old port facilities.

Cleanup work on the site is being performed under the New York State 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act "Environmental Restoration Program" (ERP). Through the ERP, DEC provides financial assistance to local governments for the cleanup and restoration of brownfield sites. A brownfield is a property that is unused, abandoned, or idle due to the presence of real or perceived environmental contamination.



Brownfield sites often have an industrial history.

Additional funding for this project was made available by New York State Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration's Safe, Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Program. Close to 14 million dollars in funding have now been invested in this shoreline improvement project.

Once constructed, the Greenbelt will offer a new opportunity for the public to enjoy a scenic section of Lake Erie's waterfront that was previously inaccessible. The project includes constructing a paved recreational path for public use along the shoreline for walkers, bikers, etc. In addition, the project includes ecological improvements such as the creation of fish habitat and landscaping with native plants to attract local wildlife and provide an improved natural setting.

SITE BACKGROUND

The project area, owned by the NFTA, occupies a significant length of the Buffalo Outer Harbor shoreline. NFTA also owns the adjacent 120 acres of adjacent land. Nearly all of the NFTA-owned property is land that has been reclaimed from Lake Erie using fill material. The fill material is composed mostly of sediments dredged from the Buffalo Outer Harbor area that were disposed of at the site from the mid-1800's to the mid-1960's. The fill material contains various metals and other environmental contaminants.

NFTA filed a funding application with DEC for the Greenbelt Remediation Project under New York State's Environmental Restoration Program (ERP). The project provides for engineering design and construction of shoreline protection in accordance with a Record of Decision issued by DEC in early 2002, which addressed shoreline improvements. In 2004, the Record of Decision was modified to include a greater portion of the existing shoreline. Changes in the New York State legislation also increased ERP funding for the project. Completed in 2006, the shoreline design includes the addition of fish habitats and native plant landscaping.

A Public Information Session was held on Thursday, May 11, 2006 at Erie County Community College's downtown campus to give interested citizens and groups an opportunity to learn more about project plans for the site.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS AND DETAILS

Construction on the project began in the fall of 2006 and is expected to last through late 2007. Project highlights include:

- Removing the debris and rubble currently found along the shoreline embankment;
- Excavating about 111,000 cubic yards (or about 170,000 tons) of soil from the existing embankment to properly prepare and shape it for the placement of an erosion-resistant, heavy stone revetment;
- Placing a geo-textile fabric and a one-foot layer of clean soil over the entire Greenbelt;
- Constructing shallow-water fish habitats to create ideal spawning areas for local fish species along the shoreline and within the existing embayment area known as the Bell Slip;
- Constructing a paved recreational path (greenbelt) for public use along the shoreline for walkers, bikers, etc.; and
- Landscaping with native plants to attract local wildlife and provide an improved natural setting.

Once completed, this project will transform a once unusable and industrially contaminated area into a clean and scenic path along a prime section of Lake Erie's shoreline for public use and enjoyment. Details of the selected cleanup plan can be found in the ROD and construction design documents, which are available for public review at the locations identified at the end of this fact sheet.

WHO SHOULD I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SITE?

Should you have questions regarding the Buffalo Outer Harbor Greenbelt site, please feel free to contact the representatives below.

Site-Related Environmental Questions

David Locey
Project Manager
NYSDEC
270 Michigan Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 851-7220

Site-Related Health Questions

Cameron O'Connor
Public Health Specialist
NYS Department of Health
584 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 847-4385

Greenbelt Project Questions

Mike Bykowski
Acting Director, Engineering
NFTA
181 Ellicott St.
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 855-7389

LOCATIONS TO VIEW PROJECT RELATED DOCUMENTS

You are welcome to review project-related documents for the Buffalo Outer Harbor project at the locations below:

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
1 Lafayette Square
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 858-8900
(See reference desk.)

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
270 Michigan Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 851-7220
(Please call for an appointment.)