



# BUFFALO HARBOR BRIDGE

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## Congressman Higgins, Mayor Brown & NY State Announce Application for Grant to Build Buffalo Harbor Bridge

### *Local Leaders Seek Federal "TIGER" Funds to Connect Downtown to Buffalo Waterfront*

Congressman Brian Higgins, Mayor Byron Brown, leaders from Empire State Development, Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation and the New York State Department of Transportation announced efforts to seek federal transportation funds to support construction of a Buffalo Harbor Bridge which would connect downtown with the waterfront.

"For decades limited and disjointed access has kept people, business and opportunity away from our waterfront," said Congressman Brian Higgins. "Continuing redevelopment along the commercial slip and ongoing work on the Outer Harbor Parkway are bringing people and excitement back to the water's edge. Through this application we are working to produce a seamless way to link the two areas that have limitless potential to draw economic development, jobs and tourism into this great region."

"I share Congressman Higgins's commitment to continuing the progress we've made along the city's waterfront and the construction of a Buffalo Harbor Bridge, made possible with federal TIGER grant funds, will stimulate continuing growth and development on the city's Inner and Outer Harbor," said Mayor Brown. "Excitement continues to build along Buffalo's waterfront, with quantifiable progress that benefits our residents and visitors. The days of a stagnant city waterfront are well behind us and this very important development project adds further proof that we're moving in the right direction."

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## Harbor Bridge

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In an application to the United States Department of Transportation local leaders are requesting a \$90 million grant through the [TIGER](#) (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) program. TIGER is a \$1.5 billion special category of stimulus funding for high-profile projects with a large, demonstrable, stimulative impact.

“From ECHDC’s perspective as lead coordinating agency, the Buffalo Harbor Bridge is exactly the type of project envisioned for funding through the TIGER Grant program,” said ECHDC Chairman Jordan Levy. “This project will reconnect Downtown Buffalo to the outer harbor, spur future development in an extremely-neglected area and literally put hundreds of Buffalonians to work. With visible progress being made almost daily in the effort to reclaim and revitalize our waterfront, the Buffalo Harbor Bridge project is a logical and effective choice for federal TIGER Grant funding.”

### **Economic Impact**

Buffalo’s Outer Harbor includes approximately 300 acres of developable land which is undeveloped because of access issues despite the fact that it is immediately adjacent to downtown. A benefit-cost ratio between 2.4 and 4.8, meaning the \$72 million Buffalo Harbor Bridge would return between \$173 million and \$345 million in total economic benefits.

### **Residential Impact**

- The application, using demographic projections from the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) estimates the presence of the bridge would lead to roughly 3,300 residents on the Outer Harbor by 2030.
- If this area was developed at the density level of Waterfront Village, the Outer Harbor could produce approximately \$80 million in local property tax revenue over 10 years.
- The Buffalo Harbor Bridge, by virtue of its convenience and efficiency, would generate an additional \$10 million worth of residential development on the Outer Harbor.

### **Commercial/Community Impact**

- Higher levels of residential development would be supported by additional commercial development, valued at \$8 million.
- New, non-work activities by Downtown residents and employees, induced by a developed outer harbor, would generate over \$101 million in economic activity.
- New, non-commercial trips by Outer Harbor residents and employees would generate \$12 million in economic activity.
- Nearly \$15 million of tourist-generated economic activity would be returned by a developed Outer Harbor.
- Finally, by eliminating the confusing and circuitous route between Downtown and the Outer Harbor, over \$25 million would be saved in vehicles travel time benefits.

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#### Harbor Bridge Study

Efforts to advance the Harbor Bridge are already underway. The [Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation](#), in cooperation with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is conducting a study of location options for the Buffalo Harbor Bridge which could result in a placing a bridge crossing at [Erie, Michigan, Main or Ganson Streets](#). \$1.6 million in Federal Highway funds, secured through Congressman Higgins and designated by the GBNRTC is funding the study, along with a \$400,000 match from Empire State Development. A public information meeting on the project was held on July 22.

The project is intended to replace the former South Michigan Avenue Bridge which was removed in 1964. Since the project area contains a federally-regulated shipping channel, a low-level moveable bridge such as a bascule, swing or lift bridge are the designs under consideration.

A new multi-modal bridge that accommodates pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorized traffic will turn what is now a 4 mile circuitous route into a 600-foot route across the Buffalo River. The bridge would link to the \$80 million [Outer Harbor Parkway](#) currently under construction, slated for completion by Fall 2010.

Projects selected for TIGER Grants will be announced no later than February 17, 2010. For more information on the Harbor Bridge project visit: <http://www.buffaloharborbridge.com/>.