



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy Celebrates National Grid Investment, Breaks Ground on Ohio Street Reconstruction

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY November 20, 2013

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National Grid to invest \$4.2 million to upgrade infrastructure, which will help attract mixed-use development; total investment in Ohio Street corridor now exceeds \$15 million.

Ground also broken on City of Buffalo's streetscape project.

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Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that National Grid will invest approximately \$4.2 million in infrastructure upgrades to the Ohio Street corridor in Buffalo with the potential for another \$10 to \$12 million in the next several years. Senator Tim Kennedy, who was on hand to break ground on the project, called this investment critical to attracting mixed-use development to the historically-significant Ohio Street corridor from Michigan Avenue to the lift-bridge.

National Grid's contribution complements the more than \$10 million investment being made by state, city and federal governments to turn Ohio Street into a tree-lined parkway linking Buffalo's inner and outer harbors. It was also announced today that the City of Buffalo's recently-approved streetscape project on Ohio Street will soon be underway, with construction expected to start in the spring. The project includes the reconstruction of the street between Fuhrmann Boulevard and Michigan Avenue, as well as improvements at St. Clair Street between Ohio and South streets.

"National Grid's decision to upgrade the infrastructure along the Ohio Street corridor shows confidence in what New York State is undertaking along Buffalo's waterfront and in the First Ward community," said Governor Cuomo. "Working together with both public and private partners, we are making the corridor shovel-ready and marking another important development that further revitalizes our waterfront and restores economic growth in Buffalo. Building off of the success of Canalside, National Grid's contribution will help us attract additional investment and mixed-use development to a formerly blighted area."

Senator Tim Kennedy said, "Buffalo's Old First Ward has a long, storied history, and with the reconstruction of Ohio Street, I believe this neighborhood's future is just as promising. The new Ohio Street will connect the rich industrial past of the Buffalo River community to our bright future as a world-class waterfront city. The progress along Buffalo's waterfront and within this historic neighborhood continues, and there's now the potential for it to grow

even faster with this targeted infrastructure investment from National Grid, which will help attract new development to the Ohio Street corridor.”

Lieutenant Governor Robert J. Duffy said, “The Ohio Street Corridor, here in the Old First Ward, is a key connector between downtown Buffalo and the Outer Harbor. Over the past few years we have seen great strides in growing the Inner and Outer Harbors toward their fullest potential. We thank National Grid, as well as our partners in government, for their investments to grow this area, which will help to create an even brighter future for the entire waterfront.”

National Grid Regional Executive Dennis Elsenbeck said, “We want to replicate the public and private sector success being experienced at Canalside where a walkable and livable community is successfully co-existing with various milestone economic development projects and initiatives. This investment in infrastructure will allow us to not only enhance reliability in the corridor, but also to meet the energy needs of any new development which we all believe will occur as a result of the success of the model being implemented at Canalside.”

Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown said, “2012 and 2013 have been great years for Buffalo - the best in decades. We’re excited that National Grid’s corporate commitment to economic development will help us meet the energy needs of the Ohio Street corridor, where today we also break ground on an \$11.3 million infrastructure improvement project that will transform this stretch of roadway into a pedestrian friendly parkway that provides a link between Buffalo’s inner and outer harbors. Today’s announcement is another great example of how public investment in infrastructure can propel private development and growth.”

Rigidized Metals Corporation President & CEO Rick Smith said, “The timing of this project is perfectly aligned with the resurgence of the shoreline of Buffalo River as a great place to

work, live and play. These infrastructure improvements will invite more businesses to join us down in the 'New' First Ward. I can't wait to welcome our new neighbors."

National Grid is in the process of installing duct work and cabling for undergrounding of electric wires and services along the corridor. The construction will improve aesthetics in the area in line with ECHDC plans, while allowing National Grid to plan for and meet future growth without the need to dig up streets. The company also is examining the potential for a new electric substation and other upgrades in the area that would add an additional \$10 million to \$12 million in investment.

The ECHDC Board of Directors previously adopted the General Project Plan (GPP) in April 2013 for the reconstruction of Ohio Street as a landscaped riverfront arterial that will serve as a link between the inner and outer harbors in Buffalo. The underutilized corridor, spanning the Buffalo River from downtown Buffalo to the Outer Harbor, will be transformed into an attractive, green parkway with significant landscaping, decorative lighting, pocket parks and pedestrian/biking lanes. As previously announced, the project will cost \$11.3 million, with Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation spending \$2.3 million through NYPA funds, along with funding from the City of Buffalo and the federal government.

In addition to today's National Grid announcement, ground has been broken on the City of Buffalo's streetscape project. The Buffalo Common Council last week approved a \$10 million contract for the redesigned parkway, which will include new lighting and landscaping, as well as walking and biking paths. The contract was awarded to CATCO and will be supported by \$7.2 million in federal funds; \$1.8 million from the New York Power Authority's relicensing agreement and \$1.1 million from the city. Work is expected to start in the spring and wrap up in summer 2015.

Congressman Brian Higgins said, “The conversion of Ohio Street into a riverfront parkway is the next major step in Buffalo’s waterfront revival. National Grid’s significant commitment to this transformative project will provide infrastructure enhancements that improve a critical connector between local neighborhoods, downtown and our waterfront in addition to preparing the area for future opportunities.”

Senator Mark Grisanti said, “These improvements will change the future of Ohio Street. By giving the existing and new businesses the power they need you are flipping the switch for a brighter economic picture for the entire waterfront and Western New York.”

Assemblyman Sean Ryan said, “The redesign and transformation of Ohio Street takes a huge step forward today thanks to a critical investment from National Grid. Connecting downtown to the outer harbor is an important part of our waterfront development strategy. Today’s announcement is great news for Ohio Street, which is benefiting from a collaboration between federal, state, and city governments, as well as the private sector. I look forward to seeing the fully redesigned parkway in just a few short years.”

Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said, “National Grid’s significant investment represents an important step forward in the revitalization of the Ohio Street corridor. They are a valued partner in the ongoing renaissance happening there, and I commend them for their vision in these infrastructure improvements and their dedication to our region. As a result of their partnerships with federal, state and local governments, this vital corridor to downtown Buffalo and our renewed waterfront will see new life as an attractive spot for business and economic growth.”

Buffalo Common Council Member Christopher Scanlon said, “Buffalo’s waterfront plays a key role in the continued turnaround of Western New York’s economic picture. We can see the positive changes at the Inner Harbor with Canalside. Now the picture is changing in this

strategic corridor of Ohio Street. A new streetscape, improved infrastructure and future businesses will help turn this area into a place of pride where people can come to work and relax.”

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation Chairman Robert Gioia said, “Ohio Street is the connector between the fantastic progress at Canalside and the work that has begun at the Outer Harbor. Under Governor Cuomo’s leadership, ECHDC is focused on putting all of the pieces of this waterfront puzzle together to create a brighter economic picture for Buffalo.”

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