



## Humboldt Parkway

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Thursday January 9, 2020

*Transcript taken and updated from the mini-documentary completed and released in June 2012.*

- **Humboldt Parkway** originated as part of America's first park system proposed by landscape architects: **Frederick Law Olmsted** (1822-1903) and **Calvert Vaux** (1824-1895).
- Designed for Buffalo, NY in the 1870's, the initial plan consisted of three main parks:
  - **The Park (now Delaware Park)**
  - **The Front (now Front Park)**
  - **The Parade (later Humboldt Park, now Martin Luther King Park)**These parks were linked by a series of **boulevards** and **roundabouts**.
- Humboldt Parkway was the longest and largest of the boulevards, linking The Parade directly with The Park. It had six rows of **elm trees** in its two-hundred-foot median, and stretched about **thirty-nine linear acres** (three miles).
- For about seventy years, Humboldt provided a beautiful **greenscape** for Buffalo's East Side residents, in the same manner **Bidwell Parkway** continues to accommodate West Side residents around Elmwood Village today.
- Pressured by **economic trends** following World War II, discussions emerged of building new **expressways** in the city.
- Despite **protests** from numerous residents, plans were approved during the 1950's for the **NY Route 33** (Kensington) and **NY Route 198** (Scajaquada) Expressways to replace Humboldt Parkway.  
All thirty-nine acres of trees disappeared through four construction phases. By 1970, expressway construction was completed.
- The resulting expressway system has been a blamed for ongoing **crime** and **blight** throughout Buffalo's East Side, due to corresponding decreases in property values.
- Today...  
...there is hope.

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- The **Restore Our Community Coalition** (ROCC) has inspired ongoing discussions of **restoring** Humboldt Parkway.
- To their defense are numerous **examples** from other cities nationwide, where neighborhoods once destroyed by expressways were later **reclaimed** by active citizens.
- Examples:
  - **Klyde Warren Park (Dallas, TX)**
  - **Margaret T. Hance Park (Phoenix, AZ)**
  - **Jim Ellis Freeway Park (Seattle, WA)**
  - **Big Dig (Boston, MA)**
  - **Harbor Drive (Portland, OR)**
  - **Embarcadero (San Francisco, CA)**
  - **McKinley Avenue (Milwaukee, WI)**
- Works in Progress in other cities:
  - **Denver, CO**
  - **Oakland, CA**
  - **Washington, DC**
  - **Tampa Bay, FL**
  - **Rochester, NY**
  - **Brooklyn, NY**
- As illustrated in the **2014 Economic Impact Study**, published by the University at Buffalo's Regional Planning Institute, the revival of Humboldt Parkway is essential for **reducing noise and air pollution, improving property values, and bringing investments back to Buffalo's East Side.**
- The **opportunity** is there.  
  
The **incentive** is here.  
  
The **moment** is now...
- *Let's make it happen!*

