

Building Community
Building Opportunity
Building The New

WEST SIDE BAZAAR

BY **WEDi**



**We invite you to
join us in building a
flagship destination
where community and
opportunity come
together in Buffalo.**

The West Side Bazaar
Capital Campaign Leadership Team

Betsy and Jock Mitchell, Co-Chairs
WEDI Co-Founder and Community Leaders

Tina Grant-Holt and Dale Holt, Co-Chairs
WEDI Entrepreneurs and Owners of Manna @ Northland

Stephen Zenger, Co-Chair
WEDI Board President and CEO Zenger Group



Community.

It's a place, but it's also an idea.

WEDI's West Side Bazaar (WSB) is an incubator where aspiring entrepreneurs are supported as they learn the fundamentals of running a small business. It is also a community gathering place where people of all races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds share a love of delicious food and unique products. At the Bazaar, customers from all over the world delight over their similarities and celebrate their differences.

WEDI is leading a significant capital campaign to build a larger West Side Bazaar on Niagara Street. The new Bazaar will be a flagship destination that can support more entrepreneurs, welcome more customers, and engage more community members.

**Let's work together to build opportunity and community
in Buffalo.**

From Past to Present



At the turn of the 20th century, Buffalo was the largest inland port in America. Easily accessible by rail lines, canals, and rivers, Buffalo produced a bevy of manufacturing supplies and consumer goods and was one of the best designed urban environments in the world.

This bounty made Buffalo a prime destination, first for generations of immigrants from Europe and later for African Americans fleeing the Jim Crow American South.

But when the post-industrial period led to economic decline, job loss and economic blight left many Buffalonians in poverty.

At the start of the new millennium, Buffalo began to turn the corner, with thousands of jobs coming back thanks to investments in higher education, a bustling medical corridor, and expansion in other industries.

Buffalo became a prime location for immigrants and refugees from war-torn countries, revitalizing the population and growing the tax base.

But for all its diversity, Buffalo remained one of the most segregated cities in the country, with Black and Brown people living in concentrated pockets in the urban core (and largely absent from many suburbs). What happened next is a familiar story: underperforming public schools and systemic racial inequities conspired to keep Buffalo's neediest residents at an economic and social disadvantage.

In the City of Buffalo:

37%
of people of color live in poverty

55%
of children in WEDI's service area live in poverty

21+%
of West Side residents do not have a high school diploma



It seemed that the cruel cycle of poverty might play out eternally...

But this time, something was different.

Abyssinia Ethiopian Cuisine owner Zelalem Gemmeda stands outside the current West Side Bazaar

WEDI

Inspired to make real and lasting change, a group of concerned citizens from the Westminster Presbyterian Church founded WEDI, the Westminster Economic Development Initiative, in 2006. Recognizing that tired models of community assistance often failed to address the root causes of poverty, they sought input from a variety of stakeholders to understand the roadblocks to economic security and cultural inclusion for everyone.

Armed with knowledge and passion, WEDI's founders focused on two key areas:



Education

Supporting 1-12th grade English Language Learners to achieve literacy and develop their social emotional intelligence.



Economic Development

Supporting aspiring and established entrepreneurs to launch, grow, and sustain small businesses through microloans and mentorship.



Then came the big idea:

To launch an incubator where entrepreneurs could learn the fundamentals of running a small business and forge a path toward financial stability. In 2011, WEDI took over a storefront on Buffalo's West Side, an area desperately in need of revitalization, and launched...

WEDI's West Side Bazaar.

It was an overnight sensation, attracting everyone from locals to weekday workers to suburbanites with authentic, affordable ethnic food and unique goods. Soon *The New York Times* and Katie Couric came to see what all the excitement was about.

The Bazaar became a community gathering place where people from every race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background were welcomed warmly and complete strangers shared tables and conversation. THIS was the Buffalo that WEDI's founders envisioned—and it was quickly bursting at the seams.

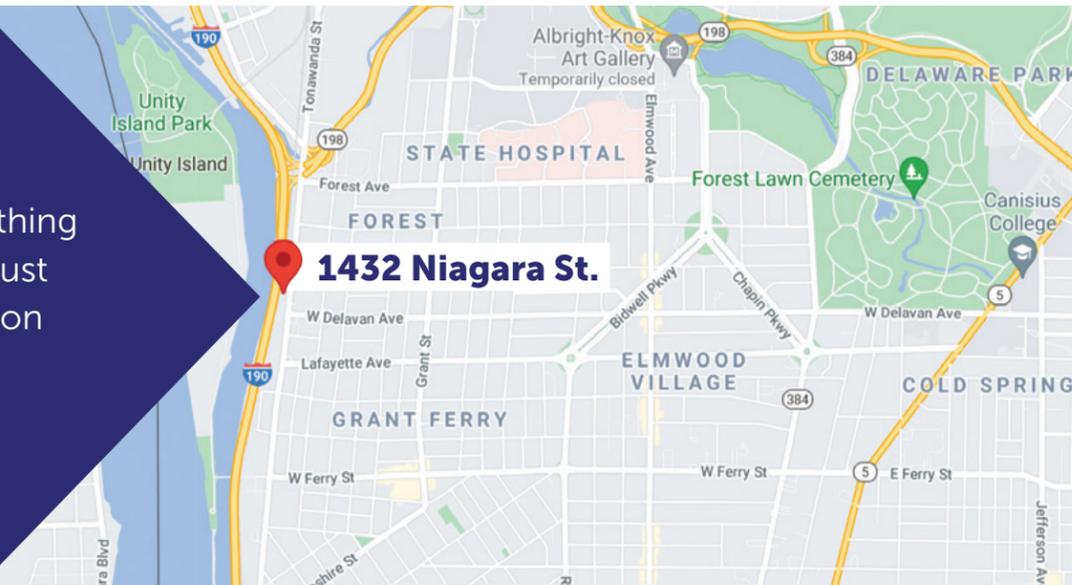
By 2020, WEDI knew it was time for the next big step: a bold new flagship that would shine a light on WEDI's work and the need for equitable opportunity for all.



Current location on Grant Street

Announcing: The New West Side Bazaar

WEDI found everything it was looking for just a few blocks west on Niagara Street.



A mix of long-time residents and recent transplants, the West Side is undergoing a transformation. Over the past decade, vacant factories and industrial plants along Niagara Street have been transformed into housing, restaurants, brewpubs, and outdoor community spaces.

Flagship, community anchor, economic engine: WEDI's new West Side Bazaar will be all of this and more.



Niagara Street is part of Buffalo's Complete Streets initiative, a multi-phased infrastructure project spanning 3.3 miles of visual and logistical improvements. It will enhance accessibility for cars, cyclists, and pedestrians, making Niagara Street a safe and attractive destination for residents and tourists alike. All of these factors, along with easy access to numerous transportation arteries, make Niagara Street an ideal location for an equitable revitalization process where everyone has a stake in success.

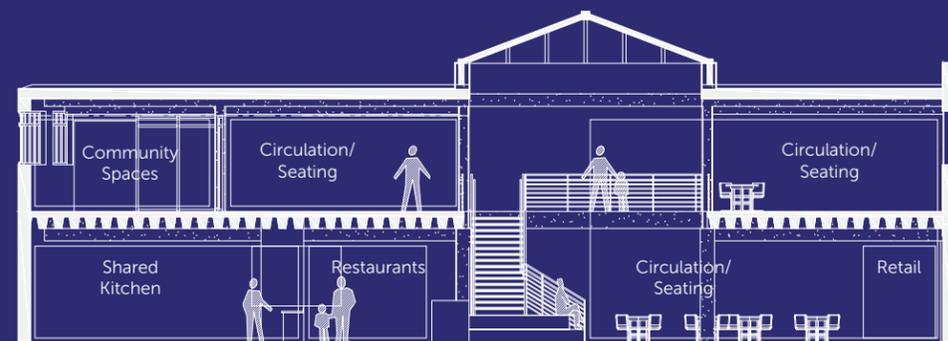
The Illinois Alcohol factory at 1432 Niagara Street will be the new home of WEDI's West Side Bazaar.

Built in 1920, the factory played a key role in Buffalo's brewing and distilling industry for nearly three decades. During the Prohibition Era, the building's glass block facade (preserved in our new design) hid a bootlegging ring.



WEST SIDE BAZAAR

BY WEDI



Part food hall and part community hub, WEDI's new West Side Bazaar will be a welcoming place to grab a bite, meet a friend, and attend an Ethiopian cooking class or Burmese cultural event. With such a diverse community, the opportunities abound.



The updated facade will add light and artistic flair to Niagara Street. When paired with the "Complete Streets" amenities, the new Bazaar will be a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

First Floor:

Restaurants, Retail Shops & Community Cafe



- 16,500 square feet: nearly 5x larger than the current Bazaar
- 19 businesses: 10 restaurant/food service and 9 retail
- 84+ Seats: nearly 3x more than the current Bazaar, plus sidewalk seating for 20
- 200+ person event capacity (both floors)
- Pop-up kiosks: for testing food and retail concepts
- The Marketplace: a kiosk selling WEDI/West Side Bazaar-branded items to generate revenue for the organization



The first floor will provide more of what people love about the Bazaar: more restaurants; more retailers; more seating; more space; and more ways to engage with the community. It will also provide more entrepreneurs with the opportunity to launch, grow, and sustain small businesses.

With a central **Stairway to Success** and **Open Pathways Glass Garage Doors** that can be rolled up on sunny days, the first floor will house **The Community Cafe, Gateways to Opportunities** (19 restaurant and retail spaces), and kiosks for new entrepreneurs.

The **Sky's the Limit Atrium** and the **Reach for the Stars Skylight** will entice customers to circulate, browse, and linger. **Conversation Station** tables can be configured for individuals, small groups, or communal seating. With standing room capacity for even more people, the first floor will be an ideal location for hosting events. Community members will jump at the chance to attend a cooking class, a book launch party for a local author, or a live musical performance.

Searches for Women, Asian, Black, and Latinx owned businesses has grown exponentially, with the latter sky-rocketing by over 4,000%*. That's good news for the WSB's diverse group of entrepreneurs.

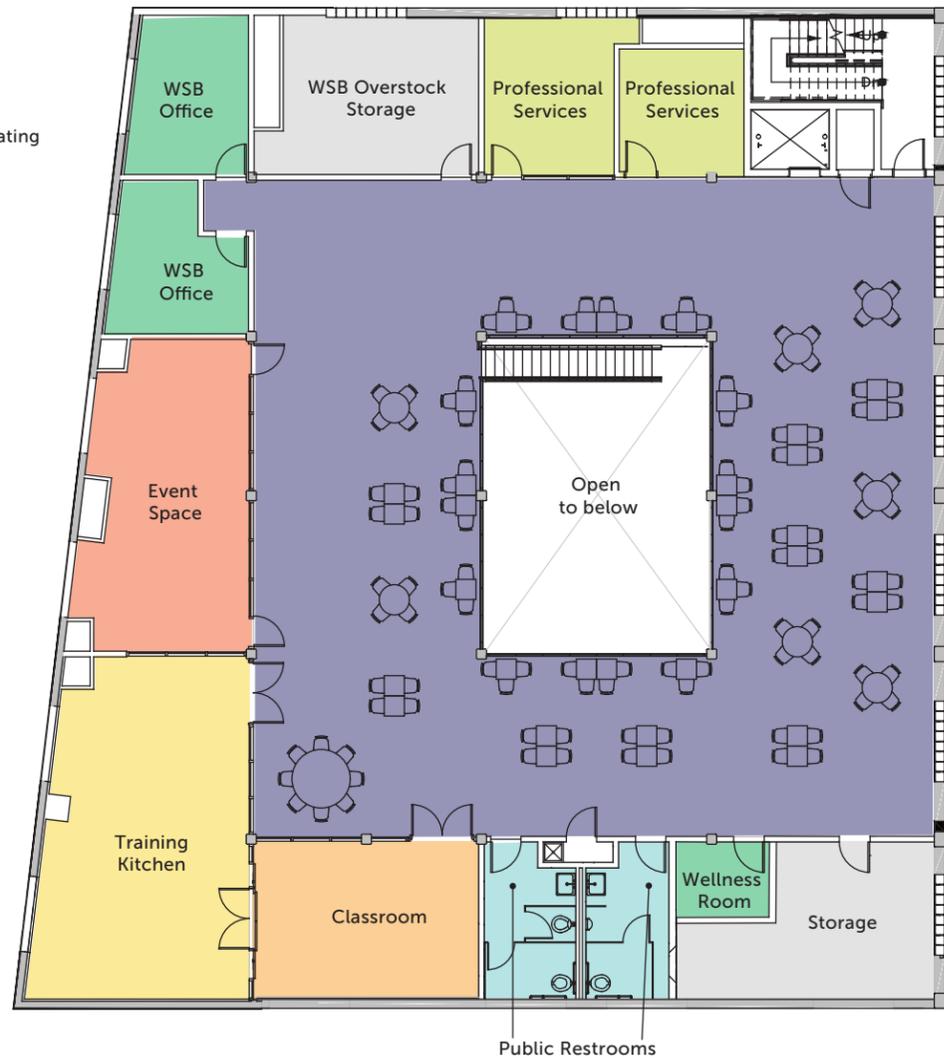
*Yelp's 2021 Diverse Business Report

Second Floor:

Programming, Event & Community Spaces

LEGEND

- WSB Operations
- Restrooms
- Circulation and Seating
- Event space
- Classroom
- Kitchen
- Storage
- Service



- 4 businesses: 2 professional service offices and 2 flex kiosks (retail or food)
- 184+ seats
- The Learning Lab: for entrepreneurship lessons
- The Hopes and Dreams Training Kitchen: for cooking and food service classes
- The Gathering Space: available to be rented by outside groups
- WEDI offices: staff on-site to support entrepreneurs and lead programming



The second floor will be a community hub which illustrates that The Bazaar is about so much more than eating and shopping. Here, many of those who have historically been left behind will have access to the tools and resources that make economic opportunity available to all.

In **The Learning Lab** and **The Hopes and Dreams Training Kitchen**, WEDI staff and partners will offer finance, e-commerce, and marketing classes to entrepreneurs; culinary and food service/safety lessons to restaurateurs; and hands-on cooking classes to the general public.

The Gathering Space (available for event rental) and two professional service offices (for businesses like hair salons and accounting) will bring in additional revenue and attract new visitors to the building. **The Loft** will also offer overflow seating during high-volume periods such as weekday lunch, or just a quieter space for folks looking to catch up over a cup of coffee.

The 2020 US Census saw Buffalo's population grow by 17,000, the first increase in 70 years. Contributing \$3B+ to the region's GDP and more than \$200M in NY state and local taxes, foreign-born residents are vital to Buffalo's new economy. To continue to be a magnet for new and returning residents and entrepreneurs that enrich Buffalo's economy, Buffalo must be a community where people can build sustainable, fulfilling lives.

The New Bazaar Builds Opportunity, Opportunity Builds Community

The Bazaar offers a safe place for entrepreneurs, particularly women and people of color, to make their first foray into owning a business. Common services, shared utilities and cleaning, and collaborative leadership are the tools to building a solid foundation.

WEDI's Business Owners Are...*

- 80%** racial or ethnic minority
- 63%** foreign born
- 85%** previously low income
- 50%** female

Small business incubators are known for their committed enthusiasts: mission-driven customers who like the concept and entrepreneurs as much as the food and goods.

The West Side Bazaar's Customers Are...

- Diverse:** Nearly 35% self-identify as non-white
- Desirable:** 20+% spend up to \$50 per visit and 50+% are Millennials who tend to eat out 3.5x/week
- Dedicated:** ~60% visit at least once per month

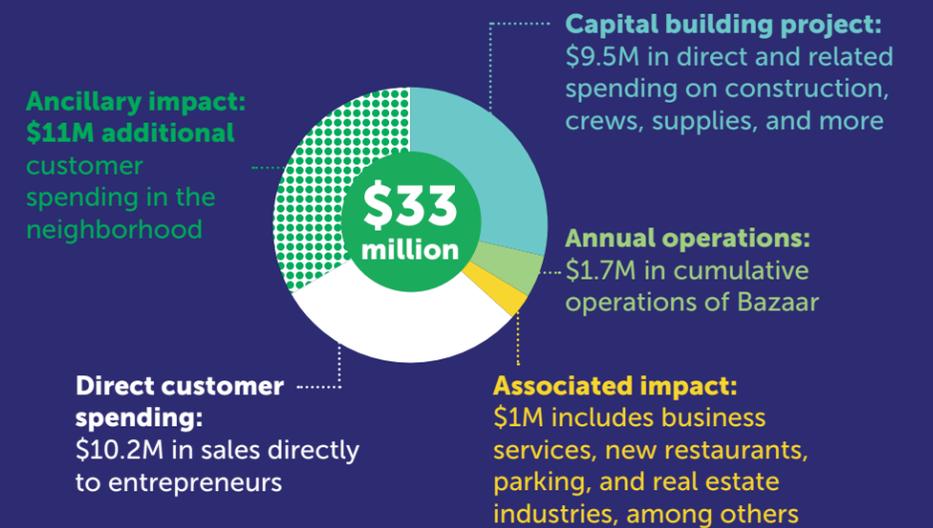
And there are more where they came from: The new, larger Bazaar can accommodate many more customers. The current Bazaar maxes out at 80,000 visits annually, but conservative estimates put the new space at 120-200,000 visits per year.



Across the United States, restaurant incubators are good business!

Most are nonprofit organizations located in stagnating neighborhoods and rural communities to spark revitalization and even repopulation. This spending attracts other businesses and communal investment grows: a shop here, a restaurant there, new apartments and more, all in close proximity. With an influx of visitors, foot traffic enhances safety and creates neighborhoods, building a better quality of life. Cities build a reputation for being welcoming to entrepreneurs which attracts investments large and small.

Based on multipliers from the U.S. Department of Commerce, WEDI projects that this watershed project will have a big financial impact over the next five years:



The West Side Bazaar is More Than a Restaurant or a Shop

An investment in an entrepreneur is an investment in our community. Influential and impactful civic projects come along periodically in a lifetime. A monumental building that changes the city skyline. A new park or stadium. A hospital expansion that saves thousands of lives. WEDI's new West Side Bazaar is one of those game-changing projects for the city of Buffalo.

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Left: Loyal customers enjoying a bite to eat
Right: Manny Batcho, owner of Envy Us Looks

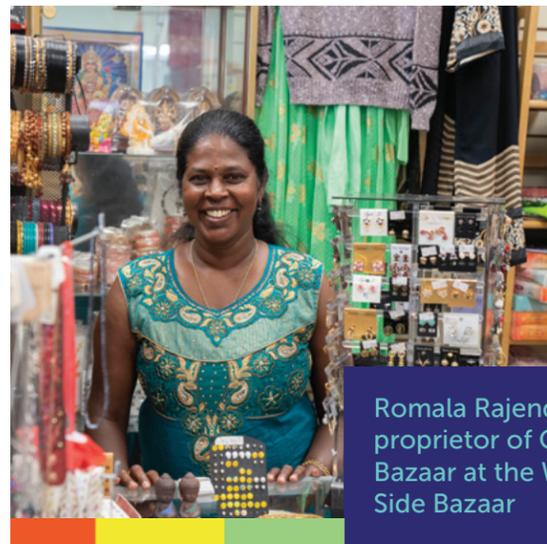


Small businesses are responsible for 99% of America's jobs. Cities that are supportive of small businesses enjoy higher adult employment, more community spending, and increased real estate values. Cities that are welcoming to immigrants see their tax base grow.

Now that is what transforms a city.



West Side Bazaar entrepreneur Chef Htay of Nine and Night Thai Cuisine



Romala Rajendran, proprietor of Gadget Bazaar at the West Side Bazaar

The "Building Opportunity" campaign will fund the construction and build-out of the new Bazaar. It will raise the visibility of all of WEDI's programs by amplifying our voices and investing in the capacity of our team. Donors of all levels are coming together to ensure the Bazaar's success, and there is a place at our table for YOU.



WEDI has been built by the community for the community. Neighbors and customers, volunteers and visitors, business owners and staff, all eagerly await the new West Side Bazaar.

Many contributors will be recognized on-site through Commemorative Naming Opportunities and the Wall of Honor, and all donors will be included in other recognition programs, communications, and celebrations.

Please join us as we build a rich, vibrant Buffalo for everyone.

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