



## Parcel Inventory

<b><u>Address</u></b>	<b><u>Type</u></b>	<b><u>Condition</u></b>	<b><u>Comments</u></b>	<b><u>Recommendations</u></b>
44/46 Riley	VACANT	Fair/Good	owned by Cash Realty, \$3700 assessed	
47 Riley	Double	Fair	ABANDONED	terminus of Ellicott Street code enforcement
48 Riley	Single	Good		
49 Riley	VACANT	Good	Cash Realty	
51 Riley	Double	Fair/Good		
55 Riley	Double	Good	architectural character	
61 Riley	Double	Good		
62 Riley	VACANT	Good	appears maintained by 66 Riley	
63 Riley	Double	Fair/ Good		
65 Riley	Commercial	Fair	VaStola Heating/ Air Cond, char brick	focus for rehab/retail development
66 Riley	Single	Fair/Good		
67-81 Riley	VACANT	Poor	City of Buffalo	
68 Riley	Double	Good	grannie flat, 50 ft setback	
70 Riley	Single	Fair/Good	Italianate brick, Civil War-era	
72/76/80 Riley	VACANT	Fair	Cash Realty	
84 Riley	Double	Fair/Good		
85 Riley	Single	Fair/Good		
87 Riley	Double	Good/Exc		
88 Riley	VACANT	Fair	driveways, Cash Realty	
89 Riley	Single	Good		
92 Riley	Single	Good/Exc	architectural character	
93 Riley	Single	Fair	ABANDONED, beautiful, City of Buffalo	rehab, sell to private owner
94 Riley	Double	Poor	ABANDONED, salvageable	code enforcement/rehab
97 Riley	Single	Fair/ Good		
98 Riley	Single	Fair	brick character residence	
99 Riley	VACANT	Good	private owner	
102 Riley	VACANT	Fair	private owner	

## Riley Street

### Observations, Conditions, Opportunities

Riley Street is a priority nodal area for investments important to the future of the neighborhood. Divided into small blocks by Ellicott and Holland, it is a key pedestrian corridor to Main and Michigan streets from areas south. Proximate to neighborhood landmarks like the Old St. Vincent's Convent, the Squier House, the old Packard Showroom, and two character commercial structures on the corners with Holland and Michigan, it is also a scene of principal architectural importance.

The street is one of the oldest corridors in the Midtown district, laid out in 1859 in commemoration of the death six years prior of Major General Bennett Riley, a prominent Buffalo citizen whose ample frame house existed at Main and Barker streets. General Riley, an important figure under President James Polk during the Mexican War, was a native Virginian and a veteran of conflicts dating back to the War of 1812. His leadership in the Mexican War laid the foundation for America's acquisition of California, over which Riley was later military governor and was instrumental in its attaining statehood. In 1849 his retirement brought him to Buffalo, a place of which he was very fond, and died shortly thereafter in 1853, leaving behind a substantial collection of antiques. To this day, the Historical Society retains Riley's hat, epaulettes, and two gold-hilted presentation swords as memories of his late love affair with Buffalo.

Riley Street forms the terminus of Ellicott Street, one of the most important original streets of Joseph Ellicott's radial grid pattern devised in 1803. Two vacant lots at 44 and 46 Riley, owned by Cash Realty and once the site of two houses, represent the final terminus of Ellicott, though it is only viewable as a terminating vista from Northampton, one block south. It is still an important



*The highly "undramatic" terminus of Ellicott Street toward Riley, where a community garden could sprout.*

nodal point in Midtown, framing the last block of Ellicott in what is generally a very striking urbanistic milieu. The two lots will play an enormous role as visual cues luring pedestrians down Ellicott from Northampton as part of a nontraditional wayfinding strategy.

The housing stock is in mixed condition, but where there are few abandoned lots, they tend to be dutifully maintained by private homeowners. The collection of housing on the block visibly contains some examples of homes markedly older than the typically post-1890 homes of areas southward around the former Dodge Farm. Houses like the brick cottage at 70 Riley look as though they could date as far back as the 1860s, when the area was still sparsely populated. The brick two-story commercial structure at 65 Riley is particularly charming. Most recently the home of VaStola Heating and Air Conditioning, 65 Riley was a livery stable owned by residents J.F. Lynch and Homer Tarbell in the late nineteenth century. With character archways and detailing, it is an ideal site for a corner store. In fact, two such opportunities exist along this stretch, including the brick Italianate 1325 Michigan on the corner with Riley.

Still, many homes of Riley Street are in terrible states of repair, including the abandoned 47 Riley as well as 93 Riley, a beautiful house that is one of only very few in Midtown owned by the City of Buffalo. It will be important to maintain and rebuild Riley's built assets, as a healthy density of homeowners will provide crucial markets for potential walkable retail opportunities nearby.

### **Recommendations, Strategies, Suggested Improvements**

#### Purchase and renovate 65 Riley for new retail space

The brick livery stable at 65 Riley is a small building with vast potential as a placeholder for the corner of Holland and Riley. The City should strongly consider:



*Riley Street is the home of many post-Civil War structures older than the typical houses of Midtown.*

- Performing its own renovation project of the building for the creation of a new corner store

*Reclaim 44 and 46 Riley as community garden terminating Ellicott Street*

The future of the final terminus of one of Buffalo's most important and historic streets should:

- Cast the two lots at 44 and 46 Riley as an outdoor community gathering place with a small water fountain, a brick wall with a mural, and comfortable, inviting seating areas that encourages artists to creatively transform and make it a signature part of the Artspace neighborhood

*Commit to new tree planting initiative*

Riley Street is probably the most important pedestrian corridor in the Midtown district. With its small blocks, character buildings and potential for retail that draws people further inward from Main Street, Riley Street is an important and vital target for:

- Landscape improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience
- A strong tree canopy along Riley to pull investment activity in its direction following the completion of Artspace
- Tree plantings of many different species



*Riley Street's next corner store, if only the City were to step in. Could the former horse stable at 65 Riley fill a crucial gap in community life?*