

February 13, 2020

# Buffalo Niagara Convention Center

*TASK 6 REPORT*



tvdesign

February 7, 2020

Attached you will find our Architectural and Engineering Assessment Report (Task 6) to compare three potential sites for a new or expanded Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. The purpose of this assessment is to:

- (i) Assess from an architectural and engineering perspective the three identified site options for a state-of-the-art convention center, and
- (ii) Refine the overall costs associated with developing each of the sites.

For each site, our team reviewed site characteristics, developed functional building diagrams, and determined key cost drivers. This information formed the basis of a conceptual project budget (quantitative analysis) for each scheme. Together with project stakeholders, we developed a series of evaluation criteria to assess the general potential for each site (qualitative analysis).

The selection of a site for new or expanded convention center is a complex decision and the intent of this assessment is to provide a recommendation to decision makers using both objective qualifiable information and subjective professional observations to assist them in selecting a site option.

It has been a pleasure working with you and your team on this assessment and we look forward to any further assistance we can provide.

Sincerely,

Robert Svedberg FAIA  
Principal  
tvsdesign

## **EXISTING BUFFALO NIAGARA CONVENTION CENTER (BNCC) SITE SELECTION STUDY**

The existing BNCC Facility is vital to the local economy of Buffalo and Erie County. Erie County commissioned HVS to undertake a Market and Feasibility Analysis to review this impact. This study highlighted the success of the existing facility (operating at near capacity), along with a description of its physical limitations and serious functional deficiencies.

Looking to the future of the BNCC, the HVS Study identified 2 potential new build sites – herein referred to as the Delaware Site and the HSBC Site. A third option was added to the study to study incorporation of the existing building with the adjacent Statler Building. This option is referred to as the Statler Scheme.

Following the HVS Study results, Erie County commissioned a deeper site specific, architectural ‘test-fit’ study to include evaluation of the existing building and the 2 sites to narrow the site options for a future new-build. Tasks requested include:

**TASK 1: REVIEW OF SITE OPTIONS**

**TASK 2: ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING FACILITY**

**TASK 3: OUTLINE OF DEVELOPMENT NEXT STEPS**

**TASK 4: CONCEPTUAL COST ESTIMATES**

**TASK 5: OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF SITE OPTIONS**

**TASK 6: REPORTING**

**EXISTING BNCC RECOMMENDATIONS**

This Report is provided per **TASK 6** and is intended to summarize the efforts and results of TASKS 1 through 5.

# Buffalo Niagara Convention Center

*TASK 6 REPORT*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study evaluated three sites for construction of a new Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. The sites and associated schemes are identified herein as the Statler, Delaware, and HSBC Sites.

Following an architectural exercise to test fit the recommended Program spaces within each site, each scheme was evaluated through high level/desk-top quantitative and qualitative measures from information readily available and/or as provided by Erie County. The Qualitative review generally focused on practical operational access and serviceability with experiential urban design impacts and relationships to cultural/commercial centers. The quantitative review focused on building size (meeting the HVS Study Program/Size recommendations) and development cost.

The following outlines the general observations and recommendations resulting from this study. The sections following this Executive Summary – Tasks 1 through 5 and Appendices – provide additional background for review.

### Delaware Site (Figure 1-D)

Generally the results of these evaluations point to the Delaware site directly north of the historic Statler Hotel as the least cost for the greatest value. The site/scheme configuration meets the recommended Program area with good operational serviceability. The scheme offers positive urban design opportunities to repair a portion of the original Buffalo city plan and view corridors interrupted by the original convention center (See following photographs of the historic Buffalo city plan).

The location takes advantage of existing hotel and commercial center proximity. Further, the Delaware site preserves the integrity of the neighboring Statler Historic Hotel property – a potential cultural and tourism center. Some preservation/treatment of historic and existing site structures may be desired.

### Statler Site (Figure 1-S)

While the Statler Scheme incorporates the Historic Statler Hotel and utilizes the existing Convention Center site, it does so by impacting Buffalo's historic street grid and view corridors as well as the existing historic Statler architecture, potentially damaging its value and usage. Further, the Statler Scheme does not meet the recommended Program areas, falling below the space requirements outlined in the HVS economic study. While smaller, the cost per square foot of the complicated construction is more expensive than the Delaware Scheme. The scheme elevates the Exhibit Hall and loading docks, also complicating the operational serviceability of the scheme.

Development of the Statler Scheme may reduce site acquisition costs by locating a new facility on property already owned by the County. However, the scheme would require closure of the existing facility for several years. This closure would severely impact existing convention business, currently employed staff, and add startup costs for a new facility in re-building a new client base while slowly re-growing revenue.

### HSBC Site (Figure 1-H)

The HSBC Site (adjacent to the Existing HSBC Building south of highway 190) affords the possibility of a larger project than that required by the Program. The size of

the site also allows for future expansion. However, certain aspects of the site limit its viability – environmental remediation cost, foundation premiums, sewer relocation, parking replacement, and hotel proximity among others.

This site is distant from most of the city's hotel stock, challenging for events looking to book a new facility in this area and looking to guarantee hotel rooms for their attendees.

Higher development cost stem from previous industrial site usage now requiring extensive contaminated soil removal. Foundation premiums stem from this same soil as its structural capacity is limited by the geology of the former waterfront. The project limits also incorporate a large original canal (now an antiquated enclosed brick sewer) that crosses the site. Relocation/rerouting is required to avoid overbuild.

Finally, the cost of replacement of lost parking for the HSBC Site exceeds the parking space needs of the other two sites.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Recommendation

Based on this summary and the analysis included in this report, the Delaware site is the least cost for the greatest value and is the recommended option.

Cost (Quantitative Review)- Comparing the 3 schemes when adjusted to be equal in size and within the conceptual cost analysis of this study, the Delaware site is the lowest cost. This is primarily due to Statler & HSBC site constraints such as soil conditions (structural and environmental), hotel proximity, parking needs, site size & building configuration limitations, and potential lost business among other variables.

Value (Qualitative Review) – The experiential advantages of the Delaware site option are worth highlighting relative to the historic and urban design opportunities. Primarily, adjacency to historic properties, facility size, hotel proximity, commercial/restaurant access all combine into a great opportunity to enhance the historic buffalo city center (see following images). Executive Summary Figure 5-1 categorizes those site characteristics deemed important by the Advisory and Steering Committees, visually diagramming the qualitative review of each site per these parameters.



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**SUMMARY CHART OF QUALITATIVE REVIEW**

Figure 5-1 summarizes the qualitative review included in the overall assessment of site options.

The chart is intended to graphically highlight various operational and/or experiential aspects of each site and scheme – grading each item with **Green**, **Orange**, or **Red** dots symbolizing **Good**, **Neutral**, or **Negative** determinations.

	<b>FIGURE 5-1</b>	<b>STATLER</b>	<b>DELAWARE</b>	<b>HSBC</b>
1	<b>Accommodates HVS Program</b>			
2	<b>Allows for Future Exhibit Hall Expansion</b>			
3	<b>Loading Dock Operations</b>			
4	<b>Public Circulation / Views</b>			
5	<b>Maintains Existing Operations</b>			
6	<b>Zoning / Green Code Compliant</b>			
7	<b>Impact on Existing Hotel Business</b>			
8	<b>Urban Design</b>			
9	<b>Historic Structures - Statler</b>			
10	<b>Historic Structures – H-L House</b>			
11	<b>Existing Structures – Franklin / Delaware Buildings</b>			
12	<b>Historic City Plan Restoration</b>			
13	<b>Re-Development of Existing Site</b>			

EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY

1928 Aerial



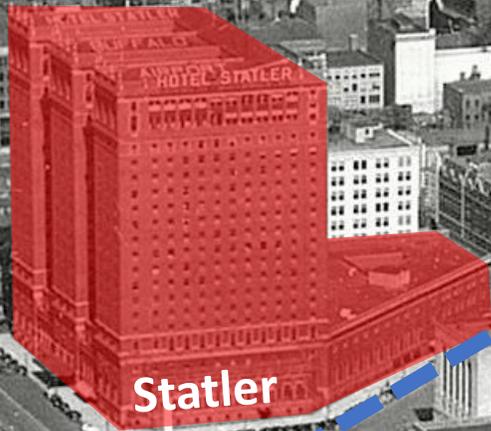
Delaware Site

Statler

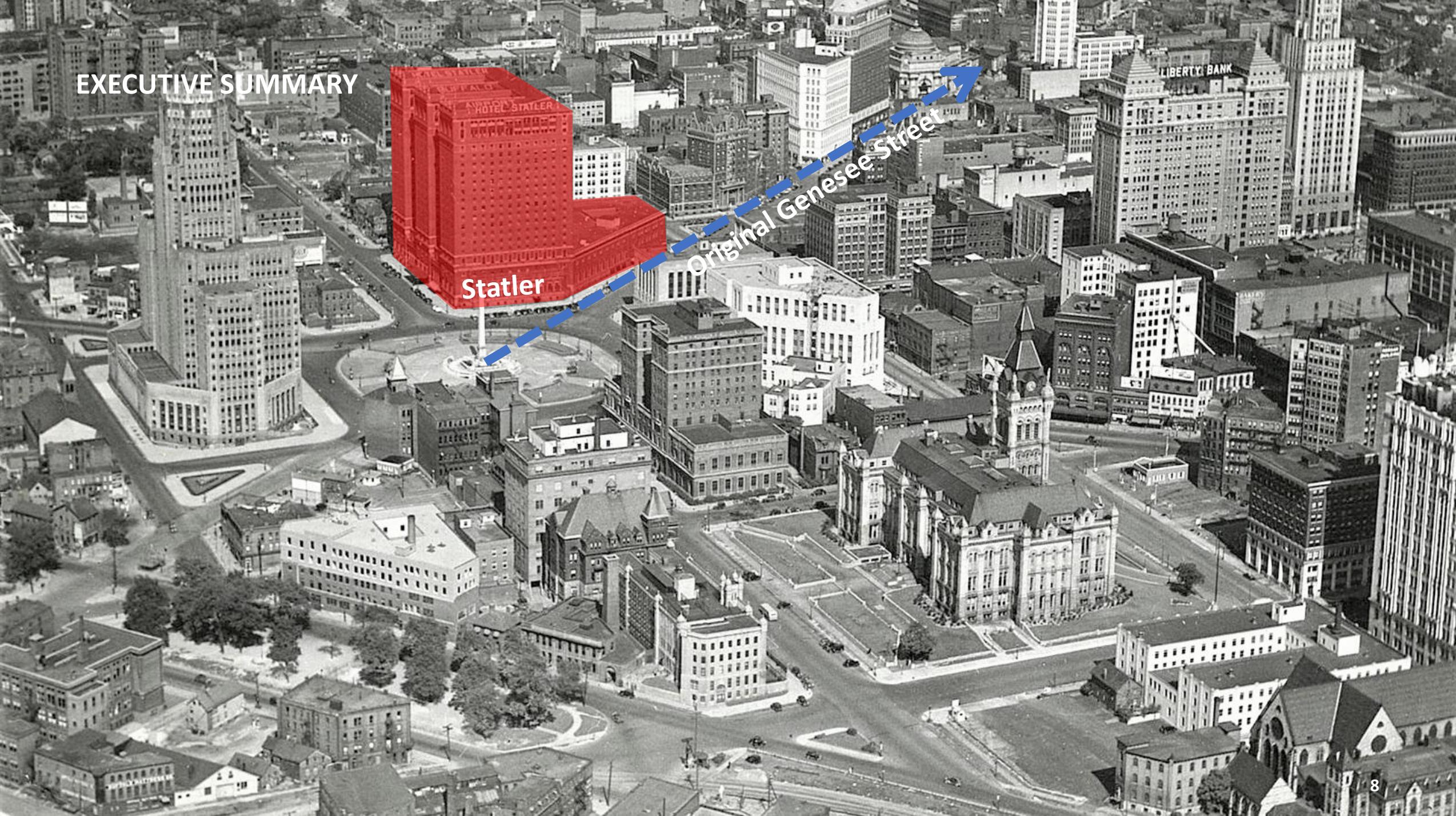
Existing BNCC

Original Genesee Street

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Original Genesee Street



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Statler



YMCA



McKinley Monument

