



Est. 1892

# St. John Kanty Parish Community

101 Swinburne St. - Buffalo, NY 14212

716-893-0412



## Request for Proposals

FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE  
FORMER ST. JOHN KANTY SCHOOL

Date Issued: October 14, 2019

Deadline: December 14, 2019

Parish Administrator:  
Rev. Michael H. Burzynski, PhD

SJK Building Repurpose Committee:  
Christopher Byrd  
Judith Felski  
Jennifer Snyder-Haas  
Brenda Myc



## Opportunity

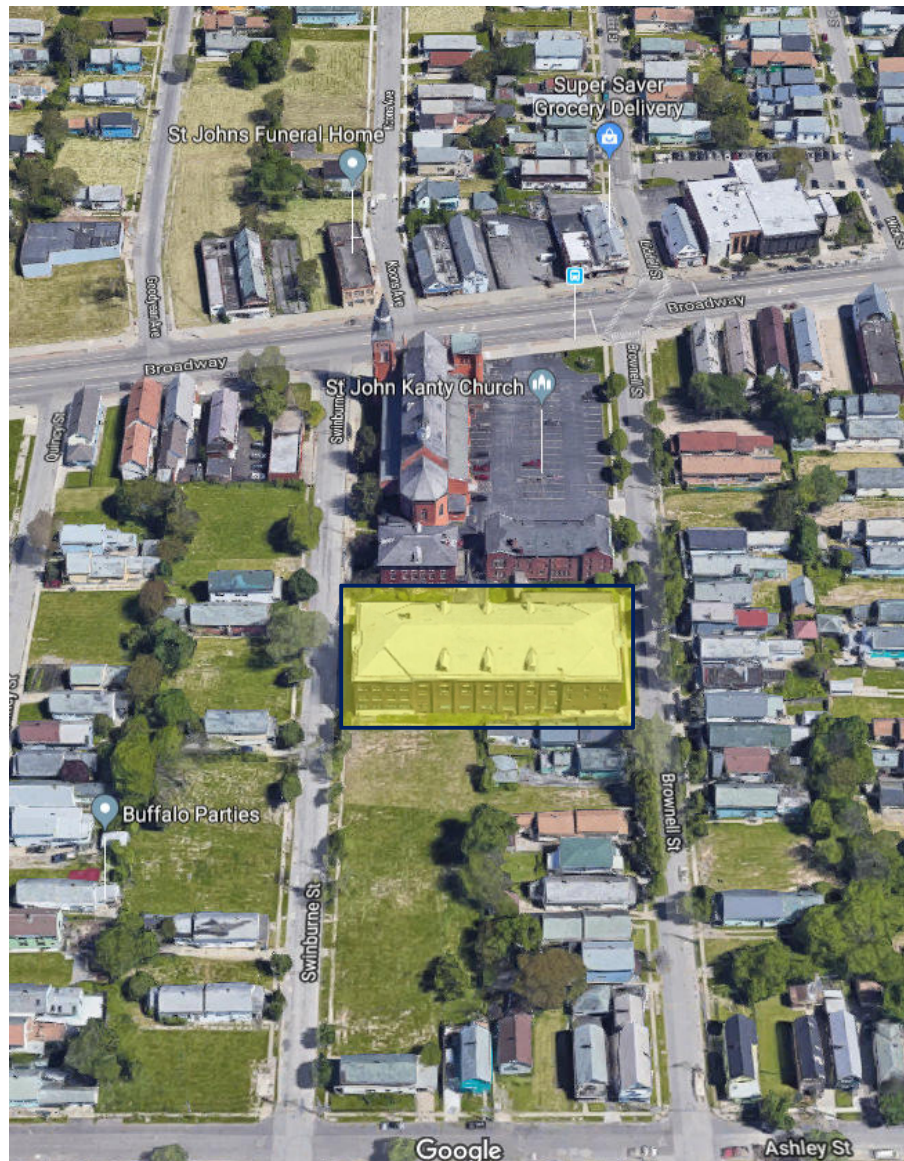
Saint John Kanty Roman Catholic Church (hereinafter SJK), located at 101 Swinburne Street in the City of Buffalo, NY in Erie County is requesting proposals from qualified applicants interested in the purchase of its former school building and property between Swinburne and Brownell Streets, close to Broadway. Purchase is defined as the fee simple transfer of the property from SJK to a developer or development team.

## Property Description

The building consists of a two- and four-story former school building, originally constructed in the 1930s, totaling approximately 69,280 square feet, with approximately 29,000 square feet of land. It is part of a larger parcel containing the entire parish grounds, including the church, rectory and former convent (now used as a parish center). It has approximately 121 feet of road frontage located at the east side of Swinburne Street and the west side of Brownell Street. It is currently zoned N-3E (Mixed Use/Legal). There are entrances to the property from the church parking lot on Broadway and from Swinburne Street.

The current layout of the building contains classrooms and offices

with high windows, as well as a “Lyceum”, with a stage on the upper floor. The property is vacant except for a rental of approximately 10% of the building to St. Luke’s Mission of Mercy on an annual basis, and use of the former school cafeteria/kitchen and nearby classrooms for church activities and functions. The building and property are owned by SJK, free from encumbrances. There are vacant lots on the building’s south side that could aid with development, possibly for parking.



## **Surrounding Area**

The subject property is located less than a block south of Broadway, which is a two-way major commercial/residential street traversing the City of Buffalo. Broadway is on a major bus line providing convenient access to downtown and the city's burgeoning medical corridor. The boundaries of the property are Walden Avenue to the north, the railroad tracks to the south, Bailey Avenue to the east, and Filmore Avenue and Jefferson Avenue to the west. The community surrounding the property contains residences housing a diverse range of people and families from single, multifamily, refugee families and older individuals. The commercial market of the neighborhood is improving with projects from the refugee population, local colleges, community groups, and local nonprofits. This has allowed for great potential for organizations to remarket older existing buildings at an "as is" market value for redevelopment leaning toward multi-use purposes to adapt to the needs of the changing community.

The site is close to the Broadway Market, Aldi's grocery store, Rite-Aid drugstore, a County Health Mall and Jericho Road Health Center. The area is ripe for development, building off the success of development of the downtown area. Current nearby projects include apartments in the former Public-School No. 44 and the former Buffalo Forge Plant.

## **History**

SJK, one of Buffalo's oldest Polish parishes, had its beginning in 1892. The former school building, located behind the church, opened its doors on September 13, 1931 and functioned as the community center of the parish and the neighborhood, housing a main hall for concerts, plays, dances and meetings. It also housed classrooms, bowling alleys and a gymnasium. The school closed in 1990 and was later briefly leased to the Buffalo Board of Education for use as an elementary school in the mid-1990s.

## **Population Analysis**

The population in the region has been steadily declining since the 1970s because of the decline of the steel, automotive and shipping industries in which most people residing in the area were employed. In order to find meaningful employment young people and young families were forced to leave. However, in recent years the population in Erie County has been on the rise as a result of renewed development of our waterfront/downtown areas; and growth of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and technology businesses.

## **Residential Market**

The change in the economic conditions based on refugees and millennials moving into the area due to an increase in employment opportunities has caused housing prices to rise, creating an increase in the market value of homes in the region. Low interest rates on mortgage loans are currently favorable for home buyers and are expected to remain in that range for the foreseeable future.

## **Economic Analysis**

The workforce of the region shows the shift from the manufacturing industry to more service-related industries and high-tech industries. Most people are employed in federal, state, or local government, followed by healthcare, public education, local non-profits, banking, finance, insurance and manufacturing. The Buffalo/Niagara labor supply is comprised of 1.2 persons age 16+. Out of the

supply of labor 800,000 are employed or seeking employment. While the average wage of employment in the area is 6% below the national average, many people are attracted to the area because the cost of living is 14.4% below the national average. A person does not need a large wage to live comfortably in Western New York.

Overall the Western New York region is experiencing moderate growth and has experienced rising real estate prices over the past several years and is slowly climbing out of the economic downturn caused by the changing of the industrial market. New jobs in service, high-tech and health related services are on the rise; and the banking, government, insurance, real estate, research and development, computer, health care, pharmaceuticals, food service, retail and tourism industries are on the rise. Growth in Western New York is expected to continue into the foreseeable future.

### **Recreation/Tourism**

There are many tourist attractions in Western New York: Niagara Falls, Artpark, Albright Knox Art Gallery, Burchfield Penney Art Center, Buffalo Naval Park, The Buffalo Zoo, The Buffalo Museum of Science, The Buffalo History Museum, Shea's Performing Arts Center, and the Botanical Gardens. Niagara Falls attracts about 5,000,000 tourists annually.

Hamburg Fairgrounds is home to the largest county fair in North America and averages over 900,000 visitors annually. It is also home to the horse racetrack and casino. Other casinos include Buffalo Creek Casino, the Seneca Nation Gaming Casino and Hotel, and the Seneca Allegany Casino and Hotel.

The region is known for the Niagara Wine Trail and Beer Trail and outdoor activities such as golfing, skiing, snowmobiling, hiking, camping, hunting and fishing.

The major sports teams include the Buffalo Bills (NFL), Sabres (NHL), Bandits (NLL) and the Bisons, a Triple A baseball team.

### **Transportation Infrastructure**

The region has a transportation system that combines air, highway, rail and shipping access. There is also access to Canada from the Peace Bridge, Rainbow, Queenston-Lewiston, and Whirlpool-Rapids Bridges. Canada is our largest trading partner.

Western New York is easily traveled via the surrounding highways: the I-90, I-190, and I-990. The southern portion of the region is also easily traveled via the 400 or the 219. The average commute time of 21.2 minutes is 4 minutes faster than the national average.

Shipping is provided by the Great Lakes System and our Port of Buffalo Gateway facility, a member of Foreign Trade Zone #23, which means incentives for area business.

The region is served by four Class 2 railroads: CSX, NS, CN and CP and one regional railroad: Buffalo & Pittsburgh, a division of Genesee & Wyoming Inc. The railroads interchange with all four Class 1 railroads and provide access to ports in New York/New Jersey and Chicago, IL. The subway operated by The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) runs from the downtown Central Business District to the Main Street Campus of the State University at Buffalo.

The NFTA also operates the Greater Buffalo Niagara International Airport, located east of the City of Buffalo in Cheektowaga, NY. The airport is served by at least nine major airlines, averaging 110 flights daily and servicing 19 cities with non-stop flights, at 26 gates. The airport can handle large jet traffic and utilizes major carriers such as American, Delta, United, Continental, Northwest and US Air. The airport is one of the least costly in the country, which makes it attractive to Canadian travelers. There is also the Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA) Commuter Terminal located just outside of the City of Niagara Falls that provides charter flights several times a week to Myrtle Beach, SC, Melbourne, FL and Ft. Myers/Punta Gorda, FL.

## **Education**

Western New York has over 150 school districts and 30 colleges and universities. There are currently 255,000 students enrolled in elementary school and 100,000 students enrolled in secondary education. There are degree programs in almost every major academic field, and more than 45% of the region's workforce has a college degree. The top three largest secondary schools are the University at Buffalo, Buffalo State, and SUNY Fredonia.

## **Healthcare**

The area has more than 30 acute care hospitals providing approximately 7,831 beds. The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus is located north of the downtown central business district in the historic "Allentown" neighborhood in the City of Buffalo. It is a consortium of medical, research and health care institutions working to create an urban center of education, medical care, and scientific research. It includes partnerships between UB, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Olmsted Center for the Visually Impaired, Kaleida Health, Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute, Buffalo Medical Group, and the Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. It employs 6,800 people, treats 500,000 patients annually, and receives \$80,000,000 in grants per year. The new Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus 20-year master plan calls for the construction of nearly 3,000,000 sq. ft. of medical related space in addition to the 3,000,000 sq. ft. already in existence. The Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo has officially opened on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.

## **Current News**

There have been many projects to help rebuild the economy of the City of Buffalo. The UB Medical Campus described in the previous section is the largest, but the creation of Canalside is also quite major. The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation, an agency of the State of New York, used the Erie Canal Harbor to create a space for events such as concerts, ice skating, ice biking, curling, kayaking, boating, outdoor fitness events, and dining. Many buildings in the downtown area have been repurposed using New York State's tax credit program for rehabilitating historic structures.

The Northland Workforce Training Center was built by Empire State Development at 683 Northland Avenue on the East Side and is administered by the Economic Development Group Inc, which consists of Catholic Charities of Buffalo, Goodwill Industries of Western New York, Inc., Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance, and the Buffalo Urban League. The organization trains and produces highly skilled workers who will be ready to enter the manufacturing and electric utility workforces.



New York State has recently allocated \$50 million in funding to make improvements and attract private investment to the East Side, including the Broadway-Fillmore and Broadway-Bailey corridors, which the site sits between. It also has given funding to the Central Terminal, a landmark close to the site that is targeted for reuse. The city is actively targeting the East Side to share in the current development success of the city.

New York has also committed significant public funding to the Riverbend complex for innovative businesses, which currently is occupied by Tesla/Panasonic for solar roof panels and battery products

### **Goals/Vision**

SJK hopes to build on market momentum in the region and spur development on the East Side in a sustainable manner that aligns with the church's values. Some ideas SJK envisions as practical uses include, but are not limited to, residential, educational, and/or not-for-profit office or community space. The goals include triggering a financial influx to SJK at closing and/or over time; reinforcing social and economic diversity; and creating a space that will pair well with the city's overall current development success in the area.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

SJK will consider the qualifications of the applicant, the quality of the proposed project, and its compatibility with SJK's goals. The intended use must be consistent with the church's values. The proposal must contain as a term and condition of sale the negotiation of a long-term lease or other arrangement that allows SJK the use of the cafeteria/kitchen and some surrounding space for its events and activities. SJK is not bound to accept the proposal with the highest bid.

SJK shall have the right to reject any or all Proposals in its complete and sole discretion, for any reason or no reason, as may be determined by SJK. Furthermore, the Church reserves the right to accept any legally binding offer for the sale of the subject property at any time.

SJK and its advisors may make any investigation necessary to determine the ability of any applicant to fulfill the terms and conditions of its proposal. Each applicant shall furnish SJK and its advisors all such information for this purpose as SJK or its advisors may reasonably request.

The ultimate purchase and sale agreement for the sale of the subject property shall be contingent upon (a) approval of the purchase and sale agreement by the Bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo, (b) approval of the purchase and sale agreement by the trustees of the Church, and (c) court approval authorizing the sale (as required pursuant to the New York Not-for-Profit Corporations Law and Religious Corporations Law).

### **Disclosures and Conditions**

Each applicant acknowledges that each is relying on its own due diligence and investigations with respect to its proposal to purchase the subject properties and that any conveyance will be "as-is, where is, and with all faults". Each applicant acknowledges that they have not been induced by, and have not relied upon, whether express or implied, warranties, guarantees, promises, statements, inducements, representations, or information pertaining to the subject properties or their use, the physical condition, environmental conditions, state of title, income, expenses, or operations of the subject properties, or any other matter or thing with respect thereto, written or unwritten, whether

made by SJK or any agent, employees, or other representative of SJK, or any broker or other person representing (or purporting to represent) SJK. Further, SJK makes no warranty with respect to the presence of any hazardous or toxic substances on, above, beneath, or discharged from the subject properties (or any adjoining or neighboring property) or in any water on or under the subject properties. It is the applicant's responsibility to fully understand and interpret all applicable ordinances and building codes when submitting proposals.

Nothing in the RFP shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of SJK or its advisors. SJK reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue this RFP, in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event shall SJK be liable for any cost or damages incurred in connection with the RFP process including, but not limited to, any and all costs of preparing a response to this RFP or any other costs incurred in reliance on this RFP. No applicant shall be entitled to repayment from SJK for any costs, expenses or fees related to this RFP. All supporting documentation submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of SJK. Applicants may also withdraw their interest in the RFP in writing, at any point in time, as more information becomes known.

### **Site Visits/Contact Information**

A site visit is available to interested applicants. Please contact Christopher Byrd at 716.316.9345 or [kristop11@gmail.com](mailto:kristop11@gmail.com) to arrange.

### **Application Process/Timeline for Review**

All interested parties must submit the following in paper or digital format or both no later than December 14, 2019. Paper format delivery to: St. John Kanty Church, Attention: Building Repurpose Committee, 101 Swinburne Street, Buffalo NY 14212; and email digital format to Christopher Byrd at [kristop11@gmail.com](mailto:kristop11@gmail.com), Saint John Kanty Church at [stjohnkantybflo@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnkantybflo@gmail.com) and Steve Roth at [sroth@buffalodiocese.org](mailto:sroth@buffalodiocese.org).

The following information should be included:

#### **(i) contact information**

Entity Name  
Type of Organization  
State of Organization  
Main Contact  
Address  
Phone and Email

#### **(ii) management and financial information**

Key investors (any investor with more than 15 percent share of ownership, whether individual or other entity). Also, please identify principals who have management control.

#### **(iii) relevant project experience**

Examples of past relevant projects, including dates of project completion, project references, involvement of key personnel, and names and qualifications of key personnel.

#### **(iv) purchase information**

Term Sheet or Letter of Intent marked "Confidential and Proprietary Information", in a usual and customary form, including but not limited to: Summary of financial terms and offering price,

ownership structure, expected timeline for transfer of ownership.

**(v) developer financial capacity**

Please provide evidence of financial capacity marked “Confidential and Proprietary Information”, as necessary to assess financial capability to complete and/or finance the project. Specifically, include the following: Identify if the entity is a subsidiary of, or affiliated with, any other corporations or firms; indicate whether the entity, the Parent Corporation or subsidiary has ever been adjudged bankrupt, indicted or convicted of any felony; composition of the entity’s current real estate portfolio; developer’s recent history in obtaining financing commitments for real estate development projects, detailing the type of project, financing source and amounts; indicate whether third party financing or acquisition of additional capital will be necessary to acquire the property.

**(vi) strategies for use**

Provide a clear, concise development strategy for the site, including the proposed use(s) and a site plan with schematics. Include a description of anticipated costs and proposed scope of a lease, including length that would be contemplated, with respect to SJK’s continued use of part of the building as previously described, which is one of the evaluation criteria.

Proposals will be reviewed by the Rev. Michael H. Burzynski and the SJK Building Repurpose Committee commencing December 14, 2019.

Rev. Burzynski and the Committee will make recommendations and refer to the Diocese of Buffalo by January 14, 2020.