



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Senator Jacobs, Mayor Brown Announce State Funding for New Soccer Mini-Pitches Along Scajaquada Pathway in Black Rock - Riverside

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(Buffalo, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60<sup>th</sup> SD) was joined by Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown, North District Council Member Joseph Golombek and local community organizations and leaders in announcing that he has secured \$80,000 in state funding to support new mini-pitches along the Scajaquada Pathway in the Black Rock-Riverside neighborhood. Mini-pitches are ideal for urban areas where finding a safe place for youth to

play soccer can be difficult. These small, customized, hard-court surfaces are perfectly suited for organized soccer programs and pick-up games.

“I am a strong believer in the importance of expanding opportunities for our children to develop beyond the school day, and healthy recreational activities are key to accomplishing that goal,” said Senator Jacobs. “I am pleased that this funding will ensure a safe, quality soccer space where children can play together while developing sportsmanship, teamwork and life skills that will serve them well into adulthood.”

Mayor Brown stated, “As we continue to build an inclusive and equitable City of opportunity, where no one is left out and nobody is left behind, we must continue to support initiatives that enable our youth to be successful both in and out of the classroom. Athletics and other types of physical activity are vital to our community and I thank North District Council Member Joseph Golombek, Jr. and the Grant Amherst Business Association for initiating this project, as well as Senator Chris Jacobs for securing the funding that will result in a hard surface mini soccer pitch, fencing and nets in this Black Rock-Riverside neighborhood.”

An influx of young families in the neighborhoods surrounding where the new mini-pitches will be located have coincided with continued interest and participation in the game of soccer locally. These two factors have created a need for quality space and facilities that are easily accessible for children in the area.

"I am thankful for the work that Senator Jacobs expended on behalf of this project," said Council Member Joseph Golombek. "It is another great example of city and state government working together to get things done and improve the quality of life for residents in Black Rock and the North District."

Community support for the new mini-pitches has been strong, as local business and civic groups, like the Grant Amherst Business Association, River Rock Community Coalition and the West Side Youth Development Coalition at Buffalo State have all identified the development of them as an important piece in the ongoing revitalization of the Grant-Amherst and Black Rock-Riverside neighborhoods.

FC Buffalo, Western New York's minor league soccer club, has had a significant impact in growing the game and its popularity in Western New York since their inception in 2009. Senator Jacobs and Mayor Brown both cited Co-Owner Nick Mendola and his team's advocacy of the youth project as key to gaining support for the funding.

West Side International Soccer, the Buffalo Soccer Club and the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Northtowns are all organizations that are looking forward to the completion of this project. Operating under the umbrella of the Pitch In Buffalo initiative, the groups have been seeking support for the project over the last several years.

"On behalf of the Pitch In Buffalo initiative we are absolutely delighted to see this project move from vision to reality," said Pitch In Buffalo's Russell Andolina. "Black Rock is an incredibly vital and important neighborhood in Buffalo with a long history of welcoming new Americans to this country. Given soccer's role as a global game, we hope this facility can act as a unifying space that will provide residents all of ages and backgrounds an opportunity to enjoy this great game. Thank you to Senator Jacobs and the many people across the city and wider soccer community who have worked so hard to see this through to completion."

The monies secured by Jacobs will cover the cost of excavation, installation of a concrete foundation with subbase, topsoil, chain link fencing and soccer goals.