

APPENDIX B

Smart Growth Screening Tool

Smart Growth Screening Tool

PIN

Prepared By: Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

Smart Growth Screening Tool (STEP 1)

NYSDOT & Local Sponsors – Fill out the Smart Growth Screening Tool until the directions indicate to **STOP** for the project type under consideration. For all other projects, complete answering the questions. For any questions, refer to [Smart Growth Guidance](#) document.

Title of Proposed Project: Metro Rail Expansion

Location of Project: Buffalo, Amherst, and Tonawanda, New York

Brief Description: The Proposed Action would expand the existing Metro Rail from the terminus at University Station, for an additional 7 miles. Ten stations are proposed as part of the extension with two stations containing a park & ride facility—and a light maintenance/storage facility is proposed at the end of the line.

A. Infrastructure:

Addresses SG Law criterion a. –

(To advance projects for the use, maintenance or improvement of existing infrastructure)

1. Does this project use, maintain, or improve existing infrastructure?

Yes

No

N/A

Explain: (use this space to expand on your answers above – the form has no limitations on the length of your narrative)

The Proposed Action involves the expansion of the existing Metro Rail (light-rail transit) utilizing and improving current infrastructure such as roadways, sidewalks, energy transmission, and utilities along the corridor.

Maintenance Projects Only

a. Continue with screening tool for the four (4) types of maintenance projects listed below, as defined in **NYSDOT PDM Exhibit 7-1 and described in 7-4:**

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/engineering/design/dqab/pdm>

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- Shoulder rehabilitation and/or repair;
- Upgrade sign(s) and/or traffic signals;
- Park & ride lot rehabilitation;
- 1R projects that include single course surfacing (inlay or overlay), per Chapter 7 of the NYSDOT Highway Design Manual.

b. For all other maintenance projects, **STOP here**. Attach this document to the programmatic [Smart Growth Impact Statement and signed Attestation](#) for Maintenance projects.

For all other projects (**other than maintenance**), continue with screening tool.

B. Sustainability:

NYSDOT defines Sustainability as follows: A sustainable society manages resources in a way that fulfills the community/social, economic and environmental needs of the present without compromising the needs and opportunities of future generations. A transportation system that supports a sustainable society is one that:

- Allows individual and societal transportation needs to be met in a manner consistent with human and ecosystem health and with equity within and between generations.
- Is safe, affordable, and accessible, operates efficiently, offers choice of transport mode, and supports a vibrant economy.
- Protects and preserves the environment by limiting transportation emissions and wastes, minimizes the consumption of resources and enhances the existing environment as practicable.

For more information on the Department's Sustainability strategy, refer to Appendix 1 of the Smart Growth Guidance and the NYSDOT web site, www.dot.ny.gov/programs/greenlites/sustainability

(Addresses SG Law criterion j : to promote sustainability by strengthening existing and creating new communities which reduce greenhouse gas emissions and do not compromise the needs of future generations, by among other means encouraging broad based public involvement in developing and implementing a community plan and ensuring the governance structure is adequate to sustain and implement.)

1. Will this project promote sustainability by strengthening existing communities?

Yes No N/A

2. Will the project reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Yes No N/A

Explain: (use this space to expand on your answers above)

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The Proposed Action would expand the reach of transit to communities currently unserved by light-rail. The study area includes transit dependent populations such as senior-living complexes, facilities serving disabled persons, low-income housing complexes, apartment complexes, and student housing that would be benefited by accessibility to reliable light-rail transit. The Proposed Action would promote transit-oriented development in existing communities, strengthening economic opportunity. The Proposed Action would help to reduce vehicular traffic along the corridor resulting in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

C. Smart Growth Location:

Plans and investments should preserve our communities by promoting its distinct identity through a local vision created by its citizens.

(Addresses SG Law criteria b and c: to advance projects located in municipal centers; to advance projects in developed areas or areas designated for concentrated infill development in a municipally approved comprehensive land use plan, local waterfront revitalization plan and/or brownfield opportunity area plan.)

1. Is this project located in a developed area?

Yes No N/A

2. Is the project located in a municipal center?

Yes No N/A

3. Will this project foster downtown revitalization?

Yes No N/A

4. Is this project located in an area designated for concentrated infill development in a municipally approved comprehensive land use plan, waterfront revitalization plan, or Brownfield Opportunity Area plan?

Yes No N/A

Explain: (use this space to expand on your answers above)

The Proposed Action is located on urbanized and developed land that is made up of commercial, residential, and institutional land use. The Proposed Action would provide residents of northern suburban communities and academic institutions with direct access to the downtown and waterfront areas of Buffalo, as well as connect the three campuses of the University at Buffalo. The increased ridership and access to downtown would foster activity and revitalization to downtown and waterfront areas. The areas along the corridor are also identified for transit-oriented development to help foster the older commercial areas of Amherst and Tonawanda.

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D. Mixed Use Compact Development:

Future planning and development should assure the availability of a range of choices in housing and affordability, employment, education transportation and other essential services to encourage a jobs/housing balance and vibrant community-based workforce.

(Addresses SG Law criteria e and i: to foster mixed land uses and compact development, downtown revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, the enhancement of beauty in public spaces, the diversity and affordability of housing in proximity to places of employment, recreation and commercial development and the integration of all income groups; to ensure predictability in building and land use codes.)

1. Will this project foster mixed land uses?

Yes No N/A

2. Will the project foster brownfield redevelopment?

Yes No N/A

3. Will this project foster enhancement of beauty in public spaces?

Yes No N/A

4. Will the project foster a diversity of housing in proximity to places of employment and/or recreation?

Yes No N/A

5. Will the project foster a diversity of housing in proximity to places of commercial development and/or compact development?

Yes No N/A

6. Will this project foster integration of all income groups and/or age groups?

Yes No N/A

7. Will the project ensure predictability in land use codes?

Yes No N/A

8. Will the project ensure predictability in building codes?

Yes No N/A

Explain: (use this space to expand on your answers above)

The Proposed Action would result in an increase in population, housing supply, and employment, particularly around the proposed stations. The Proposed Action would foster mixed use, transit-oriented development that would create mixed use, mixed income density along the corridor. The Proposed Action would enhance access to employment opportunities and foster a diversity of housing in proximity to employment and recreational resources. The Proposed Action would connect residents in the study area to

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Niagara Falls Boulevard, which consists a high concentration of commercial development, and improve the connection to other destinations in the region. The Proposed Action would spur activity in areas such as the large soon-to-be former parcel of land that contains the Boulevard Mall to create a compact, multi-use transit oriented development.

E. Transportation and Access:

NYS DOT recognizes that Smart Growth encourages communities to offer a wide range of transportation options, from walking and biking to transit and automobiles, which increase people's access to jobs, goods, services, and recreation.

(Addresses SG Law criterion f: to provide mobility through transportation choices including improved public transportation and reduced automobile dependency.)

1. Will this project provide public transit?

Yes No N/A

2. Will this project enable reduced automobile dependency?

Yes No N/A

3. Will this project improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities (such as shoulder widening to provide for on-road bike lanes, lane striping, crosswalks, new or expanded sidewalks or new/improved pedestrian signals)?

Yes No N/A

(Note: Question 3 is an expansion on question 2. The recently passed Complete Streets legislation requires that consideration be given to complete street design features in the planning, design, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, but not including resurfacing, maintenance, or pavement recycling of such projects.)

Explain: (use this space to expand on your answers above)

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide fast, reliable, safe, and convenient transit in the Metro Rail Expansion corridor, linking established and emerging activity centers along the existing Metro Rail line in Buffalo with existing and emerging activity centers in Amherst and Tonawanda. The Proposed Action would better serve existing rail and bus riders, attract new transit patrons, improve connections to/from Buffalo, Amherst, and Tonawanda, and support redevelopment and other economic development opportunities. Additionally, the Proposed Action would improve livability by increasing mobility and accessibility in communities throughout the Proposed Action corridor. The Proposed Action would promote pedestrian and bicycle facilities by adding bike facilities to Niagara Falls Boulevard, Maple Road, Sweet Home Road, and Audubon Parkway,

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continuous sidewalks along both sides of the alignment, as well as several improved bicycle and pedestrian crossings. The Proposed Action be an overall improvement of multimodal transportation in the study area.

F. Coordinated, Community-Based Planning:

Past experience has shown that early and continuing input in the transportation planning process leads to better decisions and more effective use of limited resources. For information on community based planning efforts, the MPO may be a good resource if the project is located within the MPO planning area.

(Addresses SG Law criteria g and h: to coordinate between state and local government and inter-municipal and regional planning; to participate in community based planning and collaboration.)

1. Has there been participation in community-based planning and collaboration on the project?

Yes No N/A

2. Is the project consistent with local plans?

Yes No N/A

3. Is the project consistent with county, regional, and state plans?

Yes No N/A

4. Has there been coordination between inter-municipal/regional planning and state planning on the project?

Yes No N/A

Explain: (use this space to expand on your answers above)

Public involvement is an integral part of the State Environmental Quality Review Act process. In addition to members of the public, the project is being coordinated with agencies at the federal, state, regional and local levels. The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority has committed to an open, participatory environmental review process and has solicited early and continued feedback from public agencies and members of the general public; encouraged open discussion of project details and issues; and has provided opportunities for comments and questions. These efforts will continue throughout the environmental review of the Metro Rail Expansion project. Appendix C, "Public Outreach and Coordination Report" outlines the outreach and coordination activities.

The Proposed Action is aligned with the following local and regional plans: One Region

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Forward: A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara, Moving Forward 2050: A Regional Transportation Plan for Buffalo Niagara, Framework for Regional Growth: Erie and Niagara Counties, New York, UB 2020 Plan, Western New York Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan, Queen City in the 21st Century: Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan, Town of Tonawanda 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update.

G. Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Resources:

Clean water, clean air and natural open land are essential elements of public health and quality of life for New York State residents, visitors, and future generations. Restoring and protecting natural assets, and open space, promoting energy efficiency, and green building, should be incorporated into all land use and infrastructure planning decisions.

(Addresses SG Law criterion d :To protect, preserve and enhance the State's resources, including agricultural land, forests surface and ground water, air quality, recreation and open space, scenic areas and significant historic and archeological resources.)

1. Will the project protect, preserve, and/or enhance agricultural land and/or forests?

Yes No N/A

2. Will the project protect, preserve, and/or enhance surface water and/or groundwater?

Yes No N/A

3. Will the project protect, preserve, and/or enhance air quality?

Yes No N/A

4. Will the project protect, preserve, and/or enhance recreation and/or open space?

Yes No N/A

5. Will the project protect, preserve, and/or enhance scenic areas?

Yes No N/A

6. Will the project protect, preserve, and/or enhance historic and/or archeological resources?

Yes No N/A

Explain: (use this space to expand on your answers above)

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The Proposed Action would help preserve agricultural land and forests by focusing development along a dense transit corridor of development, mitigating sprawl. The Proposed Action would use best practices to mitigate any impacts to water resources. The impacts are not adverse and mitigation efforts per 33 CFR Part 332 (Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources) would be enacted to reduce the impact. The Proposed Action would improve air quality by reducing automobile dependency and reducing green house gas emissions. The Proposed Action would improve accessibility to multiple recreational resources.

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Smart Growth Impact Statement (STEP 2)

NYS DOT: Complete a Smart Growth Impact Statement (SGIS) below using the information from the Screening Tool.

Local Sponsors: The local sponsors are **not** responsible for completing a Smart Growth Impact Statement. Proceed to **Step 3**.

Smart Growth Impact Statement

PIN:

Project Name:

Pursuant to ECL Article 6, this project is compliant with the New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act. This project has been determined to meet the relevant criteria, to the extent practicable, described in ECL Sec. 6-0107. Specifically, the project:

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-
-
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This publically supported infrastructure project complies with the state policy of maximizing the social, economic and environmental benefits from public infrastructure development. The project will not contribute to the unnecessary costs of sprawl development, including environmental degradation, disinvestment in urban and suburban communities, or loss of open space induced by sprawl.

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Review & Attestation Instructions (STEP 3)

Local Sponsors: Once the Smart Growth Screening Tool is completed, the next step is to submit the project certification statement (**Section A**) to Responsible Local Official for signature. After signing the document, the completed Screening Tool and Certification statement should be sent to NYSDOT for review as noted below.

NYSDOT: For state-let projects, the Screening Tool and SGIS is forwarded to Regional Director/ RPPM/Main Office Program Director or designee for review, and upon approval, the attestation is signed (**Section B.2**). For locally administered projects, the sponsor's submission and certification statement is reviewed by NYSDOT staff, the appropriate box (**Section B.1**) is checked, and the attestation is signed (Section B.2).

A. CERTIFICATION (LOCAL PROJECT)

I HEREBY CERTIFY, to the best of my knowledge, all of the above to be true and correct.

Preparer of this document:

Signature

Date

Title

Printed Name

Responsible Local Official (for local projects):

Signature

Date

Title

Printed Name

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B. ATTESTATION (NYSDOT)

1. I HEREBY:

Concur with the above certification, thereby attesting that this project is in compliance with the State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act

Concur with the above certification, with the following conditions (information requests, confirming studies, project modifications, etc.):

(Attach additional sheets as needed)

do not concur with the above certification, thereby deeming this project ineligible to be a recipient of State funding or a subrecipient of Federal funding in accordance with the State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act.

2. **NOW THEREFORE**, pursuant to ECL Article 6, this project is compliant with the New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act, to the extent practicable, as described in the attached Smart Growth Impact Statement.

NYSDOT Commissioner, Regional Director, MO Program Director,
Regional Planning & Programming Manager (or official designee):

Signature

Date

Title

Printed Name