

Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda Corridor Transit Expansion Project

Combined Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision



Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda Corridor Transit Expansion, Erie County, New York

Combined Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision

Final Section 4(f) Evaluation

Submitted by:

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
and
Niagara Frontier Transit Metro System, Inc. (Metro)

In cooperation with:

U.S. Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S Department of the Interior
Empire State Development
New York State Department of Transportation
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
Dormitory Authority of the State of New York/State University of New York
Erie County Department of Public Works

With participation from:

Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, City of Buffalo, Town of Amherst, and Town of Tonawanda

Pursuant to:

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4332), related statutes (23 U.S.C. § 139, 49 U.S.C. § 303, and 23 U.S.C. § 138), and regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, 23 CFR Part 771, and 23 CFR Part 774) and, as applicable, with the guidelines and methodologies established under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA, NY ENV'T CONSERV. LAW Article 8 and 6 NYCRR Part 617).

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as lead Federal agency, and the Niagara Frontier Transit Metro System, Inc. (Metro), as local project sponsor and joint lead agency have prepared this Combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), Final Section 4(f) Evaluation, and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda Corridor Transit Expansion (the Project). Metro currently operates a 6.4-mile light rail transit line called Metro Rail that provides service along Main Street in Buffalo, New York, from Downtown Buffalo to the State University of New York, University at Buffalo (UB) South Campus. The Project would expand the present service to include high-quality transit service from the current terminus at the Metro Rail University Station to existing and emerging activity centers in Amherst and Tonawanda.

On July 25, 2025, the Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was made available for public review and comment through the Federal Register and the Project website (nftametrotransitexpansion.com). The public was afforded the opportunity to comment for a period of 45 days, from July 25, 2025, through September 8, 2025. FTA and Metro provided the public numerous methods to comment on the DEIS, including submitting hard copy comments via mail, electronically via e-mail, through the Project website (nftametrotransitexpansion.com), via voicemail, and through live public testimony and written comments at the August 19, 2025 public hearing held during the comment period.

Pursuant to 49 USC 24201 and 23 USC 139(n)(2), FTA is issuing a single document that consists of the FEIS and ROD. One of the primary purposes of this combined FEIS/ROD is to respond to substantive comments received during the public and agency review and comment period. Responses are in the form of factual corrections or clarifications and are presented as errata-style edits in tabular format. These errata sheets document the changes made to the DEIS that are now reflected in the combined FEIS/ROD. The use of errata sheets and this combined FEIS/ROD comply with the requirements of 23 USC 139(n). The ROD states the decision, identifies the alternatives considered in reaching the decision, summarizes avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies and future design practices appropriate for this EIS, and states the next steps in the environmental review process that may occur with subsequent phases of the Project. Members of the public, Project stakeholders, local governments, elected officials, non-governmental organizations, Native American Tribes, Federal, State, and local agencies have been and will continue to be involved in the Project throughout all subsequent phases of the Project.

The comments received on the DEIS are included in Appendices C, “Summary of Comments and Responses,” and C1, “Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement,” of the FEIS. The FEIS addresses the substantive comments received on the DEIS.

Appendix A, “Draft Environmental Impact Statement,” documents revisions to the DEIS in response to public comments. Appendices B1, “Archeological Resources Phase 1B Report” and B2, “Section 106 Documentation,” of the FEIS documents the consideration and planning efforts

consistent with Section 106 through FTA's evaluation of the Project relative to the preservation and protection of historic properties. Appendix B2, "General Ecology and Wildlife Supplemental Information" of the FEIS documents supplemental ecology and wildlife information.

The Federal Transit Administration carefully considered the Project record including the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the Final Environmental Impact Statement, and associated technical reports and analyses; the Section 4(f) Evaluation; the mitigation measures that the Niagara Frontier Transit Metro System, Inc. (Metro) will be required to implement, including the commitments made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966; and the comments offered by agencies, stakeholders, and the public throughout the federal environmental review process. The Federal Transit Administration issues this Record of Decision for Metro's proposed Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda Corridor Transit Expansion Project, finding that the requirements of NEPA (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321et seq.) have been satisfied pursuant to 23 Code of Federal Regulations 771.127.

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