

APPENDIX C
Public Outreach and
Agency Coordination Report

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Acronyms/Abbreviations

DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
EIS.....	Environmental Impact Statement
FEIS.....	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FTA.....	Federal Transit Administration
GBNRTC	Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFTA	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
SEQRA	State Environmental Quality Review Act
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
UB	University at Buffalo

C. Public Outreach and Coordination Report

This appendix describes the public outreach and coordination that has been implemented for the Metro Rail Expansion project (Proposed Action). Public involvement is an integral part of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process. The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) has committed to an open, participatory environmental review process and has solicited early and continued feedback from the public and from agencies; 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. Tools that have been and will continue to be used in the public involvement program are described below.

C.1 SCOPING

Scoping occurs early in the environmental review process and affords an opportunity for agencies and the public to provide input on the Proposed Action's purpose and need, its objectives, the potential alternatives under consideration, and the environmental analysis methodology. A Draft Scope for the project was issued on January 24, 2019 followed by a 45-day public comment period, ending on March 10, 2019. During this period, public outreach activities included a public meeting and a pop-up event in the community.

A public scoping meeting was held on February 12, 2019, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Sweet Home Middle School in Amherst, New York. Email notifications were distributed to elected officials, and parties who signed up via the project website to be on the email distribution list. Notices of the meeting were published in the *Buffalo News*, *KenTon*, and *Amherst Bees*.

The meeting was held in an open house format, with project boards grouped into the following topics: project/study area; environmental review process; project overview; project purpose, needs, and objectives; and environmental considerations. The NFTA staff were available to answer questions, provide project information, and receive input. One area of the room was dedicated to providing written comments, with tables, chairs, comment cards, and a comment box. A stenographer was also available to record verbal comments. The location of the scoping meeting provided access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

A public information brochure was developed and made available at the scoping meeting. The brochure provided a general project overview and described the ways in which the public could provide comments. The brochure is available on the project website (www.NFTAMetroRailExpansion.com) (see Section C.5).

A total of 80 people attended the scoping meeting, including community members, elected and government officials, representatives of nonprofit/community organizations, and property owners

along or nearby the Proposed Action alignment. Approximately 40 percent of these attendees submitted written or verbal comments. The comments received were considered and incorporated into the written record of the meeting and addressed in the Final Scoping Document. A summary of the scoping is available on the project website (www.NFTAMetroRailExpansion.com) (see Section C.5). A pop-up event (see Section C.3) was also held during the scoping period.

C.2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

In addition to the formal scoping meeting, public meetings have been held throughout the conceptual design and environmental review process.

- A public open house was held December 6, 2018 at Sweet Home Middle School in Amherst, NY to provide the results of the re-evaluation of the Locally Preferred Alternative. A total of 80 people attended the open house meeting. A total of 12 written comments were received at this meeting.
- A public workshop was held on June 11, 2019 at UB South Hayes Hall to present various station design concepts, ridership projections, and traffic analysis results. A total of 30 people attended the workshop. A total of two written comments were received at this meeting as well as 19 responses to the community survey. A public workshop was held on September 24 at Sweet Home Middle School to present the concept design plans, updated station design concepts, traffic analysis results, and preliminary environmental analysis and impacts. A total of 100 people attended the scoping meeting. A total of 17 written comments were received at this meeting.

C.3 POP-UP EVENTS

A pop-up event is a form of public engagement in which project team members set up a table with project information at a local event, center of activity, or other location where the intended audience for a project may congregate. This format allows for informal one-on-one or small group conversations and offers participation opportunities for people who otherwise might not be aware of the project, or may not be available to attend a public meeting. Table C-1 presents the pop-events held at the publication of this DEIS. Pop-events will continue to be held throughout the environmental review process.

Table C-1. Pop-Up Events

Event	Location	Date	Estimated Attendance
UB Young Alumni Speaker Series	Big Ditch	April 11, 2019	35
Tonawanda Neighborhood Watch Group	St. Bartholomew	May 6, 2019	50
Allen Medical Campus Station Pop-Up	Allen Medical Campus Station	June 21, 2019	30
LaSalle Station Pop-Up	LaSalle Station	June 27, 2019	30
University Station Pop-Up	University Station	July 9, 2019	20
34 Bus	Niagara Falls Boulevard	July 24, 2019	80
UB on the Green Pop-Up	Rotary Field, UB South Campus	August 9, 2019	60
Annual Book Sale Pop-Up	Erie County Central Library	August 15, 2019	10
Kenilworth Branch Library Pop-Up	Kenilworth Branch Library	August 20, 2019	10
ITE Lunch and Learn	NFTA Offices	November 20, 2019	20

C.4 COMMUNITY MEETINGS/EVENTS

The project team attended and provided project information and opportunities for input at meetings and events hosted by neighborhood, business, and civic organizations within the project corridor. Public comments gathered at these events were logged in the project’s comment database and contact information from sign-up sheets was added to the project’s mailing list.

Table C-2. Community Hosted Events

Event	Location	Date	Estimated Attendance
Ken-Ton Networking Event	Tonawanda Castle	February 28, 2019	40
Kenmore Rotary Meeting	Jovi's	February 25, 2019	15
Ken-Ton Networking	Hyatt Place Buffalo/Amherst	March 28, 2019	10
Audubon HOA Meeting	Audubon Community Center	June 27, 2019	70
Hartford Estates Meeting	Sweet Home Middle School	July 2, 2019	70
Willow Ridge Civic Association	Ellicott Creek Fire Hall	July 30, 2019	20
Westminster Presbyterian Church	Westminster Presbyterian Church	September 15, 2019	5

C.5 PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website (www.NFTAMetroRailExpansion.com) provides current project information, including an interactive map, an overall schedule and upcoming events, a document library that includes documents related to the current effort as well as previous studies, and public meeting materials, including meeting summaries.

C.6 MEDIA

The project has used local newspapers to inform the public of upcoming events, project milestones, and opportunities to provide input. News releases and advertisements for public meetings are sent to newspapers in Greater Buffalo-Niagara Region.

C.7 SURVEYS

Surveys have been used during the environmental review and conceptual design to collect public input. A Station Design & Connections Questionnaire was administered between June 11 and August 30, 2019 (80 days) to collect input on and received 457 responses. The purpose of this survey was to gather public input on elements of the proposed station designs including canopies and shelters, platform configuration, and road separators, as well as potential connections to proposed stations including bike, bikeshare and pedestrian facilities.

A Corridor Employer and Employee Survey was administered between September 16 and November 27, 2019. The survey received 217 responses. The purpose of this survey was to (1) to learn about parking and transportation issues employers and employees currently face that could be mitigated by the addition of light rail to the corridor, (2) to ensure that businesses and their employees in the proposed Metro Rail Expansion corridor, who may disproportionately benefit or be impacted from the addition of light rail to the area, are aware of the project and (3) to gather input on what kinds of environmental impacts employers and employees are concerned about and their preferred methods for mitigating said impacts.

C.8 AGENCY COORDINATION

C.9 STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee consists of internal staff from NFTA and GBNRTC. The Steering Committee provides oversight and guidance for the project. Meetings have been held by the Steering Committee throughout the project at regular intervals.

C.10 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consists of NFTA staff, key stakeholders, and municipal entities. The Technical Advisory Committee reviews project materials and provides feedback and guidance for the Steering Committee and project team. Meetings have been held by the Technical Advisory Committee throughout the project at regular intervals. TAC members include:

- NFTA staff
- Metro Rail: Business Center and Rail Operations
- UB – Campus Planning and Administration
- NYSDOT – Region 5
- GBNRTC staff
- Federal Transit Administration, Region 2

- Empire State Development
- Erie County – Planning & Economic Development Division and Highways Division
- Town of Tonawanda – Department of Engineering
- Town of Amherst – Department of Planning
- City of Buffalo – Office of Strategic Planning

C.11 STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) consists of representatives from a variety of community and stakeholder groups, including developers and real estate professionals, businesses, property owners, not-for-profits, housing and transportation agencies, community and economic development agencies and academic institutions. The SAC reviews project materials and provides feedback and guidance to the Steering Committee and project team. Meetings have been held by the Stakeholder Committee throughout the project at regular intervals.

C.12 UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO WORKING GROUP

The University at Buffalo (UB) Working Group includes faculty, student representatives, planning staff and NFTA staff. The UB Working Group reviews project materials and provide feedback related to the project. Meetings have been held with the UB Working Group throughout the project at regular intervals.

C.13 COMMENT DATABASE AND MAILING LIST

All comments received on the project, including those collected during public meetings or those received via the project website or by email are recorded in a comment database. Comments are categorized by theme, and incorporated into the environmental review process, as applicable.

A project contact list, totaling more than 740 names, 556 email addresses and 436 phone numbers has been developed through the course of the project. The mailing list includes elected officials, public agency contacts, stakeholder and community groups, media, and individuals. Included within the list are organizations, media, and individuals that have relevance and connections with environmental justice communities in the study area. These organizations include:

- El Museo, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, professionally directed visual arts organization dedicated to the exhibition of contemporary work by underserved artists, and cultural programming that engages diverse communities through the arts and humanities
- Heart of the City (HOCN), Inc., a housing organization with programming aimed at stabilizing homeownership through repairing occupied housing, as well as ensuring tenants have safe, affordable housing opportunities

The mailing list has been and will continue to be used to issue meeting notices and other communications with the public.

C.14 REPOSITORIES

Project documents, such as the Scoping Report and this DEIS, are available for public viewing at the locations listed below.

- NFTA Headquarters, 181 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York 14203
- Buffalo and Erie County Central Library, 1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo, New York 14203
- Kenilworth Library, 318 Montrose Avenue, Tonawanda, New York 14223
- Amherst Library, 350 John James Audubon Parkway, Amherst, New York 14228
- Amherst Town Hall, 5583 Main Street, Williamsville, New York 14221
- Tonawanda Town Hall, 2919 Delaware Avenue, Kenmore, New York 14217

C.15 CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information on the Metro Rail Expansion project, please visit the project website at <https://www.nftametrorailexpansion.com> or contact: railx@nfta.com.