



Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
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May 3, 2022

Hon. Patrick F. McAllister
Steuben County Supreme Court
3 East Pulteney Square
Bath, NY 14810

Dr. Jonathan Cervas
Special Master Steuben County Supreme Court
3 East Pulteney Square
Bath, NY 14810

Dear Justice McAllister and Special Master Cervas:

As the public transit provider for Erie and Niagara Counties in New York State, we write in support of a new 63rd State Senate District that connects the Town of Amherst with portions of the City of Buffalo and City of Lackawanna.

As Buffalo's largest suburb, which shares University at Buffalo campuses with the city, and as home to the planned expansion of high-capacity transit linked with the existing NFTA-Metro Rail, Amherst's economic, demographic, and geographic ties to Buffalo far outweigh its connections to the communities in the Town's current Senate district, which are largely rural or even stretch an hour's drive away into the City of Rochester.

In 2019, the NFTA completed work on the draft State Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a transit enhancement project from the current terminus of the NFTA-Metro Rail at the University of Buffalo South Campus, which is located on the border of the City of Buffalo and Town of Amherst, through the University at Buffalo North Campus. In August 2021, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as Lead Federal Agency, issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Federal EIS for the proposed project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA process is currently in the draft environmental impact phase.¹

To support the transit expansion project the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, has completed Phase 1 and continues to work on Phase 2 of a Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan for the corridor.² This work documents in detail the growth patterns, demographic changes, and economic ties that the communities in the corridor and proposed 63rd Senate District share. For example, the corridor's population growth is

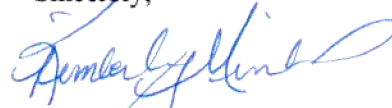
¹ <https://www.nftametrotransitexpansion.com>

² <https://www.gbnrtc.org/tod>

projected to be much higher than the regions. By 2040, the corridor population is expected to increase by 5.8 percent while the region's population is projected to increase 1.3 percent. The corridor has smaller households than the rest of the region, and their size is projected to continue to reduce. The corridor also has an important concentration of office, health services, education, and government employment. Employees in these industries share many demographic and economic characteristics including a higher likelihood of commuting by public transit.

The transit expansion project, once completed, will connect Downtown Buffalo, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, the University at Buffalo's South Campus, and the University at Buffalo's North Campus in Amherst with high-capacity transit, further tying these municipalities together. In addition, the project will further support a denser, urbanizing corridor that will share many similarities. For these reasons, we urge you to connect the Town of Amherst with portions of the City of Buffalo and City of Lackawanna through a new 63rd State Senate District. We appreciate the time you are taking to review these concerns and recommendations in detail.

Sincerely,



Kimberley A. Minkel
Executive Director

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