



# COMPREHENSIVE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**  
AUGUST 2018



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# 1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

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The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) Board recently authorized moving forward with the extension of Metro Rail to enhance mobility and connectivity between key activity centers in Buffalo and those located in the Northtowns. The authorization, based on technical results of an alternatives study and feedback from project committees and the public, proposes to extend Metro Rail from the existing terminus at University Station, extending under Bailey Avenue to a portal on Eggert Road where it would run at-grade on Niagara Falls Boulevard to Maple Road to Sweet Home, onto UB North Campus to Audubon Parkway where it would terminate near the I-990.

The Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Planning study demonstrates that the proposed transit investment will not only have the ability to enhance mobility options for the community but also serve to support broader social and economic goals by promoting Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). The study shows that the Metro Rail expansion not only enhances regional mobility, but is part of a larger regional investment strategy to leverage economic and community development opportunities associated with transit investment.

## 1.1. PROJECT GOALS

The following goals set the stage for what the Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Planning project should accomplish:

- Identify, measure, communicate, and enhance the economic and community development potential and impact of Transit-Oriented Development.
- Comprehensively plan for the transit-land use connection to ensure the proposed Amherst-Buffalo Corridor transit investment meets the purpose and need of the Alternatives Analysis and the goals of the Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning grant received by NFTA.
- Delineate a comprehensive and innovative set of strategies; policy, regulatory, and financial tools; and priority infrastructure projects that reflect actual market demand and will significantly enhance TOD opportunities.
- Increase public understanding and awareness of the benefits of TOD and actively engage citizen champions, leaders, developers, and other private sector stakeholders in the planning process.
- Generate support for multi-modal, accessible, mixed-use development that supports transit investments and enables more sustainable forms of redevelopment within existing centers and nodes along proposed Amherst-Buffalo Corridor.
- Assemble a Regional Transit-Oriented Development Committee capable of implementing recommendations of this planning effort beyond the completion of the study.

## 1.2. TOD OVERVIEW

Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD, aligns investment in transit with a region's vision for growth and economic development. TOD promotes the development of vibrant, walkable, mixed-use communities in and around transit corridors and transit stations. The concept leverages public investment in transit to drive private investment in order to enrich neighborhoods and drive regional smart and sustainable growth. An emphasis of TOD empowers communities to become dynamic places where people live, work, and play. The typical walkshed area around a transit station is 1/4 mile and represents the distance most people are comfortable walking.

TOD in the Buffalo-Niagara Region aligns the investment in Metro Rail and the Metro Rail extension to the Northtowns with the vision of numerous policies and plans, most notably One Region Forward, to promote smart, sustainable growth, regional economic development strategy, and ready the region to compete with other regions for population, employment, and tourism growth.

### 1.2.1. TOD PRINCIPLES

Planning and implementing successful TOD involves decisions that directly influence land use, public realm, multi-modal transportation, urban form, and overall performance as a place. There are seven basic principles that define the essential characteristics of a successful TOD. While these principles should be applied to create transit-supportive environments around station areas, TOD must be customized to be compatible with a neighborhood's character, the market strength for development, and the community's aspirations for TOD. The principles for making a successful TOD include:

- Medium to Higher Density Development
- Mix of Land Uses
- Compact, High Quality Pedestrian Environment
- Active & Vibrant Center
- Multi-Modal Connectivity
- Limited, Managed Parking

# 2. COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## 2.1. OVERVIEW

A series of stakeholder and community workshops were held in 2017 for various stages of the project (March, June and October) about Smart Growth Transit-Oriented Development along the Metro Rail line in the City of Buffalo and the proposed Metro Rail extension to the Northtowns. The multi-day workshops included presentations by the project team, followed by interactive discussions among stakeholders. In addition to these workshops, the project team attended meetings and shared information about the project with nine community organizations. Stakeholder input was used to help develop strategies for Transit-Oriented Development along the project corridor. A final open house was held on August 29, 2018 to present the Comprehensive TOD Planning vision that community and stakeholder members helped develop.

This chapter includes a summary of the stakeholder workshops and information on other engagement efforts undertaken as part of the project.



## 2.2. WORKSHOP SERIES #1: MARCH 2017 STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

### OVERVIEW

The first round of community workshops were held in March of 2017. Four workshop sessions were held throughout the day and evening of March 29, 2017 at One Seneca Tower in Buffalo. The workshop was divided into four sessions, each tailored to a variety of interests and expertise. The schedule of events is noted below.

- Development & Real Estate Session
- State & Local Government Session
- Academic, Business, Housing & Transportation Session
- Community Groups & Public Session



## 2.3. WORKSHOP SERIES #2: JUNE 2017 FOCUS GROUPS AND PUBLIC WORKSHOP

### OVERVIEW

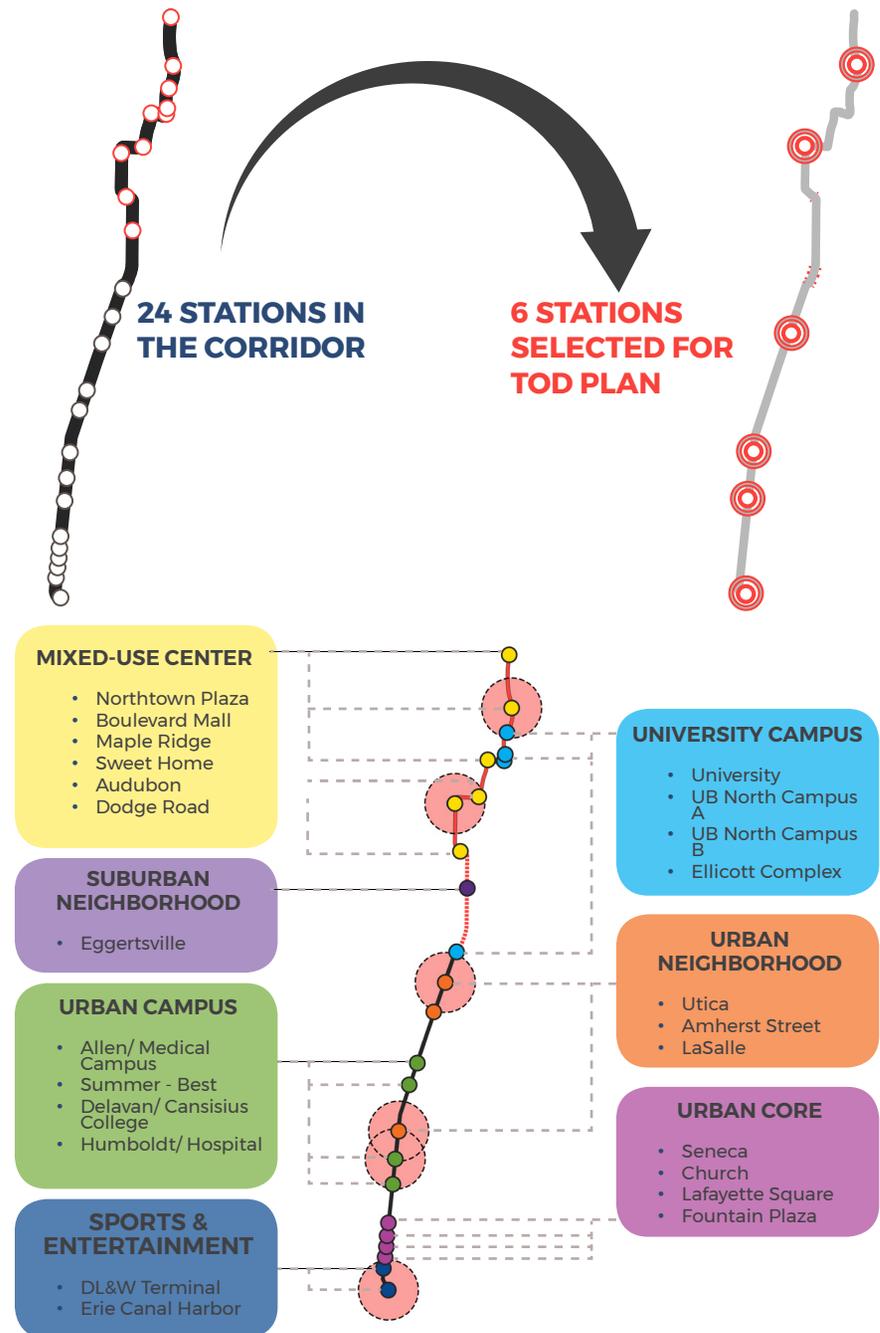
A second round of community workshops were held in June of 2017. Four workshop sessions were held throughout two days and one evening on June 28 and June 29 at the University of Buffalo's Hayes Hall. The workshops were divided into four sessions, each tailored to a variety of interests and expertise, similar to the first round of workshops. The schedule of events is noted below.

- Development & Real Estate Session
- State & Local Government Session
- Academic, Business, Housing & Transportation Session
- Public Workshop

## 2.4. WORKSHOP SERIES #3: OCTOBER 2017 PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

### OVERVIEW

A third round of Transit-Oriented Development workshops were held on Tuesday, October 3 and Wednesday, October 4, 2017 at University at Buffalo's Educational Opportunity Center and Weinberg Campus.



# 3. CORRIDOR BASELINE ANALYSIS

## 3.1. STUDY CORRIDOR OVERVIEW

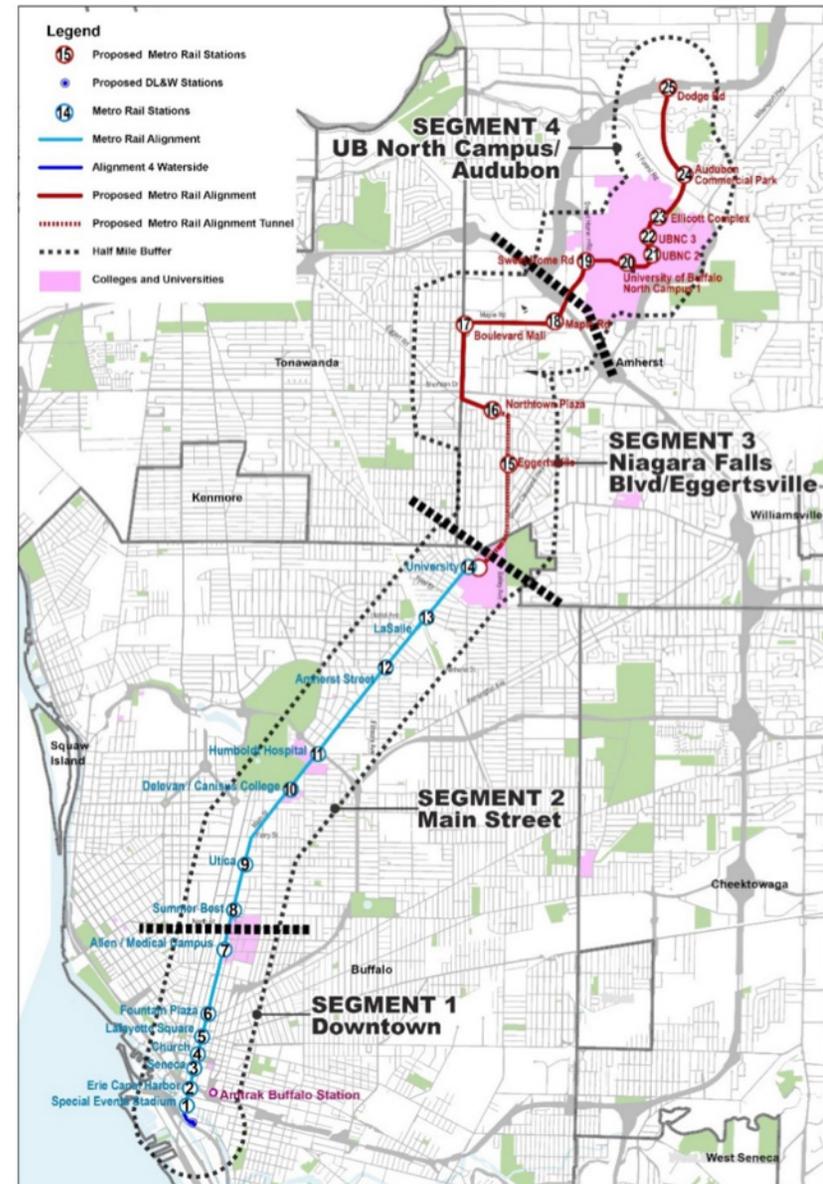
The Study Corridor is centered on the Metro Rail Corridor, which includes both the existing Metro Rail line, running from the future DL&W Terminal Station at the southern end, to University Station, as well as the Metro Rail extension, running from University Station through the University at Buffalo North Campus to the area near I-990 and Dodge Road. The entire alignment is shown in Figure 10, with the existing Metro Rail line and stations in blue and the proposed Metro Rail extension and stations in red.

The proposed Metro Rail extension to the Northtowns generally follows an alignment from the existing University Station, extending underground along Bailey Avenue to a portal near Eggert Road, where it would surface and run at-grade on Eggert Road to Niagara Falls Boulevard to Maple Road to Sweet Home Road, through the University at Buffalo North Campus, to Audubon Parkway where it would terminate near the I-990.

For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that a new permanent station will be located at DL&W Terminal and that the Special Events Station will be eliminated, meaning Metro Rail service would operate from DL&W Terminal to an area on Audubon Parkway near I-990, approximately 13 miles of light rail line.

Also, to simplify the assessment and portraying of the study corridor conditions, the study corridor was partitioned into four somewhat geographically equal segments: Segment 1 - Downtown (extending from DL&W Terminal to just north of Allen - Medical Campus Station); Segment 2 - Main Street (extending from just south of Summer - Best Station to University Station); Segment 3 - Niagara Falls Boulevard/ Eggertsville (extending from University Station to just north of the proposed Maple Ridge Station); and Segment 4 - UB North Campus/ Audubon (extending from just north of the proposed Maple Ridge Station to the proposed terminus at Audubon and I-990). The following pages summarize general conditions of the four segments.

Figure 1. Study Corridor



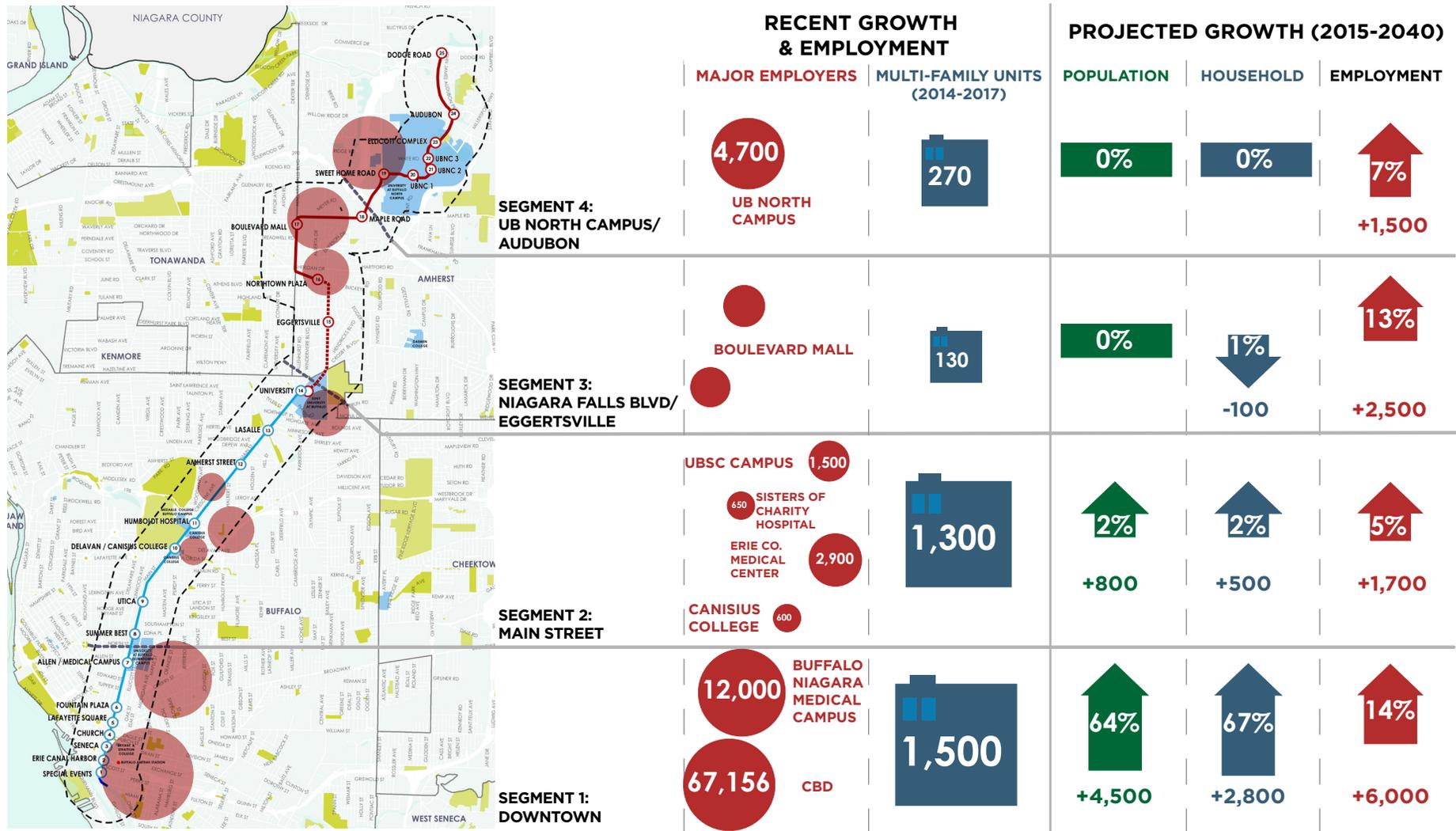


Figure 2. Demographic Corridor Analysis

# 4. MARKET ANALYSIS KEY FINDINGS & BENEFITS

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## 4.1. INTRODUCTION

NFTA needed an economic and fiscal impact analysis and narrative on the breadth of likely impact of the design and construction of the recommended Metro Rail extension alignment on the region in order to get acceptance from the NFTA Board for the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to move forward. This section quantifies the anticipated economic and fiscal benefits associated with extending the existing Metro Rail line to the Northtowns.

This section is provided in two parts- the first part focuses on the high-level economic and fiscal impacts of the Metro Rail extension; the second part focuses on the market readiness for Transit-Oriented Development along the corridor.



## 4.1.1. ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BENEFITS FINDINGS

This analysis focuses on the transit-oriented growth patterns of the Metro Rail extension's corridor, the economic and fiscal benefits created by the construction of the Metro Rail extension and associated Transit-Oriented Development, and benefits in terms of job accessibility for households in the region. The main findings are:

- The Metro Rail Corridor is projected to grow faster than the region.
- Employment in the Metro Rail Corridor represents about a fifth of all regional jobs, and almost a fourth of all office and health, education, and government jobs in the region.
- Employment growth is projected to be stronger, on average, in the Metro Rail Corridor than in the total region, particularly for office jobs.
- The land supply of available vacant, underutilized, and/or redevelopment parcels in the Metro Rail Corridor is more than sufficient to accommodate the projected household and employment growth expected to occur in the corridor through 2040.
- Future development resulting from the extension of Metro Rail is expected to add approximately 8.4 million square feet of commercial (office and retail) and residential space throughout the Metro Rail Corridor, worth a total assessed valuation of approximately \$1.7 billion. Existing properties where the current buildings and uses are expected to remain should see their cumulative assessed value increase by upwards of \$310 million as a result of their proximity to the Metro Rail extension.
- In the scenario where the Metro Rail extension is built, the City of Buffalo and the Town of Amherst would collect approximately \$61.5 million in property tax revenues from properties in the Metro Rail

Corridor, 32 percent more than in a scenario without the Metro Rail extension project.

- The retail development linked to the construction of the Metro Rail extension would lead to approximately \$8.7 million in sales tax revenues for the State of New York and \$10.3 million in sales tax revenues for Erie County.
- Employed residents both living and working within the Metro Rail Corridor could benefit from a significant reduction in transportation costs. Currently, almost 5,000 employed residents living in the existing Metro Rail Corridor also work in the corridor. Considering the Metro Rail extension, and not assuming any new residents in the corridor, this number would increase by 3,656. Moreover, based on projected future growth, and conservatively assuming current patterns of location of workers, an additional 1,339 workers could both live and work in the corridor by 2040, reaching a total of 9,942. This figure is likely to be higher as residential and commercial development intensifies within half a mile of Metro Rail stations.

## 4.1.2. TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT MARKET READINESS FINDINGS

- The corridor's basic market activity - as measured by the total number of sale transactions - grew significantly in the past two decades.
- Between 1997 and 2016, market activity in Segments 1, 2, and 3 multiplied at comparably high speeds.
- Transaction activity in the corridor has been moderately responsive to broader economic trends, and has slowed down during major recessions.
- Despite various fluctuations, between 1997 and 2016 the corridor showed a 75% increase in the sales value of all real estate product types.

### 4.1.3. MEASURING THE BENEFITS OF TRANSIT

The anticipated economic and fiscal benefits pertaining to the Metro Rail extension are focused on the following three elements:

#### TRANSIT-ORIENTED GROWTH

The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) provided 2040 projections for Households and Jobs in the region and for the Metro Rail Corridor, including both the existing Metro Rail line and the extension. These figures were produced as part of the process to translate the One Region Forward initiative into the region's mandated Long Range Transportation Plan. Every major region in the United States is required by Federal law to complete such a plan, which typically gets updated every five years and has at least a 20-year time horizon. A key part of this planning process is to generate socio-economic projections that then become the basis for modeling future transportation demand. This demand will, in turn, drive future transportation investment decisions. In the Buffalo-Niagara region, GBNRTC is responsible for preparing these mandated projections. In fact, GBNRTC is in the process of updating its population, household, and employment growth for the region through 2040.

Total projections were then allocated to subarea geographies to form the basis for the transportation demand modeling. The GBNRTC preliminary projections, including growth allocations to specific subareas, assumes that there will be a transit project in the general vicinity of the proposed Metro Rail Corridor. Thus, these projections reflect a "Transit-Oriented" growth pattern for the region. Such a growth pattern would accomplish two objectives. First, focusing more future growth in the region's core is more fiscally and environmentally sustainable, as was demonstrated through the One Region Forward process. And, secondly, this allows the Buffalo region to be more competitive with other regions for economic expansion. While in past decades most parts of the U.S. have focused growth in expanding suburban locations, economic and demographic trends are now reshaping demand for employment and housing options that would allow some segment of the region's businesses and their workers to use transit as an alternative to driving to work. Work trips are an essential part of future transportation demand modeling, so including this transit expansion in the GBNRTC model was done to reflect the impact of future transportation investments and ensure that the region is maintaining its fiscal viability and economic competitiveness.

Because most of the economic benefits coming from a transit investment are driven by future development and property and sales tax, it is essential to understand the relationship between future population and employment growth and how this growth translates into demand for housing units and commercial space. For purposes of this analysis, the GBNRTC 2040 population, household, and employment projections were used as the basis for estimating future development activity. However, because this analysis is a one year snapshot of potential future change, not a cumulative estimate of all potential impacts from the transit investment, the 2040 projections are used in this report as a "Transit-Oriented growth scenario." This approach creates a relatively simple way to measure the potential change in conditions along the Metro Rail Corridor by comparing the existing conditions to a single future year.

**Fiscal Benefits:** The biggest monetary benefits from the Metro Rail extension will be realized in increased assessed valuations and revenues to the City of Buffalo, the Towns of Amherst and Tonawanda, Erie County, and New York State. These benefits are directly reflected in increased property and sales tax valuations from new development, as well as in increased assessed valuations from new development and an increase in value of existing property located near transit that will not change use. There is consistent evidence from all over the U.S. that light rail transit has a positive impact on property values, and increases the likelihood of future development.

**Accessibility:** Based on research showing that transit has higher economic benefits when it connects major employment centers, this analysis also measures how many people would have an increased accessibility to jobs based on their ability to both live and work near Metro Rail. One of the significant strengths of the Metro Rail extension project is that it connects many of the region's most significant employment, institutional, shopping, and entertainment concentrations including: Downtown Buffalo, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, all of the UB campuses, attractions in and around Canalside (including KeyBank Center and HARBORCenter), colleges (i.e., Canisius College, Medaille College, and Erie Community College City Campus), the Theatre District, important retail locations such as the Boulevard Mall and Northtown Plaza, and suburban office locations such as the Audubon Office Park, as well as the planned Muir Woods mixed-use project.



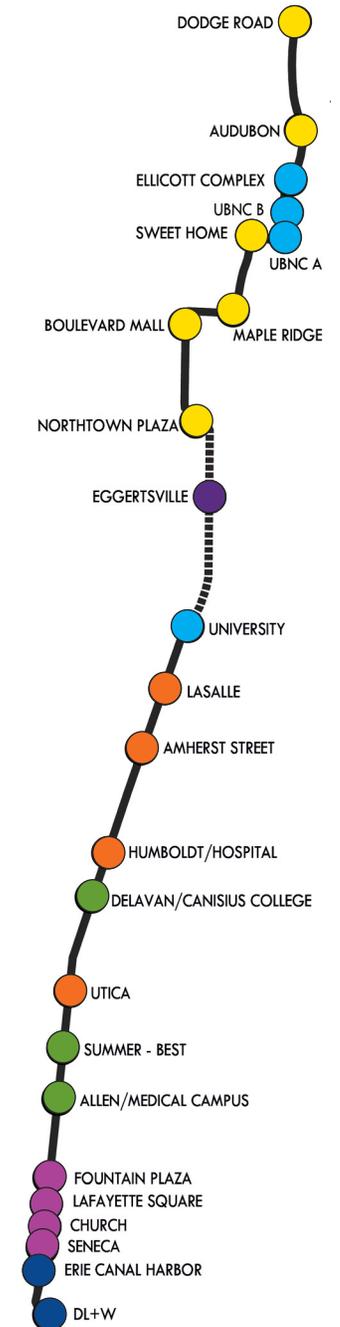
# 5. STATION AREA TOD TYPOLOGIES

TOD should not be viewed as a one-size-fits-all approach. Because station areas vary significantly in function, character, physical form, and market potential, and are driven by a number of factors that vary throughout a corridor, planning goals and future development objectives for station areas should be flexible to accommodate the differences in situations at various station areas.

Station typologies are a way to think about the function, character, physical form, and market potential of station areas in the larger context of the Metro Rail study corridor, and provides a way to group station areas that share similar attributes. Station typologies are developed based on the current character of the neighborhood, a reasonable expectation of what character the station area will take on and how the station area will function, how the physical form will be shaped, and what the market potential is for TOD. Seven station typologies are identified in the Metro Rail study corridor, shown below with the stations that fit within each typology. The corridor map to the right portrays the station typologies along the Metro Rail Corridor and an explanation of each of the station typologies is provided on the following pages.

- Sports & Entertainment District
  - DL&W Terminal
  - Erie Canal Harbor
- Urban Core
  - Seneca
  - Church
  - Lafayette Square
  - Fountain Plaza

- Urban Campus
  - Allen/Medical Campus
  - Summer - Best
  - Delavan/Canisius College
- Urban Neighborhood
  - Utica
  - Humboldt/Hospital
  - Amherst Street
  - LaSalle
- Suburban Neighborhood
  - Eggertsville
- Mixed-use Center
  - Northtown Plaza
  - Boulevard Mall
  - Maple Ridge
  - Sweet Home
  - Audubon
  - Dodge Road
- University Campus
  - University
  - UB North Campus A
  - UB North Campus B
  - UB North Campus C
  - Ellicott Complex



# TOD DESIRE & READINESS RATING SUMMARY



# 6. TOD DESIRABILITY AND READINESS ASSESSMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

To take a closer look at the existing and proposed Metro Rail stations and their surrounding areas, the following station area assessment was undertaken. The station area assessment considers findings from existing plans and studies, review of existing conditions, input from stakeholders and the community, as well as professional input from the consulting team. The station area assessment is laid out from south to north—beginning with DL&W Terminal station and ending at the proposed Dodge Road station—and includes photos of the station area, station area descriptions, strengths and opportunities and weaknesses and challenges, maps of the station areas' existing conditions and generalized strengths and weaknesses, and a TOD Desirability & Readiness Assessment for each station area, as described below.

The TOD Desirability & Readiness Assessment is a qualitative exercise used to gauge the level of preparedness for TOD and, if development is desirable, to identify what might be needed to stimulate investment. This process is generally accepted by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development and has been used in other regional TOD plans.

## 6.1. DEFINING DESIRABILITY AND READINESS FOR TOD AT A STATION AREA

At each station area, the local government leadership, real estate and development interests, businesses, and community need to express their level desire for TOD in order to set the context for each station area strategy. Building upon a community's desire for TOD is the market strength for development to occur at a station area. A community may be very interested in having TOD occur, but if the market doesn't support TOD at a station area, successful TOD will be slow to follow. High desire (which, in turn, suggests a community's degree of readiness) is illustrated by a community that strongly supports TOD in the station area and sees the station as a centerpiece to development. This is supported by a strong market for TOD at the station area due to existing or perceived market conditions.

Not every station is suitable for TOD. Communities define their desire based upon surrounding land uses, surrounding densities, and neighborhood character. However, a lower desire reflects only current opinion and does not necessarily mean that there are no opportunities for future TOD and other improvements. In station areas where desire is lower, there may still be a need to consider what public realm improvements can optimize the relationship between the station and the surrounding community that would result in greater accessibility to and use of the station, accompanied by reduced automobile usage.

Building upon the desire for TOD, each station area is also evaluated for its level of readiness to implement TOD. Readiness translates a community's desire into an understanding of the level of preparedness that the community has to achieve the TOD within the context that they envision.



# 7. PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY AND STRATEGIES

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## 7.1. PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

This Priority Infrastructure Investment section focuses on those key infrastructure investments and strategies that need to be coordinated and implemented by both public and private entities to facilitate and accelerate TOD. In many instances, initial investments in infrastructure by public entities is a key mechanism for accelerating TOD, and can often serve as the tool that unifies a TOD and maximizes its potential.

### TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT FOCUS STRATEGIES

The opportunity for TOD may vary in different areas of the region, and for different station typologies. But certain universal strategies can be considered and evaluated for each station area in order to implement and accelerate TODs. The following six strategies are defined based on fundamentals of successful TOD:

- Complete Streets/ Multi-Modal Connectivity
- Engaging Civic Spaces/ Placemaking
- Progressive Parking Design and Policy
- Mixed-Use Development
- Transit-Oriented Density Distribution
- Repurposing and Infill Development

**Table 1.** Priority Infrastructure Policy and Strategies

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Policy Recommendation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Application/ Action Plan</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Regional	Establish a TOD Regional Committee	A Regional TOD Committee would consist of stakeholders from GBNRTC, NFTA, other involved regional agencies, municipalities and municipal departments, taxing jurisdictions, and other TOD stakeholders to guide policy and infrastructure strategies, review development and policy applications for consistency with the TOD plan, develop mechanisms for financing TOD infrastructure, and facilitate TOD.	Draft an Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Regional TOD Committee and work with municipalities and jurisdictions to create a regional committee.	TBD	Very High
	Adopt a TOD/ Joint Development Policy	NFTA should adopt a formal TOD/ Joint Development policy or action plan to set the stage for how TOD/ Joint Development would occur at Metro Rail stations.	The TOD/ Joint Development policy should outline how NFTA would staff such efforts, market land, solicit for development, select a development partner, negotiate a Joint Development lease or disposition of land, etc. More on Joint Development is provided in the financing section of this Plan.	NFTA	Very High
	Issue RFP's for Joint Development	The NFTA Real Estate Market Analysis will identify those NFTA owned sites that are marketable for Joint Development projects, which will begin to facilitate TOD in key station areas.	Upon completion of the NFTA Real Estate Market Analysis, NFTA, in collaboration with other municipal agencies where appropriate, should initiate RFP's for Joint Development at key NFTA owned Metro Rail station sites. The RFP's should establish guidelines for development to follow TOD criteria.	NFTA with assistance from TOD Regional Committee and other municipal agencies when appropriate.	Very High
	Lobby for Transit TIF Districts	Either through the Article VII budget language or stand-alone legislation, establish a process for the recoupment of costs for major capital construction through the creation of transit TIF districts for transit and related infrastructure.	If adopted, NFTA should lobby state legislators to get such benefits expanded to the Buffalo-Niagara metropolitan area to allow for the creation of transit TIF districts.	NFTA or Buffalo Niagara Partnership	High
	PILOT Increment Financing (PIF) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	A PIF structure allows for the diversion of money which is otherwise payable to a taxing jurisdiction under a PILOT into a fund that is usable to offset a developer's project costs, to repay project financing, or to fund infrastructure, all as provided in the respective inducement resolution. In terms of the Metro Rail Corridor, project specific PIFs would generally be developed as projects within the Metro Rail Corridor are proposed which seek IDA financial incentives. Specific infrastructure necessary for the project and/or general infrastructure in the area of the project (or beyond) could be funded through PIF.	It would likely make sense, well in advance of specific project applications to the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) or the Amherst Industrial Development Agency (Amherst IDA) to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to establish a framework for implementing project specific PIFs along the Metro Rail Corridor once applications are received. Since such project specific PIFs would also require approval of all affected taxing jurisdictions, it might make sense to include the County and affected school districts in any MOA discussions.	ECIDA	High
	TOD Assistance	Provide TOD assistance to developers, not-for-profits, municipalities, and communities, and offer training to local Planning and Zoning Boards on TOD.	Provide a staff person within NFTA, GBNRTC, or from the TOD Regional Committee that can provide routine and on-demand TOD assistance in the form promoting funding/ financing opportunities and conducting outreach, messaging, and education on how transit can add value to real estate or a neighborhood.	TBD	High

Entity	Policy Recommendation	Description	Application/ Action Plan	Lead Agency	Priority
	Expand Go Buffalo Niagara Transportation Options	Expand the Go Buffalo Niagara initiative, a transportation management program focused on working with employers to promote employee use of alternative transportation. This program can be expanded to offer additional transit benefits to employers and employees along the Metro Rail Corridor.	Identify employers, institutions, and residential communities along the Metro Rail Corridor that would be interested in participating in the Go Buffalo Niagara initiative to promote transit use. Examples could include Sisters Hospital, Canisius College, Medaille College, and Tri-Main Center.	GBNRTC	High
	Develop a specialized TOD Fund	Many cities have worked with not-for-profits, Community Development Financing Institutions (CDFI's), philanthropic organizations, and the business sector to establish and capitalize TOD Funds. TOD Funds help investment in infrastructure to facilitate TOD, help finance TOD projects, and offer incentives to employers, employees, and residents within a TOD. This could also take the form of a TOD Live/ Work Fund to encourage people who work along Metro Rail to live along Metro Rail, funded by employers as a means of equitable housing- which provides a market for developers.	Continue to work with National LISC, Buffalo LISC, and/or other institutions to establish and fund a TOD Fund.	TOD Regional Committee with assistance from GBNRTC	Medium
	Partner with Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (BENLIC)	Numerous regions and transit agencies have partnered with local Land Banks to assemble key parcels near transit stations for TOD. The land banked parcels would then become available for Transit-Oriented Development.	Initiate discussion with BENLIC to develop a strategy for assembling key parcels near Metro Rail stations that might facilitate TOD.	TOD Regional Committee with assistance from GBNRTC and community partners	Medium
	Allow on-street parking near proposed station areas	On-street parking helps to activate streetscapes and helps storefronts survive by having short-term parking near their front doors. A change to the traffic policies and patterns along major streets would be required to calm traffic, increase walkability, and provide on-street parking.	As walkability improvements are made and construction of the Metro Rail extension begins, policies should be amended to allow on-street parking on streets where TOD is proposed.	NYSDOT, Erie County, Town of Amherst, Town of Tonawanda, City of Buffalo	Medium
City of Buffalo	Expand Better Buffalo Fund	The Better Buffalo Fund is used to fund infrastructure improvements or help bridge financing gaps for redevelopment projects. The current geography of the Better Buffalo Fund is the Central Business District, including Larkinville and Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.	Seek New York State acceptance to amend the Better Buffalo Fund language to adjust the boundaries to cover all of Main Street in the City of Buffalo, allowing the Fund to be used as a TOD redevelopment tool along Main Street.	City of Buffalo and Empire State Development	Very High
	Evaluate potential to develop parking management district	Currently, Buffalo Civic Auto Ramps manages parking ramps in the City and the City of Buffalo Parking Department manages on-street parking. The income from either goes towards the General Fund and is not dedicated towards infrastructure improvements in any area. Creating a parking management district would allow income from parking around Metro Rail stations to go towards infrastructure investments dedicated to facilitating TOD. This allows money spent on parking in the station area to be dedicated back to improvements to the station area.	The first step would be to evaluate the feasibility of developing a parking management district. If feasible, the next step would be to implement a parking management district and begin identifying funds for infrastructure improvements.	City of Buffalo	Medium
	Amend Green Code to allow for higher densities at LaSalle station	Overall, the Green Code is very TOD supportive. Depending on the desired TOD at LaSalle station, the Green Code may need to be amended to allow for slightly higher densities in the interior section of the LaSalle site (currently maximum is 3-4 stories). It is possible to increase densities slightly in the interior portions of the site without negatively impacting Main Street or the surrounding neighborhoods.	This can either be a proactive revision to the Green Code, or reactive to a development plan for the site dependent upon the density distribution of the site.	City of Buffalo (or applicant seeking amendment)	Medium

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Policy Recommendation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Application/ Action Plan</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Town of Amherst	Implement proposed Imagine Amherst zoning revisions	The Town of Amherst has been developing new zoning for its commercial districts (covering Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road). The Imagine Amherst zoning revisions will reflect more of a form based code that encourages mixed-uses, active streetscapes, and increased density. These code changes would ultimately facilitate the development of Transit-Supportive and Transit-Oriented Development.	The Town of Amherst should finalize Imagine Amherst zoning revisions and have the Town Board adopt new zoning for the commercial districts, at least for those areas along Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road.	Town of Amherst	High
	Update Comprehensive Plan	The current Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan was amended in 2015, but does not reflect the Metro Rail extension to the Northtowns. The Comprehensive Plan should be updated to reflect the Metro Rail extension and prepare Amherst for transportation, land use, and other community implications. This will also help determine where Transit-Oriented Development should occur and where park-and-ride will be acceptable.	As the Metro Rail extension Environmental Impact Statement and preliminary design progresses, the Town of Amherst should update its Comprehensive Plan in the next couple years to reflect the project.	Town of Amherst	High
	Amend Parking Standards	Revise the Town of Amherst Zoning Code (or include as part of the new commercial zoning under Imagine Amherst) to amend the parking standards to reflect a more TOD supportive standard. This would include reducing or eliminating parking minimums, not allowing parking in front or side yards, requiring shared parking in certain areas where TOD is promoted, etc.	The Town of Amherst should revise their parking standards, possibly as part of the larger zoning revisions under Imagine Amherst, to reflect more TOD supportive parking standards.	Town of Amherst	High
	Implement Stormwater Management Best Practices along Niagara Falls Boulevard	Currently, there are sanitary and storm sewer capacity issues along and adjacent to the Niagara Falls Boulevard corridor causing drainage issues, especially near the intersection of Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road, and constraining redevelopment opportunities. Implementing stormwater management best practices that include green stormwater practices as part of roadway construction or redevelopment will help alleviate stormwater issues. Along with the implementation of green stormwater practices, there will be a need to increase sanitary sewer capacity through a series of capital projects and inflow & infiltration reduction measures.	Implement policy to require green stormwater management practices as roadway construction occurs or as redevelopment occurs along Niagara Falls Boulevard.	Town of Amherst and NYS-DOT	Medium
Town of Tonawanda	Update Comprehensive Plan	The current Town of Tonawanda Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2014, but does not reflect the Metro Rail extension to the Northtowns. The Comprehensive Plan should be updated to reflect the Metro Rail extension and prepare Tonawanda for transportation, land use, and other community implications. This will also help determine where Transit-Oriented Development should occur and where park-and-ride will be acceptable.	As the Metro Rail extension Environmental Impact Statement and preliminary design progresses, the Town of Tonawanda should update its Comprehensive Plan in the next couple years to reflect the project.	Town of Tonawanda	High
	Revise Zoning along Niagara Falls Boulevard	Currently, the Town of Tonawanda's Zoning Code for commercial zoning along Niagara Falls Boulevard reflects more of a suburban strip commercial code. Revision of the code would require redevelopment to be in accordance with Transit-Supportive and Transit-Oriented Development principles.	The Comprehensive Plan amendment should support revision of the zoning code to revise or implement new TOD supportive zoning along Niagara Falls Boulevard.	Town of Tonawanda	High

Entity	Policy Recommendation	Description	Application/ Action Plan	Lead Agency	Priority
	Amend Parking Standards	Revise the Town of Tonawanda Zoning Code (or include as part of the new commercial zoning) to amend the parking standards to reflect a more TOD supportive standard. This would include reducing or eliminating parking minimums, not allowing parking in front or side yards, requiring shared parking, etc.	The Town of Tonawanda Zoning Code should be revised, possibly as part of larger zoning revisions, to reflect more TOD supportive parking standards.	Town of Tonawanda	High
	Implement Stormwater Management Best Practices along Niagara Falls Boulevard	Currently, there are sanitary and storm sewer capacity issues along Niagara Falls Boulevard causing drainage issues, especially near the intersection of Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road, and constraining redevelopment opportunities. Implementing stormwater management best practices that include green stormwater practices as part of roadway construction or redevelopment will help alleviate stormwater issues.	Implement policy to require green stormwater management practices as roadway construction occurs or as redevelopment occurs along Niagara Falls Boulevard.	Town of Tonawanda and NYSDOT	Medium
Other	Allow on-street parking near proposed station areas	This would require a change to the traffic patterns along major streets that calm traffic, increase walkability, and provide on-street parking. On-street parking helps to activate streetscapes and helps storefronts survive by having short-term parking near their front doors.	As walkability improvements are made and construction of the Metro Rail extension begins, policies should be amended to allow on-street parking on streets where TOD is proposed.	NYSDOT, Erie County, Town of Amherst, Town of Tonawanda, City of Buffalo	Medium

# 8. FUNDING AND FINANCING MECHANISMS

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## 8.1. INTRODUCTION

The following is a “toolkit” that can be used by implementing agencies and stakeholders for identifying potential mechanisms to fund and/or finance infrastructure improvements. Many of these funding and financing mechanisms can also be considered by NFTA to fund and finance the Metro Rail extension and operation. This section includes a detailed discussion of value capture methods for both site-by-site as well as corridor-wide infrastructure projects.

There are a range of funding and financing mechanisms used around the country to fund and finance transit and transit-supportive infrastructure to stimulate TOD development. Funding and financing mechanisms can be broken down into a number of categories:

- Direct fees
- Debt
- Tax abatements, credit and credit assistance
- Equity
- Grants and other philanthropic sources
- Value capture

Chapter 10 in the main report, includes a table that discusses various funding and financing mechanisms that are either currently available in the Buffalo Niagara Region or that other areas in the country have utilized and could be considered here. The table is meant to be an exhaustive list of mechanisms. The recommended funding and financing mechanisms that should be pursued for Transit-Oriented Development and Transit-Supportive Infrastructure along the Metro Rail Corridor are discussed in further detail at the end of this chapter, but involve a mix of PILOT Increment Financing and joint development projects.

# 9. STATION AREA PLANS

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## 9.1. INTRODUCTION

Building off the input from stakeholders and the community at TOD workshop #3 in October 2017 where participants were asked which station areas had the best potential for Transit-Oriented Development, the Steering Committee selected six station areas to develop station area plans for. These station areas represent a range of TOD typologies across multiple jurisdictions - DL&W, Summer-Best, Utica, LaSalle, Boulevard Mall, and Audubon.

## 9.2. STATION AREA PLANS

The following station area plans are built around a vision for their future build-out along with a number of themes that line up with the Transit-Oriented Development focus strategies outlined in the Priority Infrastructure and Policy Strategies chapter. The station area plans are meant to be conceptual as to not focus on design detail, but capture a vision as to how the community and stakeholders foresee these station areas evolving as Transit-Oriented Development and transit-supportive communities. As these station area plans are realized, specific design details will continue to emerge, guided by these station area plans. Accompanying the station area plans is a discussion of the station area plan vision as well as an outline of key infrastructure strategies that should be undertaken to help achieve the station area plan vision.

## 9.3. DL&W

The DL&W station area plan centers on the new Metro Rail station that will be located within a reactivated DL&W Terminal, providing enhanced transit access to the Cobblestone District.

The focus of this station area plan is to build off the investment in DL&W Terminal, which includes creating a new Metro Rail station on the first level along with reactivation of the 2nd level. The South Park Avenue and Buffalo River frontages are also activated through new public access improvements. New TOD development is focused on the blocks where surface parking currently exists to reactivate urban blocks. Key activity corridors and major connections are focused on enhancing connectivity between Cobblestone and adjacent neighborhoods as well as within the Cobblestone District, and specifically enhancing connectivity to the DL&W Terminal Station. The key east-west spine is Perry Street, and the key north-south spine is Mississippi Street. Both of these streets should comprise of active street fronting uses that generate streetscape activity and result in a more engaging and intriguing atmosphere. To break up the large blocks and create a more urban grid, Mississippi Street and Columbia Street are extended through to Scott Street.

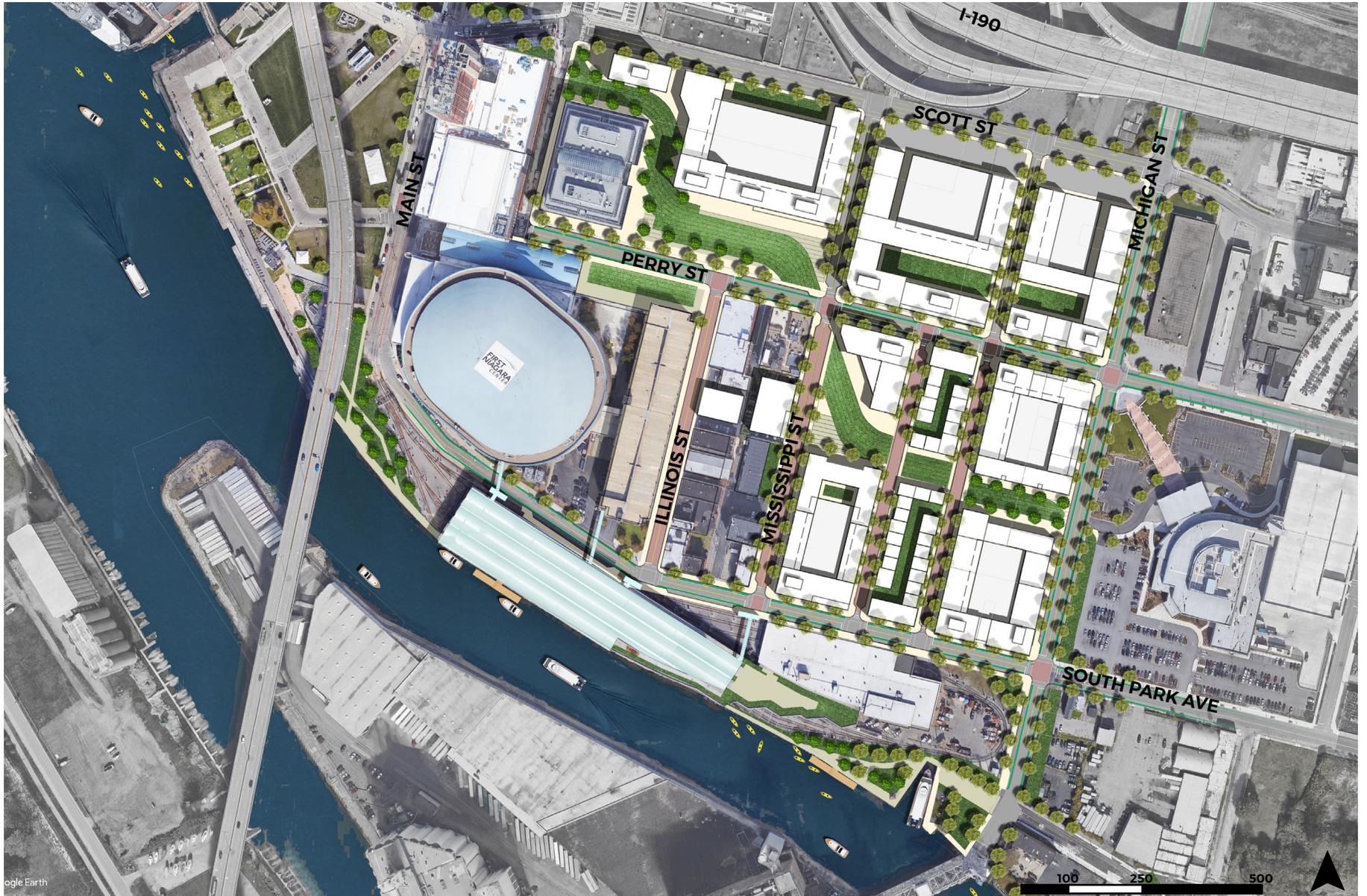


Figure 3. DL&W Illustrative Plan

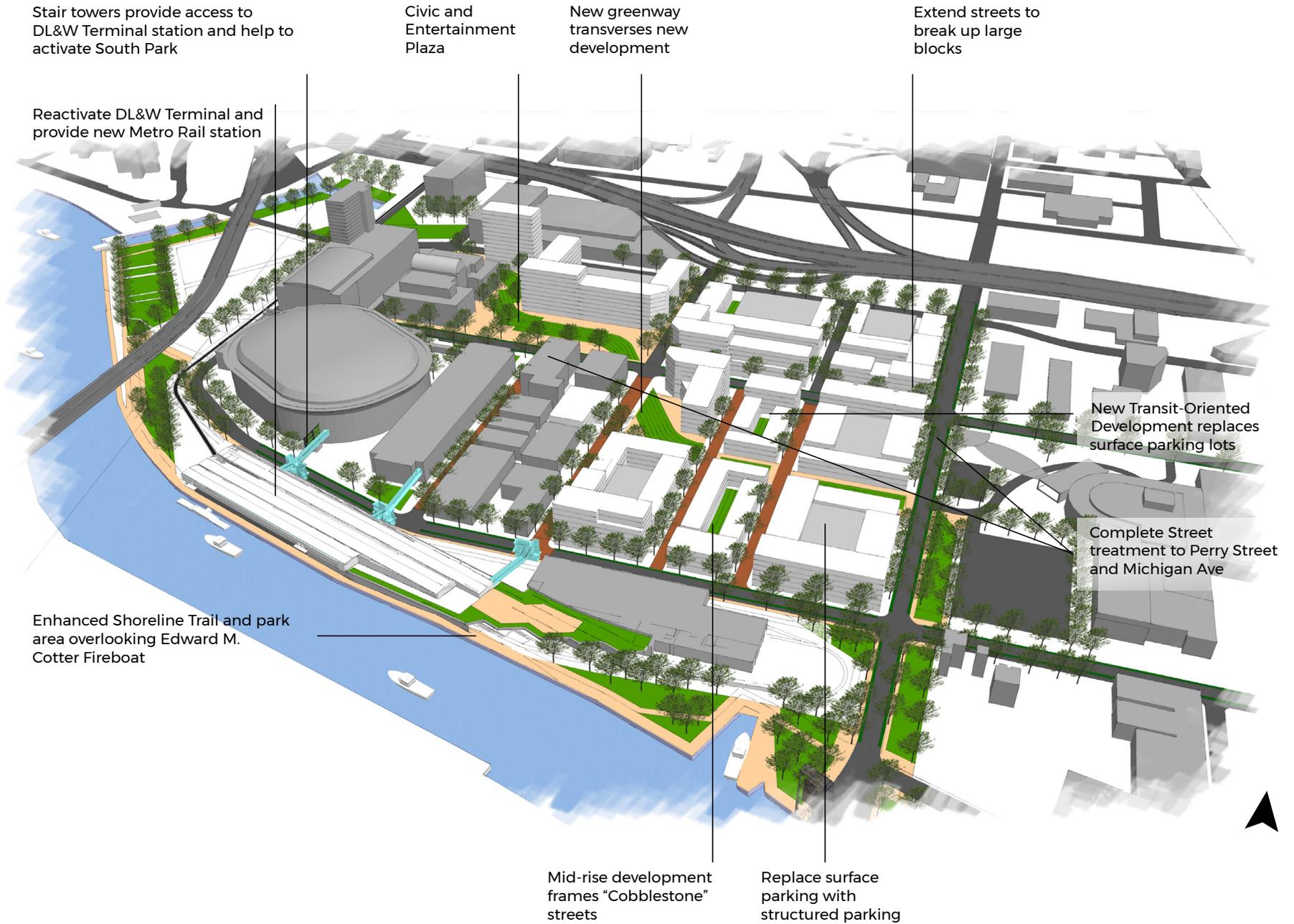


Figure 4. DL&W Station Area Massing Concept

## 9.4. SUMMER-BEST

The Summer-Best station area plan is centered on the existing Summer-Best Station at the intersection of Main Street and Best Street.

The focus of the Summer-Best station area plan is to build off the recent investment and growth at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus to spur complimentary development. New Transit-Oriented Development is focused on the block encompassed by Main Street, Dodge Street, Ellicott Street, and Best Street, where the Summer-Best Station building is located. Secondary Transit-Oriented Development looks to infill vacant or underutilized property along Main Street with street fronting urban development with context appropriate residential development extending back beyond Main Street, transitioning to adjacent neighborhoods. The key east-west spine is Summer Street/ Best Street, and the key north-south spine is Main Street. A new greenspace would be created on the vacant land at the southeast corner of Main Street and Best Street to bring an engaging civic space to the area, helping to bridge the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus with Summer-Best Station.



Figure 5. Summer-Best Station Area Illustrative Plan



Figure 6. Summer-Best Station Area Massing Concept

## 9.5. UTICA

The Utica station area plan is centered on the existing Utica station located on the northeast corner of Main Street and Utica Street.

The focus of this station area plan is to “fill in the corners,” which means to bring active storefront development up to the intersection to frame an urban, transit-oriented neighborhood at the intersection of Main Street and Utica Street. New Transit-Oriented Development is focused on overbuild of the Utica station and the properties on the west side of Main Street that have expansive surface parking lots that can be infilled. Secondary Transit-Oriented Development looks to infill vacant and underutilized property along Main Street with street fronting development, with context appropriate residential development extending back beyond Main Street, transitioning to adjacent neighborhoods. The key east-west spine is Utica Street, and the key north-south spine is Main Street. A new bus pull-off is located on Utica Street that will replace the existing bus loop. This bus pull-off will include an enhanced transfer area that will make the transfer between Metro Bus and Metro Rail more comfortable while also providing a more identifiable station for the community.



Figure 7. Utica Station Illustrative Plan

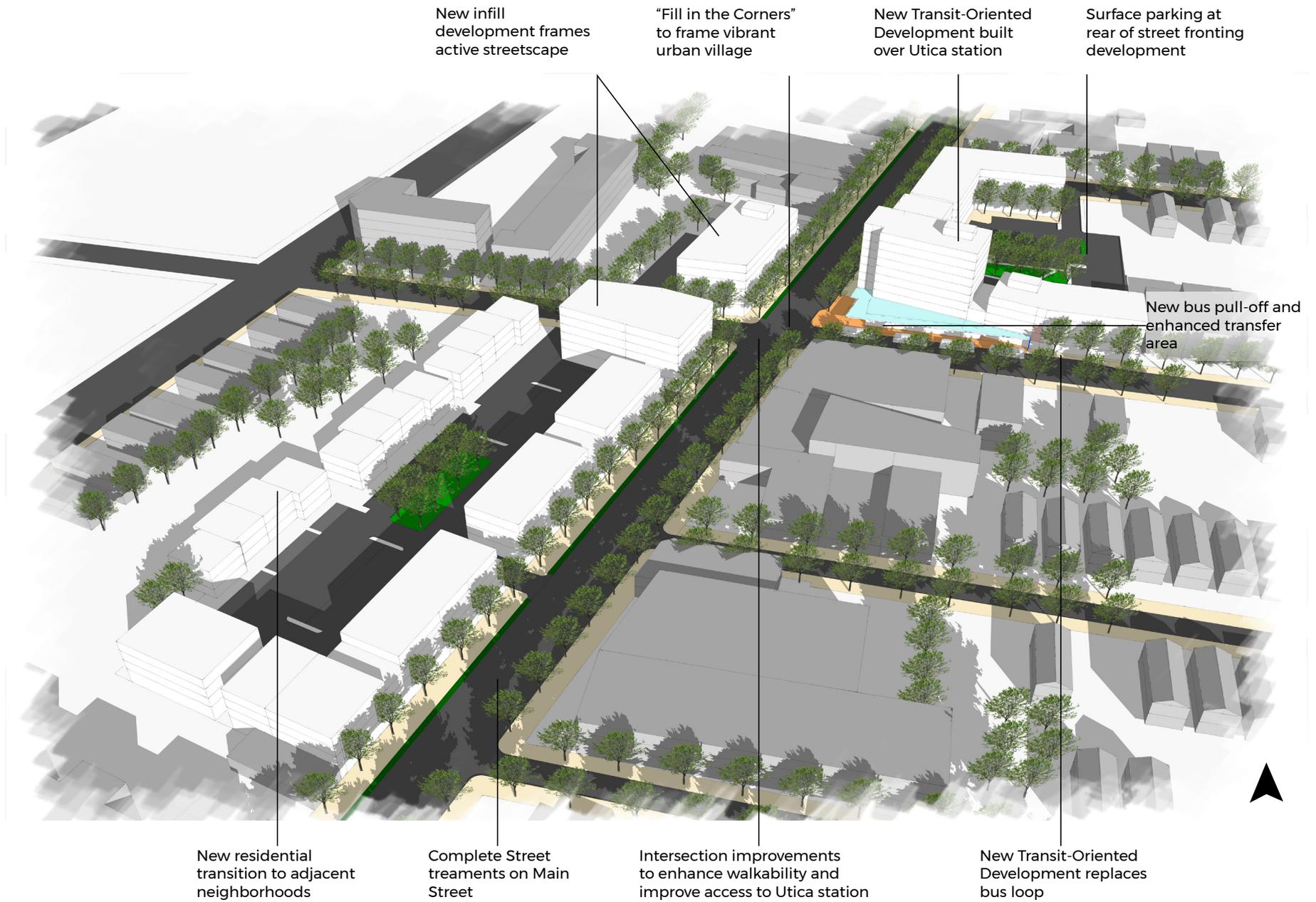


Figure 8. Utica Station Area Massing Concept

## 9.6. LASALLE

The LaSalle station area plan covers the existing LaSalle station as well as the adjacent park-and-ride lot and nearby properties.

The focus of this station area plan is to pilot a Transit-Oriented Development and mobility hub at a publicly owned site – the park-and-ride lot that is partially owned by NFTA and City of Buffalo. New Transit-Oriented Development is focused on overbuild of the LaSalle station as well as on the adjacent park-and-ride lot. The LaSalle station area should build off the multi-modal opportunities presented by the North Buffalo Rails-to-Trails to create a mobility hub and strengthen the University Heights neighborhood economically by offering a type of development not currently available. Complete Street treatments would be implemented along Main Street improving walkability and better tying in the east side of Main Street to LaSalle station. A new roadway would be extended into the site, aligning with Minnesota Avenue, that would open up the parking lot for development opportunities. Open space would connect the site to Shoshone Park and extensions of trails and bike lanes would connect the LaSalle station area to adjacent neighborhoods.

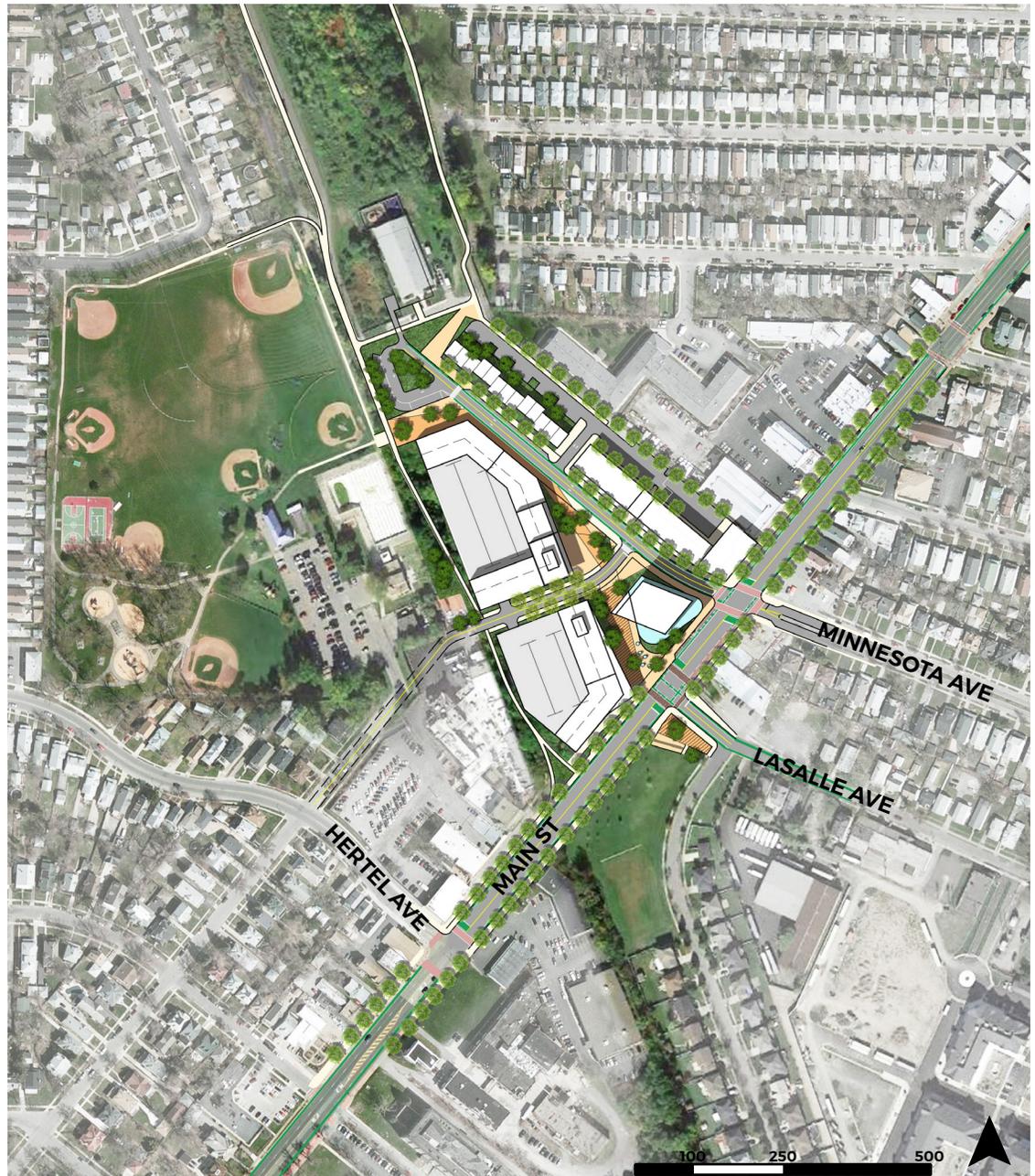


Figure 9. LaSalle Station Area Illustrative Plan



Figure 10. LaSalle Station Area Massing Concept

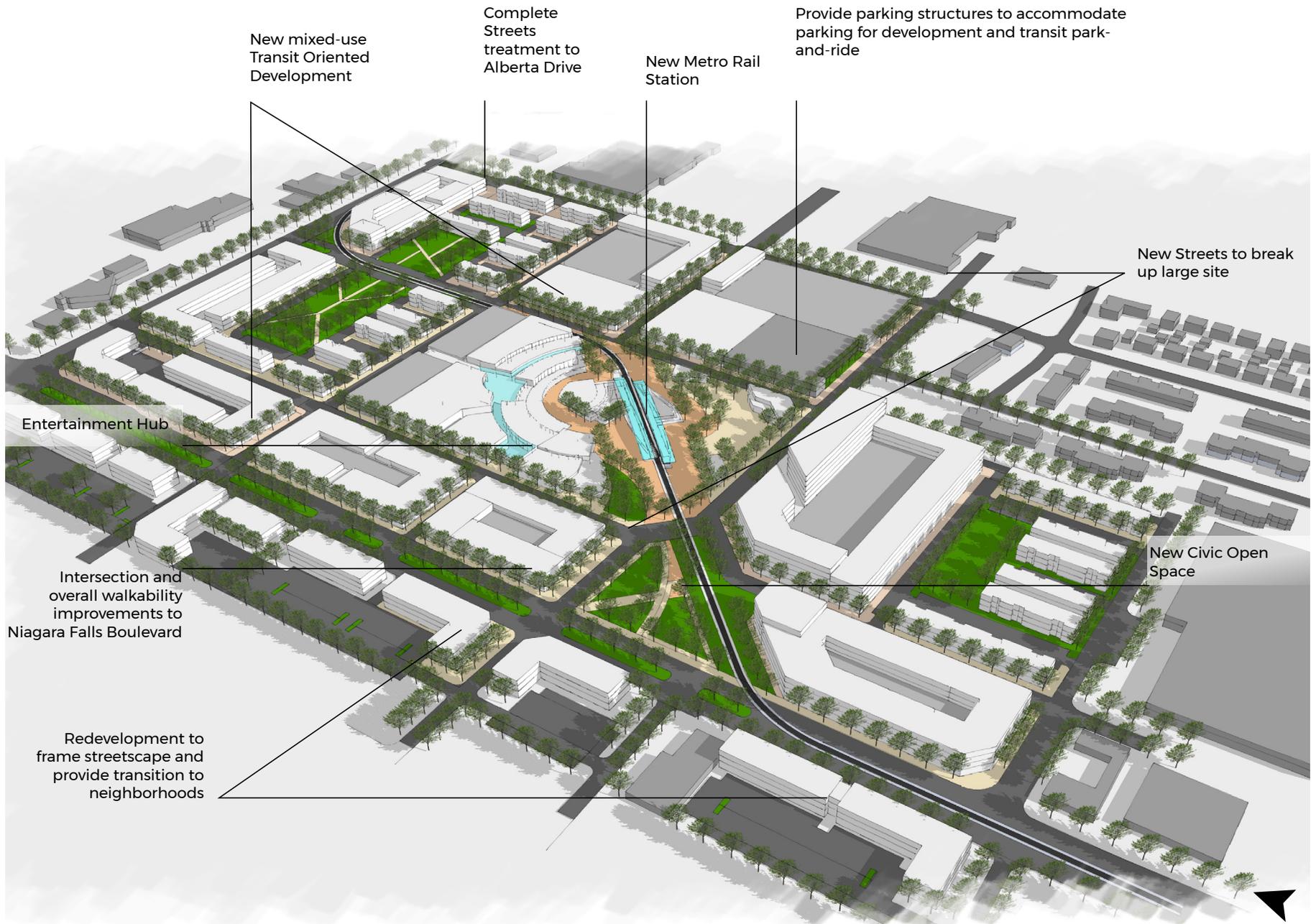
## 9.7. BOULEVARD MALL

The Boulevard Mall station area is centered on a station proposed as part of the Metro Rail extension. The station would be located either along Niagara Falls Boulevard or, as is the case in the following station area plan within the Boulevard Mall site.

The focus of this station area plan is to remake the Boulevard Mall into a transit-oriented “Live, Work, Play” neighborhood. New Transit-Oriented Development is centered on a new Metro Rail station located central to the Boulevard Mall site, surrounded by Transit-Oriented Development. Secondary Transit-Oriented Development looks to infill vacant or underutilized property along Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road with street fronting transit-supportive development that allows for a transition to adjacent neighborhoods. Complete Street treatments to Niagara Falls Boulevard, Maple Road, and Alberta Drive will provide much needed walkability and multi-modal transportation improvements. A new street network and smaller block sizes within the Boulevard Mall site will break up the large site and improve connectivity.



Figure 11. Illustrative Plan



**Figure 12.** Boulevard Mall Station Area Massing Concept

## 9.8. AUDUBON

Transit serving the Audubon station area is centered on a station proposed as part of the Metro Rail extension. The station would be located along Audubon Parkway either near the intersection of Sylvan Parkway or, as is the case in the following station area plan- near the Amherst Town Complex, which includes the police/ court building, senior center, and library.

The focus of this station area plan is to create a Transit-Oriented neighborhood center within the traditional office park setting of Audubon, utilizing the civic services at the Amherst Town Complex as a generator. New Transit-Oriented Development is centered on a new Metro Rail station located along Audubon Parkway adjacent to the Amherst Town Complex. Utilizing government owned land on the east side of Audubon Parkway, development frames the entry road to the Town Complex and provides a neighborhood center with active streetscape and upper floor mixed-uses. Secondary Transit-Oriented Development looks to infill underutilized property and parking areas along Audubon Parkway with mixed-use, transit-supportive development that helps to create a more walkable and transit-supportive environment. Complete Street treatments to Audubon Parkway and Sylvan Parkway will improve walkability and multi-modal transportation opportunities. Utilizing the existing Audubon trail network and creating a new connection to the Weinberg Campus area improves connectivity and accessibility to/from the station.



**Figure 13.** Audubon Station Area Illustrative Plan



Figure 14. Audubon Station Area Massing Concept

