

# East Buffalo Airport Metro Rail Extension Analysis



CITIZENS FOR REGIONAL TRANSIT

Updated 2022 by

DARSHANA SUBRAMANIAM

CORNELL UNIVERSITY HIGH ROAD FELLOW

Original Work by  
ELIZABETH TABER 2021  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY HIGH ROAD FELLOW

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

Transportation access is one of the most important components of escaping poverty. Transportation is ranked as the primary need by service providers and the second-ranked need by residents in the Buffalo region.

The term “East Buffalo” has not yet been decided by the community as the preferred term for the city east of Main Street. “East Side” is also acceptable. For the purposes of this paper, we will use “East Buffalo.”

The East Buffalo Airport Extension would help facilitate a more robust transit option for those living and working in East Buffalo. The extension would consist of 13 miles of new track with estimated construction costs of between \$559 million and \$806 million for the state and local government.

Buffalo’s Light Rail Rapid Transit (Metro Rail/LRRT) system is more easily accessible than Metro buses for those with physical disabilities and requires less assistance to use.

Buffalo’s Metro Rail system performs better than its bus system on affordability, speed, and safety, but similarly for efficiency (proportion of on-time arrivals). The Metro Rail system meets regional demands for efficiency.

Light Rail systems have a positive impact on public health, which is particularly important for East Buffalo residents, where data show poorer health outcomes among residents than the rest of the city on average.

Improved public transit connectivity between Buffalo’s inner city and suburbs would improve access to fresh food, education centers, healthcare, shopping, and cultural/recreational amenities. All are top considerations for improving transportation access for East Buffalo residents.

57 hours, \$965, and 23 wasted gallons of fuel per driver per year are lost by commuters in Buffalo. This is in addition to the time, money and gas that would be spent commuting without the congestion. That is, it is the additional time and money spent because of the congestion.

Households in the East Buffalo Airport Corridor spend an average of 12% of their income on local mobility needs, making transportation the second-largest household expense after housing.

Just over 30 percent of households in East Buffalo do not have access to a car. The East Buffalo Airport Corridor has twice the rate of car inaccessibility than the City of Buffalo at large.<sup>1</sup>

Comparing 2010 Census data with 2020 Census findings shows a reversal from population loss to a population gain in both the City of Buffalo and Town of Cheektowaga.

The East Buffalo Airport Corridor’s population density lands at 5,182, below Buffalo’s density of 6,436 people per square mile when the area surrounding the airport is not incorporated, and 4,416 when the airport area is incorporated. The corridor comprises 17% of the region’s population and has a higher vacancy rate than the rest of Buffalo and Cheektowaga.

The East Buffalo Airport Corridor has a poverty rate well above that of Cheektowaga as a whole and in line with Buffalo's poverty rate, although these rates vary by community along the corridor.

---

<sup>1</sup> Maciag, M. (2021, June 14). *Vehicle ownership in U.S. Cities data and map*. Governing.  
<https://www.governing.com/archive/car-ownership-numbers-of-vehicles-by-city-map.html>

Conditions are ripe for extending Metro Rail through East Buffalo and Cheektowaga to the Airport and a Park-n-Ride on Transit Road.

The East Buffalo Airport Corridor follows similar patterns to the rest of Buffalo and Cheektowaga regarding employment rate. We note that employment rates for three of the four communities examined along the corridor fall below the regional average.

The East Buffalo Airport Corridor has a racial composition like that of Buffalo at large. Residents within the East Buffalo Airport Corridor have a high school graduation rate 20% lower than Buffalo at large and a 29% lower rate of degree attainment. Metro Rail would link community members to many educational resources.

Rapid transit investment in East Buffalo would capitalize on and enhance the East Buffalo Avenues Initiative, an ongoing investment of \$65 million in East Buffalo by New York State. Master Plans for major institutions along the corridor, like the Broadway Market and Central Terminal, add momentum to the potential for private investment, as Larkin Development Group's initial investments in the Larkin District became the catalyst for the node of redevelopment that would become "Larkinville." Additional investments of more than \$110 million from the State of New York are helping to stabilize and grow the Fillmore Corridor. These monies are spurring private investment on a large scale.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS REPORT SPONSORS

---

Fellowship and research for this report was sponsored by the Partnership for the Public Good, the Cornell University High Road Fellow program, and was created for Citizens for Regional Transit.

## COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEES

---

The following is a list of community stakeholders interviewed for the purpose of this report about Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (eTOD) and equitable mobility in East Buffalo. Their input was invaluable for guiding the focus and input of this report. No individual listed below is responsible for the content or findings of the following analysis.

Dena Belzer, Founding President, Strategic Economics

Paul F. Ciminelli, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation

Brian Conley, Senior Planner, University of Buffalo Regional Institute (UBRI)

Donna Edwards, Community Activist, Fillmore Forward

Fred Frank, Assistant Vice President & Lead Planner, WSP

Lesle Honore, Managing Director of Strategy and Communications, Center for Neighborhood Technology

Robert Jones, Manager of Service Planning, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA)

Darren E. Kempner, Manager, Grants and Government Affairs, NFTA

Dan Leonard, Project Development Manager, Wendel Development

Michael Finn, Executive Director, Metropolitan Planning, Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)

Paul J. Tronolone, Vice President for Policy & Planning, Empire State Development (ESD)

Howard Zemsky, Founder and Director Emeritus, Larkin Development Group

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	2
Acknowledgements Report Sponsors .....	4
Community Stakeholder Interviewees .....	4
Abbreviations and Terminology .....	6
Regarding Census Data.....	6
INTRODUCTION .....	7
Equitable Transit-Oriented Development .....	8
USING TRANSIT TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY AND IMPROVE MOBILITY .....	9
EAST BUFFALO AIRPORT EXTENSION .....	13
Overview.....	13
Transportation Access and Use in the Corridor .....	16
Estimated Extension Cost .....	18
East BUFFALO Airport Corridor Social Characteristics.....	19
EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (eTOD) TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS .....	21
Principles of equitable TOD .....	21
Social Aspects .....	22
Environmental .....	26
Clean Air and Reduction in Greenhouse Gases .....	27
Financial Impact.....	28
NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES .....	30
Larkinville Neighborhood Profile.....	30
Broadway-Fillmore Profile .....	35
Wildroot Neighborhood Profile.....	41
Walden Neighborhood Profile.....	46
APPENDICES.....	51
Appendix A – Metro Rail Extension Evaluation Criteria .....	51
Appendix B – Comparison of Emissions from Transit Alternatives .....	53
Appendix C – Updated 2020 US Census Data.....	55
SOURCES.....	63

## ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

---

**CBB:** Census Business Builder

**Captive Riders:** Lower-income people who must use transit because they don't own cars

**Choice Riders:** Higher-income people with cars

**eTOD:** Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

**GBNRTC:** Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, MPO

**Grade Crossing:** The crossing point between a railroad and a street

**LRRT:** Light Rail Rapid Transit

**MPO:** Metropolitan Planning Organization

**NFTA:** Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

**TOD:** Transit-Oriented Development (see eTOD above)

**Wildroot:** For the purpose of this report the Walden-Bailey-Broadway community is referred to as "Wildroot", in reference to the landmark Wildroot Building adjacent to a proposed station on the corridor

## REGARDING CENSUS DATA

---

The report has been updated based on 2020 U.S. Census data by Darshana Subramaniam.

Updated data and charts are available in Appendix C.

## INTRODUCTION

This report quantifies the economic, demographic, and social composition of the East Buffalo Airport Corridor (Figure 1). It evaluates the area's needs and potential through the lens of Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (eTOD). This report provides an overview of the NFTA's planned East Buffalo Airport Metro Rail Extension and its considered stops in the Larkinville, Broadway-Fillmore, Wildroot<sup>2</sup>, and Walden Park communities. The analysis considers the economic, social, and environmental impact of an LRRT investment that would serve Buffalo's most disinvested neighborhoods while connecting Buffalo's downtown Metro Rail stations to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, serving two of the region's most vital employment centers.

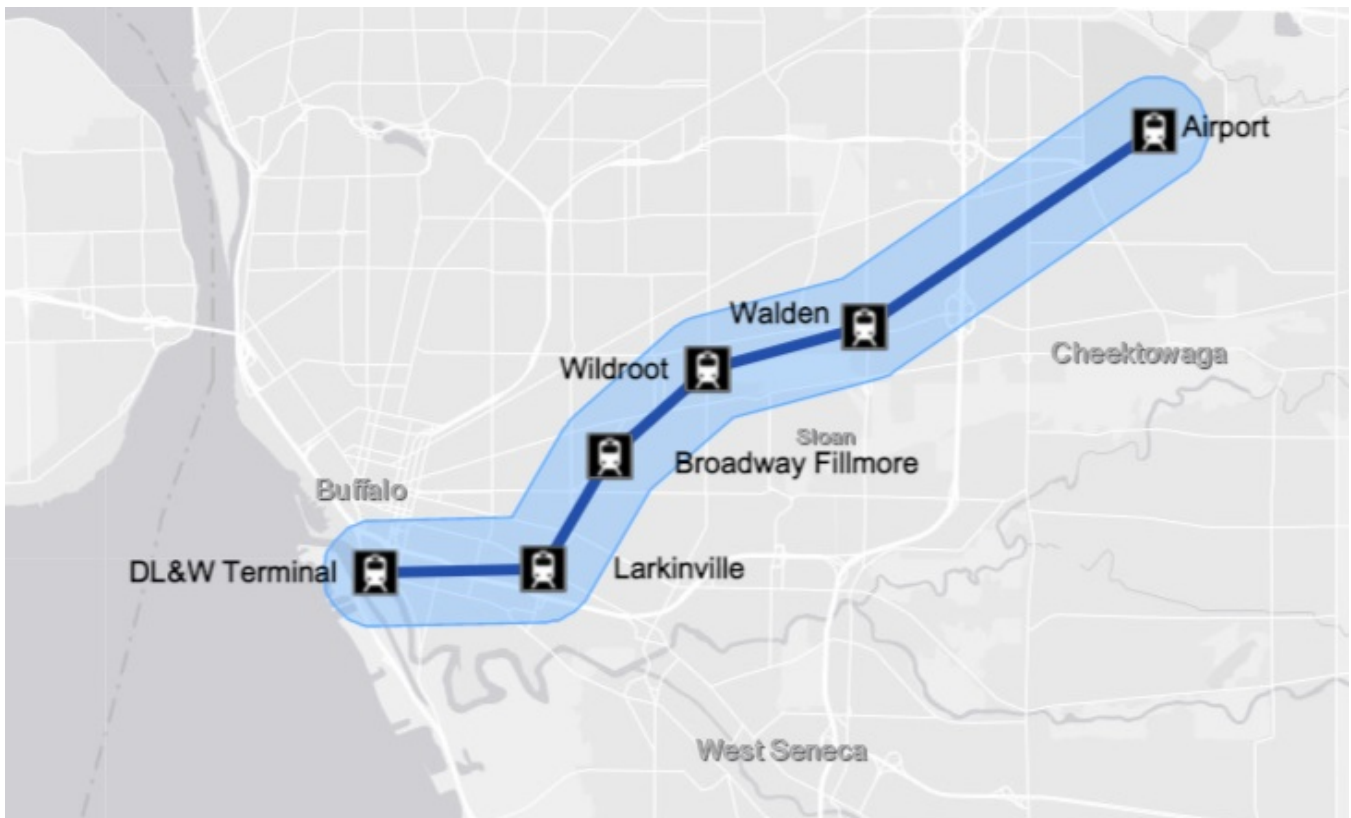


Figure 1: East Buffalo Airport Corridor Map

---

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, the Walden-Bailey-Broadway community is referred to as Wildroot in reference to the Wildroot building adjacent to the proposed station

## EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



Figure 2: CRT Proposed LRRT Full System Build

Throughout the history of American cities, low income and minority-majority communities have struggled under targeted disinvestment. This conscious neglect of the past requires more than a move away from discriminatory policies; active steps must be taken to advocate for the special needs of historically disadvantaged communities. A major component of achieving economic and racial justice is equitable access to fast, efficient public transportation.

Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (eTOD) focuses on providing affordable housing, amenities, and transportation services to communities with the greatest need rather than prioritizing immediate returns on investment. Expanding Buffalo's Metro Rail Rapid Transit from downtown to the airport would provide an efficient, timesaving means of getting to essential destinations to positively impact residents' quality of life.



## USING TRANSIT TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY AND IMPROVE MOBILITY

Transportation access is a vital component of equity. The “2020 Buffalo Niagara Regional Report by Numbers in Need” identified transportation as a pressing barrier for residents with lower incomes. [29] The lowest earning fifth of Americans spend 40.2% of their take-home pay on transportation, primarily due to the expense of owning and maintaining private vehicles. [40]<sup>3</sup> Cities with effective and expansive access to public transportation dramatically lower the share of earnings spent on transportation for the average-earning family: from 25% of total income to as little as 9%. [41]<sup>4</sup> Studies find that commute time is one of the most significant factors in an individual's chances of escaping poverty, as poor transportation options impede an individual's access to employment opportunities, healthcare, and education centers. [41]

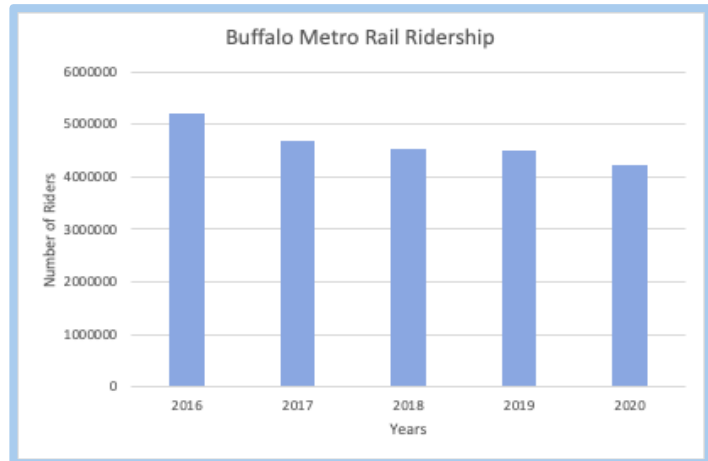


Figure 3: Rail ridership in Buffalo, NFTA metro (2020)

Lower income populations are more likely to use public transportation, and thus depend on its reliability to access jobs, the wider community, and educational opportunities. Nonetheless, East Buffalo, home to a disproportionately large share of Buffalo's lower income and minority population, has poorer access to multimodal transportation than Buffalo at large. East Buffalo is less easily walkable, has less access to bicycle infrastructure, sees poor transit service because urban sprawl has thinned population and siphoned transit funds from the city to suburban sprawl. Buffalo's Metro Rail does not have an East Buffalo line. Residents must rely on buses that are slow and require many transfers. Therefore, improving access to *rapid* public transportation would improve the accessibility of employment centers, healthcare institutions, education, recreation, and entertainment centers for the region's most disadvantaged residents.

Transportation is ranked as the primary community need by providers of community services such as medical institutions, libraries, and social service organizations. Transportation needs are ranked second by residents in the region. [29]<sup>5</sup> In discussions with community leaders conducted for the purpose of this report, improved access to fresh foods, education centers, and improved connectivity between the suburbs and Buffalo's downtown were cited among top considerations for public transportation expansion.

<sup>3</sup> Surface Transportation Policy Project. (2003). Why a Lack of Transportation Choices Strains the Family and Budget and Hinders Home Ownership. Smart Growth America. Retrieved from <http://old.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/transportation-costs-and-the-american-dream.pdf>, on August 3, 2017

<sup>4</sup> Chetty R. & Hendren N. (2015) The Impacts of Neighborhoods on Intergenerational Mobility. Harvard University. Retrieved from [http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/nbhds\\_exec\\_summary.pdf](http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/nbhds_exec_summary.pdf) on November 2, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Numbers in Need. (2020). The Buffalo Niagara Regional Report. <http://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/07/NumbersInNeed.pdf>

Beyond connecting citizens to resources, investment in public transportation is linked to regional economic growth. Strategic public transportation investment promotes the upward mobility of low-income residents while benefiting the economy as a whole. [1] Research finds that every \$1 invested in public transportation yields a \$4 return. Investment in public transportation is also a means of placemaking. [6] This is emphasized by Buffalo's One Region Forward report, which pointed towards the need to shift the focus of transportation funding towards stimulating growth rather than rewarding it. [13]

Buffalo's current Metro Rail consists of 6.4 miles of track running from the Erie Canal Station to the University Metro Station. Much of the line and its 15 stations are underground (See Figure 1). Initial LRRT plans for Buffalo detailed a far more extensive system. However, in the 1970's New York State canceled funding for upstate NY projects including its share of the Buffalo Metro Rail, all of SUNY including UB, and the Amherst Urban Development Corporation's Walton Woods project. Funds were diverted to New York City to avoid bankruptcy. In doing so, Federal funding for Buffalo's Metro Rail project could not be obtained without the local funding portion.<sup>6</sup> Work on Metro Rail system plans resumed in 2008 with the University at Buffalo 2020 growth plan.

In 2020, the train system cost the NFTA \$26,709,509 to operate as compared to the far more expansive bus system over 1,000 service miles which costs \$107,653,826 a year to operate<sup>7</sup>. [26]

---

<sup>6</sup> NYC Default to Force Large SUNY Cutbacks, and Development of Amherst New Community Halted by UDC, Page 1, Vol. 28, No.30, 29 October 1975, The Spectrum <https://digital.lib.buffalo.edu/items/show/84872>

<sup>7</sup> NFTA-Metro (2020). NFTA 2019-2020 Annual Performance Report. <https://www.nfta.com/media/jdubj5z3/metroperformancereport2020.pdf>

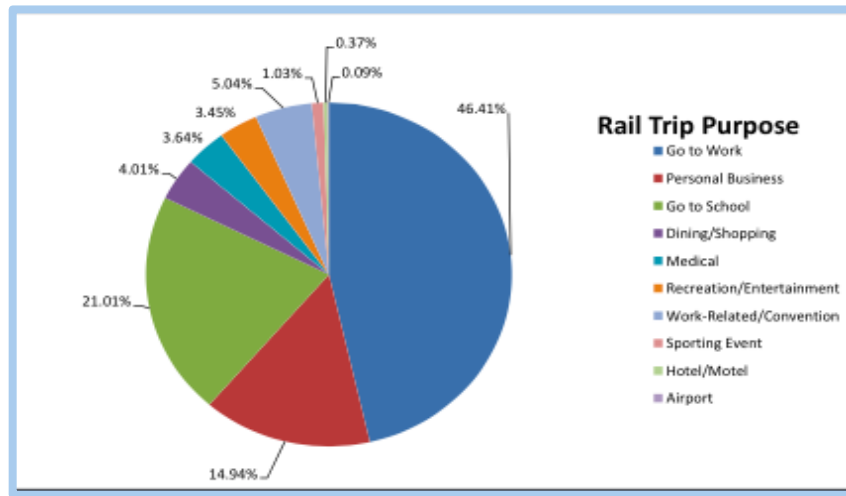


Figure 4: Transit use purpose, GBNRTC (2015)

Currently, the NFTA is conducting the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for an extension of the Metro Rail line northward to the UB Amherst campus. This extension would add 6.5 miles of rail and ten stops to the line. Analysis of the extension followed criteria listed in [Table 1 of the appendices](#). [24].

Prior to the pandemic, Metro Rail had 5,058,300 annual passengers<sup>8</sup>. Ridership has declined slowly since that point with a dramatic drop in 2020 to 2,782,065 because of pandemic conditions [26]. However, while it runs only for 6.4 miles as compared to over a thousand miles of bus services LRRT, carries 20% of all NFTA transit.

Metro Rail ranks among the most-riden light rail transit systems in the U.S. by passenger mile. Even though Metro Rail currently covers only 6% of total service miles compared to Metro Bus's 94% of total service miles, Metro Rail carries 20% of all NFTA transit riders, making it the real workhorse of Buffalo's transit system.

Most of Buffalo's frequent public transit passengers don't have access to a personal vehicle. However, the Metro Rail rapid transit attracts a significant proportion of discretionary riders, possibly due to the speed and comfort advantage it offers over travel by bus and car. As such, an expanded Metro Rail system may attract more car owners to become choice riders of public transit. [35]

City-wide, thirty percent of Buffalo residents do not have access to an automobile, and thus are limited in their ability to fully participate in the community. [17]<sup>9</sup> Residents dependent on Buffalo's public transportation report

---

<sup>8</sup> NFTA Metro, (2019). Metro Rail Expansion Project. Locally Preferred Alternative Refinement Technical Report. [https://www.nftametrorailexpansion.com/pdfs/LPA\\_refinement\\_technical\\_report\\_012019.pdf](https://www.nftametrorailexpansion.com/pdfs/LPA_refinement_technical_report_012019.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Maciag, M. (2021, June 14). *Vehicle ownership in U.S. Cities data and map*. Governing. <https://www.governing.com/archive/car-ownership-numbers-of-vehicles-by-city-map.html>

that it is difficult to use. In interviews conducted for this report, community leaders noted that transportation gaps exist in the bus running times and the routes available for residents to access job opportunities in the suburbs. In a One Region Forward survey of Western New Yorkers, 40% ranked Buffalo's public transportation at 4 out of 5 in difficulty of use for reaching work or school. [13]<sup>10</sup> This is significant as the majority of those using Buffalo's public transportation use the system to get to work or school: 46% for work; 21% for school. The next-most relevant use was for personal business at 15%<sup>11</sup>. Respondents to the One Region Forward transportation survey also ranked improving transit far above prioritizing driving, biking, or walking, and indicated that they would like to see public transportation prioritize connecting to new places. [10, 13]

---

<sup>10</sup> Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council, Niagara Frontier Transportation, Buffalo Niagara Partnership Authority, School of Architecture and Planning, University at Buffalo, . (2015). *Making connections survey results (MARCH-APRIL)*. One Region Forward. <http://www.oneregionforward.org/data-tools/making-connections-survey-results-march-april/>

<sup>11</sup> GBNRTC. (2010). *Erie County Transit Service Restructuring and Fare Study–Strategic Assessment*. Final Report 2010. <https://app.box.com/s/vhju03f9iqrwnl91mc9439k53xd5xm1n>

## EAST BUFFALO AIRPORT EXTENSION

### OVERVIEW

The proposed East Buffalo Airport Extension would connect from the downtown end of Buffalo's existing light rail line through East Buffalo terminating at the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport or slightly beyond at a Park-&-Ride close to the I-90, where it could serve suburban commuters and visitors arriving via the NYS Thruway. This above ground rail rapid transit would operate on disused legacy railroad rights-of-way, crossing from Buffalo's downtown into the Town of Cheektowaga, linking several of the highest demand destinations in the Buffalo Niagara region. As part of One Region Forward's public outreach, Western New York residents were asked what destinations were in greatest need of public transportation service. [14]

The public ranked the Buffalo Niagara International Airport the number 1 destination for needed transit service. Larkinville, Central Terminal and Walden Galleria Mall (ranked 6, 7, and 8) were among the top ten in-demand destinations. Nonetheless, MPO Transit Investment Project locations for the upcoming years (to 2024) don't prioritize these locations and show a continued lack of investment in East Buffalo. [11]



Figure 5: One Region Forward Mobile Transportation Survey





Figure 6: CRT Proposed East Buffalo Airport Extension - Stations

Expanding the light rail rapid transit system would increase the utility, speed, and value of the transit system, including the bus lines and bikeways that augment it. As an addition to the existing Metro Rail system, the East Buffalo Airport Extension would build on Buffalo's existing rail investment (worth \$2 billion in today's dollars) and create a one-seat ride from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport to Amherst. This would rapidly connect those visiting Buffalo to its growing downtown while connecting Buffalo's underserved East Buffalo communities to employment, education, and other amenities all along the existing system – with even more connectivity possible as the originally-planned system is built out incrementally in future years.

East Buffalo has the highest number of residents at or near the poverty level: 78,982 people. [29] These residents have the greatest potential to benefit from rapid transit investment and have a higher potential for transportation-related economic growth in their neighborhoods.

According to a 2010 NFTA commissioned study, the East Buffalo Airport Corridor was also found to have higher development potential and has market intensity greater than that of the Amherst Corridor which is moving forward and slated for transit extension. [10]

The East Buffalo Airport Extension corridor has a lower population density than Buffalo at large: 4,193 residents per square mile, whereas Buffalo has a density of 6,351 residents per square mile.<sup>12</sup> As such, plans for the line would limit initial stops to increase rail speed and decrease costs, given the lower density of the corridor. But the proposed line with all possible future stations is pictured above in Figure 5 to illustrate its full potential. For the purposes of this report, four station locations will be examined in detail: Larkinville, Broadway-Fillmore, Wildroot, and Walden. The area surrounding the proposed East Buffalo Airport Extension comprises 12.3% of the population of both City of Buffalo and Town of Cheektowaga, based on the Census tracts within a half mile of the proposed route. [36] Both the city of Buffalo and Cheektowaga had been losing population, but this trend was reversed as of the 2020 Census; the City of Buffalo's population grew by 6.75% to 278,379 – faster than the entire region. Cheektowaga also reversed its decline, growing 1.9% to 89,877.<sup>13</sup>

Nonetheless, according to the 2020 US Census, the corridor and communities examined continued to show population decline, except for the area surrounding the Walden stop, which shows less decline. The highest population density along the route occurs surrounding the proposed Walden stop and thins to its lowest point in the area surrounding the Airport. When the airport is removed from density estimates, the corridor's population density lands at 5,182 people per square mile still well below Buffalo's average of 6,436 people per square mile. When the area surrounding the airport is included, the corridor's population density falls to 4,460. [37]<sup>14</sup>

Community	Occupied Residences	Growth Rate	Vacancy Rate	Unoccupied Housing	Home Ownership Rate
Buffalo	110,427	-0.91%	3.30%	22,094	40.50%
Cheektowaga	35,424	-1.24%	2.30%	1,983	68.50%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	18,486	-0.68%	18.20%	4,111	53.40%

Table 1: Residential Statistics, CBB

Community	Number of Residents 2015-2019	Number of Residents 2010-2014	Share of Community	Population Growth
Buffalo and Cheektowaga	344,875	349,383	100%	-1.29%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	42,284	43,429	12.30%	-2.65%

Table 2: Population, CBB

<sup>12</sup> Open Data Network, 2018, [The population density of Buffalo, NY](#)

<sup>13</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). [Census Business Builder \(CBB\). Consumer/Residents, Demographic Characteristics](#)

<sup>14</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). [Census Business Builder \(CBB\). Consumer/Residents, Demographic Characteristics](#)

The proposed East Buffalo Airport corridor, which includes the Census tracts in the one mile surrounding the proposed line, has 18,486 occupied residences and 4,111 unoccupied units (See Table 1). [36] The corridor's vacancy rate is well above Buffalo's, which both raises concerns and provides opportunity for growth. If LRRT is placed in a sparsely populated corridor, the growth in both housing and business associated with such investments has space to expand without displacing locals. Likewise, the region has above average homeownership rates, protecting residents from concerns regarding rising rents because of investment. On the other hand, the Buffalo-Cheektowaga region is experiencing a decrease in the number of occupied housing units; while the East Buffalo Airport Corridor is no exception, its loss is occurring at a slower scale. [36]

## TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND USE IN THE CORRIDOR

The area surrounding the proposed East Buffalo Airport Corridor has poorer access to transportation infrastructure than much of the Buffalo area. There are few bike paths in East Buffalo, and community leaders cite walkability as a prime concern (See Figure 6). There are, however, two Park-&-Rides within the corridor and space for more at the proposed stations, especially at the Central Terminal with its above-ground and below-ground parking. There are 18 bus lines, out of Buffalo's 47, which cross through the corridor. These lines include 5 core routes, 10 secondary routes and one express route. [26] These bus lines have farebox revenue of 28.8%, which is above the bus system's average of 21.5%, and have 26 passengers per revenue hour, above the system average, which has 24.6 passengers per revenue hour. The three bus routes that most closely follow the route of the proposed rail extension are #4-Broadway, #6-Sycamore, and #24-Genesee. These routes have even higher farebox revenue, 29%, and passenger per revenue hour rates, 28 passengers per hour, than the region at large. These high ridership figures point to the region's potential for eTOD, especially as rail transit can attract discretionary riders at a higher rate than buses.

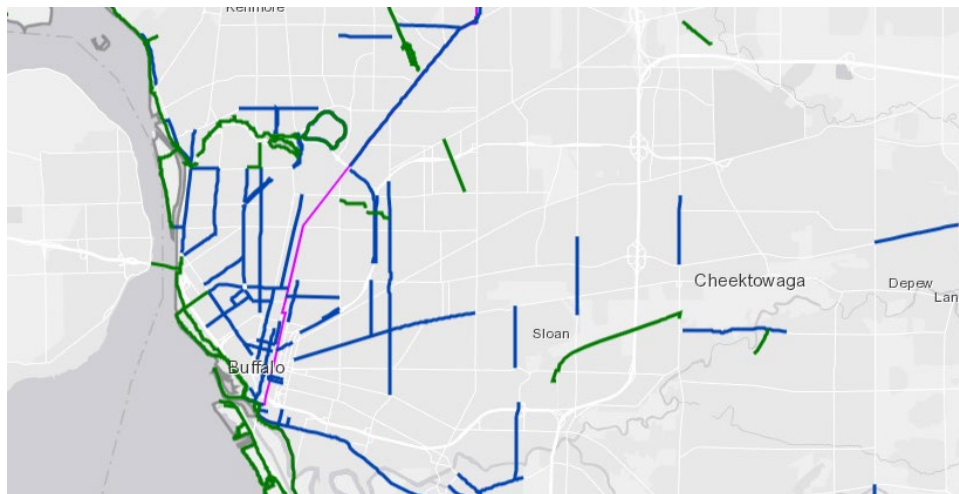


Figure 7: Bicycle Infrastructure Map (N. D.), GBNRTC<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> ARCGIS Web Application - Bike infrastructure Layer List

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5568FE1B05484D4BBBD723DCB84EA692c>



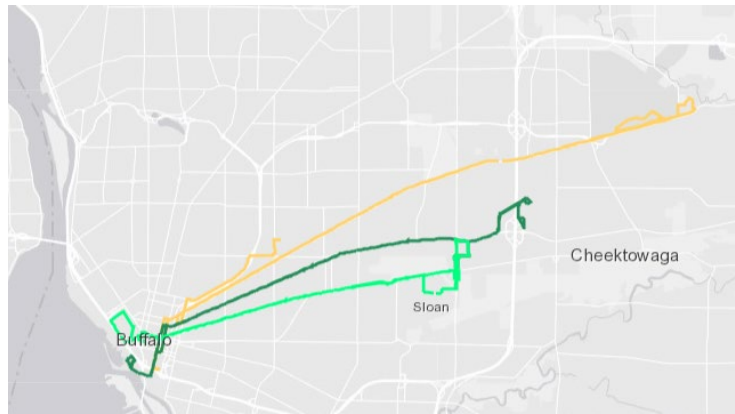


Figure 8: Bus Lines Running Along Proposed Corridor, GBNTRC (2020)<sup>16</sup>

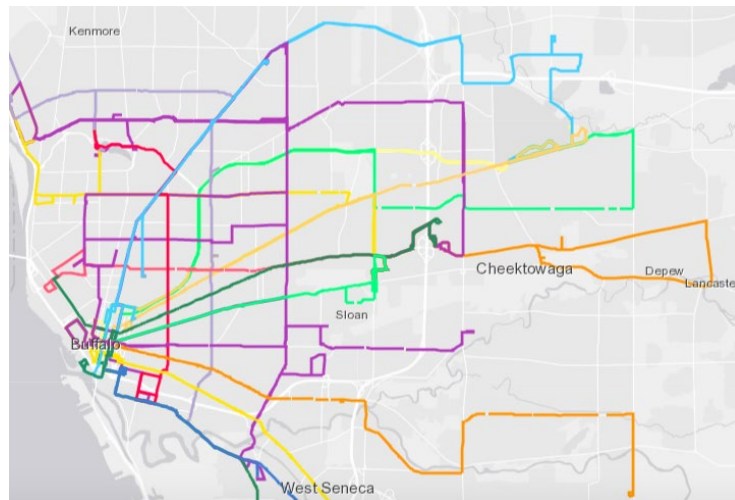


Figure 9: Transit use purpose, GBNRTC (2015)

Most residents in the East Buffalo Airport Corridor, 83.9%, use a car to commute to work. [37]<sup>17</sup> This is greater than the proportion for the City of Buffalo at large and just slightly below the commuter trends in the Town of Cheektowaga. Use of public transit is on par with the Buffalo average and significantly above Cheektowaga's. [37] Like the region at large, nearly the entire corridor commutes by car to work. Commute times are on par with the Buffalo average of 20 minutes.

One example of car travel time verses public transit in the Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood: Travel to Veterans Hospital on Main Street/Bailey Avenue: Car: 15 mins, Public Transit: 45 to 50 minutes. Wait times between buses

---

<sup>16</sup> Maps and Data, GBNRTC, <https://www.gbnrtc.org/maps>

<sup>17</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). *Census Business Builder (CBB)*. The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.Census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb.html>

and trains above 15 minutes are found to be prohibitively high for individuals who require public transportation (10)<sup>18</sup>.

Community	% Who drive alone to work	% Who carpool	% Using public transit	% Who walk to work	% Working from home	% Using other means to commute
Buffalo	65.70%	10.50%	11.30%	5.70%	2.30%	2.70%
Cheektowaga	88.30%	6.40%	1.40%	1.20%	0.80%	1.80%
Eastside Airport Corridor	73.10%	10.80%	10.60%	4.60%	1.80%	2.00%

Table 3: Transportation Accessibility, CBB, Percent of Workforce

Community	Average Travel Time	% Having no vehicle available	% Having one car available	% Having two or more cars available
Buffalo	21.0 minutes	11.79%	35.20%	53.01%
Cheektowaga	19.2 minutes	3.17%	27.80%	69.10%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	20.5 minutes	26.70%	41.40%	31.80%

Table 4: Transportation Use, CBB

## ESTIMATED EXTENSION COST

The East Buffalo Airport rail extension in full would include 13 miles of new track. The cost of this expansion is estimated between \$559 million and \$806 million for the state and local government portion under current funding formulas, with the federal government picking up the remainder of the cost.<sup>19</sup> Two factors may place this figure towards the lower end in Buffalo compared to light rail systems elsewhere: the line's right-of-way is owned primarily by the NFTA, eliminating the massive land acquisition costs that typically face other locales. Secondly, because the trains would run on disused legacy railway, this portion of the system would run almost entirely surface-based at high speed (50 mph), with minimal tunneling required.

<sup>18</sup> GBNRTC. (2010). *Erie County Transit Service Restructuring and Fare Study–Strategic Assessment*. Final Report 2010. <https://app.box.com/s/vhju03f9iqrwnl91mc9439k53xd5xm1n>

<sup>19</sup> Citizens for Regional Transit estimate for Metro Rail extensions

Mode	Cost per Mile \$ Million	Distance Miles	Total Cost \$ Million	% Federal Share	\$ Million Federal Share	\$ Million Local Share
LRRT Top Estimate	\$100	13	\$1,300	0.5	\$650	\$650
LRRT Low Estimate	\$70	13	\$910	0.5	\$455	\$455
Highways	\$177	13	\$2,301	0.8	\$1,841	\$368

Table 5: CRT Cost Estimation

## EAST BUFFALO AIRPORT CORRIDOR SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The East Buffalo Airport Corridor has a poverty rate well above that of Cheektowaga as a whole. The poverty rate is in line with Buffalo's, although it falls only slightly below due to the area surrounding the Walden stop. The Walden Neighborhood is wealthier with a median household income of \$43,552.

Community	Poverty Rate	Employment Rate	Median Household Income	% Of Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	% Of Population with a Diploma
Buffalo	30.10%	55.60%	\$37,354	27.60%	84.60%
Cheektowaga	10.70%	62.9%	\$54,002	23.60%	93.20%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	28.20%	54.9%	\$49,101	15%	84.90%

Table 6: Social Statistics, Census Business Builder (CBB)

The other three communities examined have poverty rates more closely resembling East Buffalo, the highest being in the area surrounding the Broadway-Fillmore Station at 44.3% of the population living at the poverty level.<sup>20</sup> The corridor follows similar patterns regarding employment rate and levels of educational attainment: three of the four communities examined fall below the regional average, but the rates are bolstered by above-average performance in the area surrounding the proposed Walden Station. Unsurprisingly, below-average outcomes throughout much of the corridor coincide with poor accessibility of educational and employment opportunities.

The East Buffalo Airport Corridor has a racial composition like that of Buffalo at large. The three primary racial groups in the corridor are: White, Black, and Asian. The demographic makeup of the corridor varies significantly by community. The area surrounding the Larkinville station has the highest proportion of Black residents at 58.5%, and the Broadway-Fillmore community has the highest proportion of Asian residents at 21.2%. [36]

<sup>20</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). *Census Business Builder (CBB)*. The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.Census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb.html>

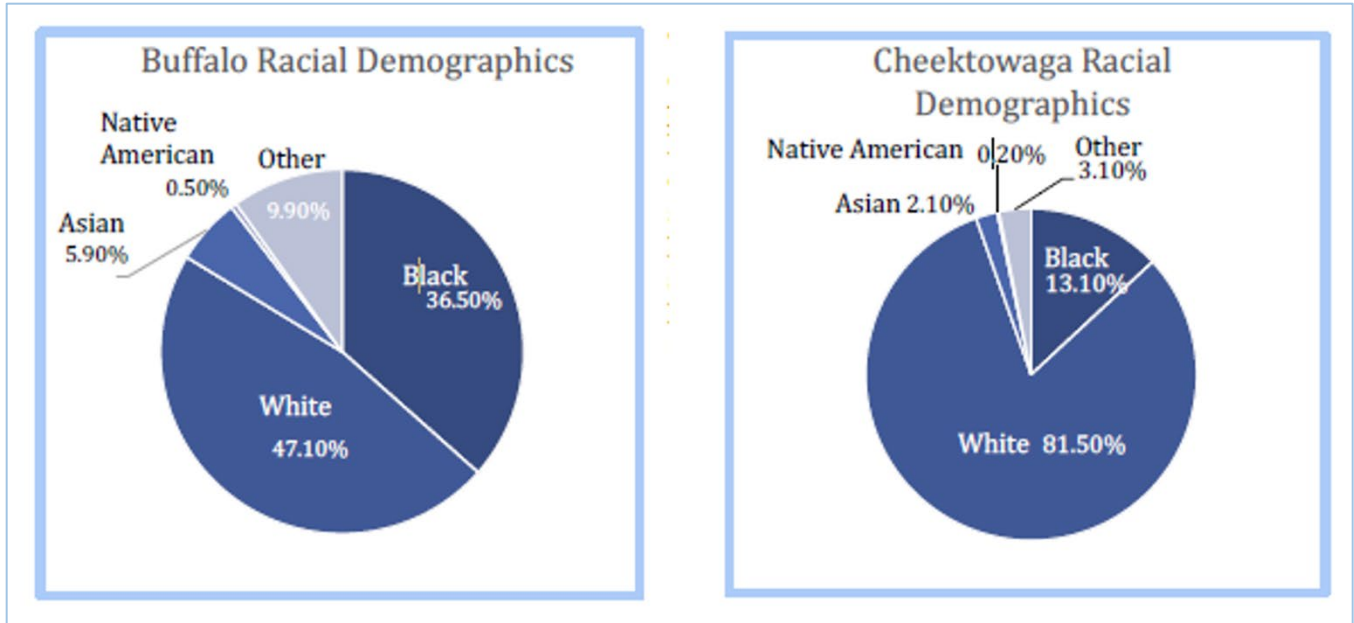


Figure 10: Buffalo Racial Demographics, CBB and Cheektowaga Racial Demographics, CBB

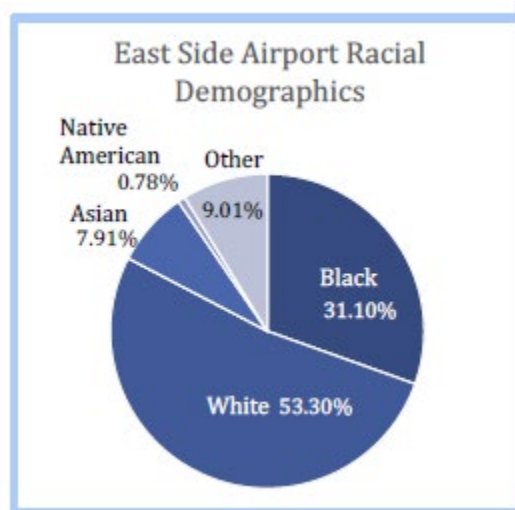


Figure 11: East Buffalo Airport Corridor Racial Demographics, CBB

## EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (ETOD) TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS

### PRINCIPLES OF EQUITABLE TOD

The implementation of eTOD aims to provide underserved communities the opportunity for growth that they would otherwise lack the resources to achieve, harnessing the housing and economic benefits of development spurred by proximity to transit for people of modest means, especially those already living in a project area. The key principles which underlie eTOD, as outlined by the Greenlining Institute, are social equity and community power, which translates into local residents having a say in what goes into their neighborhood and for whose benefit.

Mobility equity is measured through three primary criteria: increase in access to mobility, reduction in air pollution, and the enhancement of economic opportunity. [3] These measures are used below to evaluate the eTOD potential of the proposed East Buffalo Airport light rail extension.



Figure 12: eTOD Mobility Equity Indicators, Greenlining Institute

## SOCIAL ASPECTS

### Affordability

The Greenlining Institute recommends that households spend no more than 20% of their budgets on transportation costs. [3]<sup>21</sup> Households in the East Buffalo Airport Corridor spend an average of 12% of their income on local transportation. While this is below the 20% figure, transportation is the second largest household expense after housing. Additionally, the average corridor resident spent \$637.53 monthly on car maintenance and repairs. [37]<sup>22</sup> Less than half of Buffalo residents surveyed felt confident that they could handle a \$500 emergency cost. Car dependence therefore puts them at risk. [21]<sup>23</sup> Additionally, the average annual expense of \$4,847 for transportation is well above 20% of the income for a two-person family (the average family size for the corridor) at the poverty line – making the 28.2% of the corridor's population that lives at or near the poverty line below the affordability threshold.<sup>24</sup> By contrast, the maximum monthly price for Metro Bus and Rail is just \$75, a cost that has not increased in 17 years. [23]

### Accessibility

Community	Total Consumer Expenditures per Household	Consumer Expenditures on Local Transportation	Consumer Expenditures on Gasoline	Consumer Expenditures on Vehicle Maintenance and Repair
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	\$40,345.19	\$4,847.17	\$1,261.73	\$637.53
Larkinville Station	\$32,100.38	\$3,888.25	\$931.96	\$465.37
Broadway-Fillmore Station	\$29,780.58	\$3,557.33	\$931.96	\$465.37
Wildroot Station	\$34,464.78	\$4,172.54	\$1,098.74	\$542.51
Walden Station	\$49,426.51	\$6,104.41	\$1,575.36	\$789.32

Table 7: Transportation Expenses, CCB

<sup>21</sup> Creger, H., Sanchez, A., & Espino, J. (2019, November 20). *Mobility equity: Turning theory into reality*. The Greenlining Institute. <https://greenlining.org/blog-category/2018/mobility-equity-theory-reality/>

<sup>22</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). *Census Business Builder (CBB)*. The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.Census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb.html>

<sup>23</sup> A Mobile Safety Net Team. (2020). *The Buffalo Niagara Region*. <http://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/07/NumbersInNeed.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). *Census Business Builder (CBB)*. The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.Census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb.html>



Accessible public transportation should strive to provide services for the differently abled, the elderly, those with language and cultural barriers, and those without phone or bank access. [3]

Table 8 below compares the accessibility of Buffalo’s rail and bus system. [19] Buffalo’s rail system is more easily accessible than its bus system for those with physical disabilities and requires less assistance to use. [7] Both systems provide options for those dependent on cash or without smartphones, although the rail system is more easily navigable without use of a digital mapping service. Neither system provides much assistance for those with linguistic or cultural barriers, although the rail system more effectively provides services for individuals with visual or hearing impairments with the inclusion of Braille and consistent announcements. As East Buffalo currently lacks Metro Rail service, it is more difficult to navigate for differently-abled individuals. [7, 9]

Metro Rail	Metro Bus
<p>Accommodations for the differently abled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Metro Rail trains and stations are designed to be accessible to differently abled riders.</li> <li>Train cars are accessible for wheelchair riders through the first door of the first railcar</li> <li>Two wheelchair securement locations in each railcar</li> <li>Every train stops at every station and each stop is called.</li> <li>Metro offers free Park &amp; Ride lots strategically located around the region</li> <li>Service animals are permitted</li> <li>Ticket vending machines are equipped with Braille and raised letters and have Wheelchair height options.</li> <li>Many stations provide Telecommunication Devices, volume control telephones and video monitors to assist riders who are deaf or hearing impaired.</li> </ul>	<p>Accommodations for the differently abled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All vehicles have wheelchair lifts or ramps.</li> <li>Vehicles have a kneeling feature which lowers the bus.</li> <li>One to two wheelchair tie-down positions.</li> <li>Operators are required to announce major stops and to provide assistance to disabled passengers where necessary or upon request.</li> <li>Service animals and personal oxygen supply are permitted.</li> <li>In the event the wheelchair lift is not working and the next bus is not due to arrive for over 30 minutes, riders are entitled to alternative transportation upon request.</li> </ul>
<p>Accommodations for those without access to cellphones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cash payment options available</li> <li>Posted schedule and map at stations and route mapped within rail cars</li> </ul>	<p>Accommodations for those without access to cellphones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cash payment options</li> <li>Clear signage, full routes at central station as well as online</li> </ul>
<p>Cultural and linguistic accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English speaking signage and drivers, considered a concern by some community leaders spoken to for the purpose of this report</li> </ul>	<p>Cultural and linguistic accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English speaking signage and drivers, considered a concern by some community leaders spoken to for the purpose of this report</li> </ul>

Table 8: Metro and Bus Accessibility, NFTA

The East Buffalo Corridor has a population of individuals with disabilities proportionally slightly above the entire City of Buffalo. The Larkinville Station area has the highest proportion of residents with disabilities at 23.7%<sup>25</sup>. The corridor has a higher population of English-speaking residents than all of Buffalo, and a higher proportion of English-speaking residents than Cheektowaga (See Figures 11, 12 and 13). Spanish is the largest single primary language for community members besides English. The corridor has a similar elderly population to Cheektowaga and Buffalo and a larger youth population than either community.

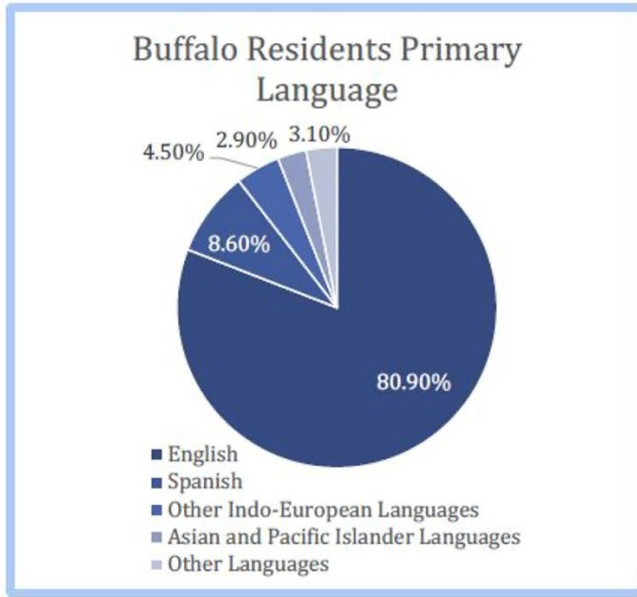


Figure 13: Buffalo Residents Primary Language, CBB

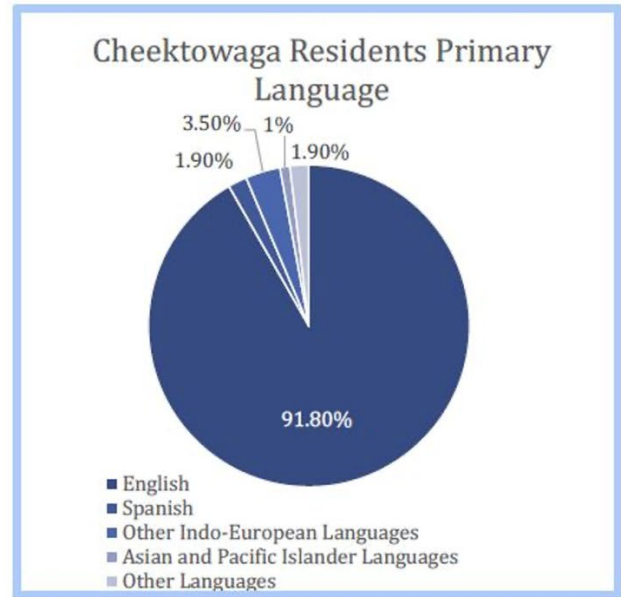


Figure 14: Cheektowaga Residents Primary Language, CBB

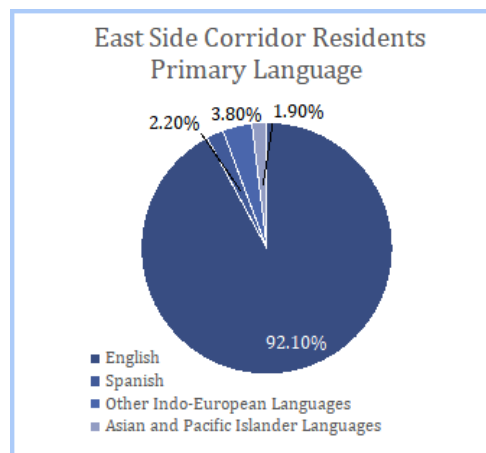


Figure 15: East Buffalo Corridor Residents Primary Language, CBB

<sup>25</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). *Census Business Builder (CBB)*. The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.Census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb.html>



Community	Percent of Population with a Disability	Percent of Population that is Foreign-Born	Age
Buffalo	16.3%	11.3%	Over 65: 12.4% Under 18: 22.6%
Cheektowaga	13.4%	5.8%	Over 65: 19.4 Under 18: 17.4%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	17.5%	9.1%	Over 65: 14.9% Under 18: 24%

Table 9: Special Requirement Populations, CBB

### Efficiency and Safety

Research on the Buffalo-Niagara region has pointed to the need to limit headways (wait times between transit conveyances such as buses and trains) to 15 minutes during weekday peak and midday to maximize ridership. [10] The current Metro Rail line runs once every ten minutes at rush hour and slows to no less than once every 20 minutes during operational hours of 5:10 pm-12:50 am Monday through Friday, and 8:00 am to 11:50 pm on Sundays. [25] The current Metro Rail is on time 84.7% of the time, on par with the Buffalo bus system, and has the highest rates of on-time arrival on Sundays and between 5 pm and 12 am, when ridership is lower. [25] As the East Buffalo Airport line would be an extension of this line, the on-time percentages and wait times can be presumed to be similar.

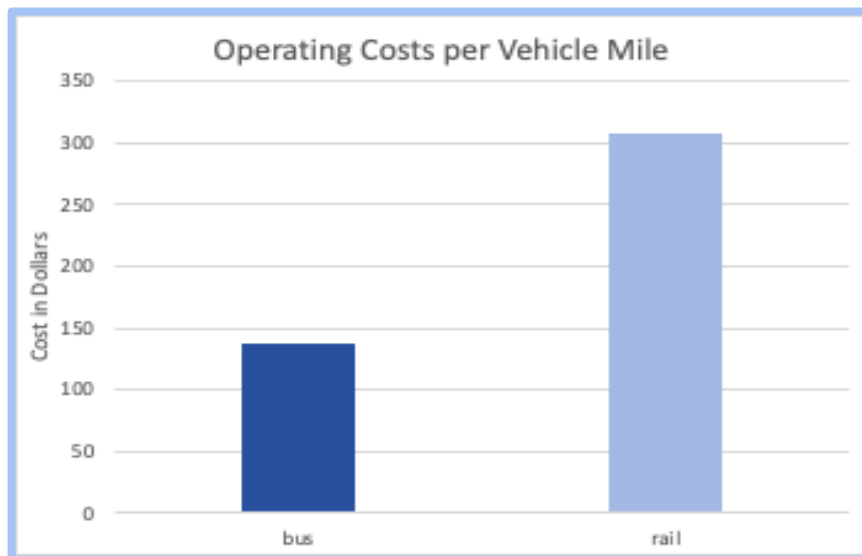


Figure 16: NFTA Operating costs

These statistics fulfill the requirements of the Buffalo-Niagara report. Running the rail line through the East Buffalo Corridor may decrease passengers per revenue mile as the corridor has a lower population density than Buffalo as a whole. However, placement of a Park-&-Ride at the eastern terminus of the East Buffalo Airport rail extension could help to maximize ridership by encouraging long-distance commuters to rely on public transit rather than subject themselves to city traffic, contribute to city traffic, and costly parking.

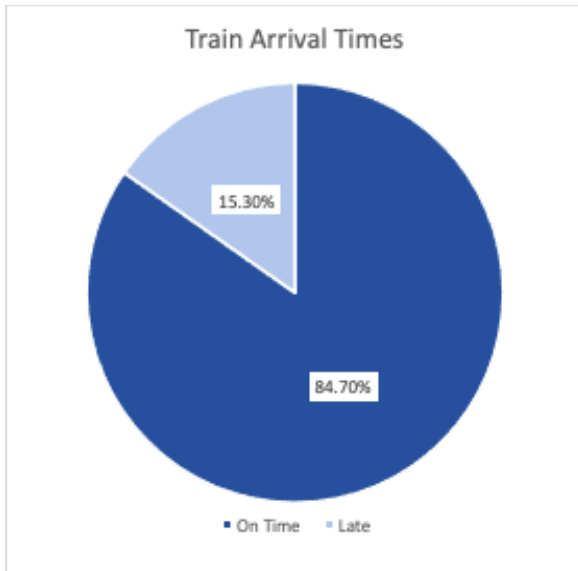


Figure 17: LRRT Arrival Times

Nonetheless, the Buffalo Metro Rail system has twice the passengers per revenue mile the bus system has.

However, the Metro Rails operating costs are nearly three times that of the bus system per mile. [10] The extension's placement over old rail line, limiting the need to cross traffic as well as the initially reduced number of stops, would allow it to move rapidly through the corridor, aiming to prevent delays and lower wait times.

In 2019 the NFTA reported over 250 avoidable collisions in its public transportation system. The proportion of Buffalo bus collisions is well above the American Bus Benchmarking Group average. [27] The rail system in comparison has seen only six collisions since 2002, including one grade crossing incident. [22] The system has had no derailments, no passenger fatalities, and only one evacuation. Traveling on Buffalo's LRRT system is proven to be safe for passengers, and with minimal road crossings, the East Buffalo Airport Extension would minimize grade crossing incidents.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

### Positive Health Benefits

Environmental concerns are a primary argument for public transportation investment. This rationale is particularly relevant for Buffalo and Cheektowaga as their populations have significantly higher rates of colorectal, esophageal, kidney, lung, oral cavity (mouth and throat) and prostate cancer than the surrounding area. While smoking is key among these causes, traffic is also listed as a potential cause for these elevated rates. [38] East Buffalo residents are subjected to the emissions fumes of approximately 70,000 cars a day that ply the expressways dividing the neighborhood, chiefly the Kensington Expressway (Rt.33) and some measure of the Scajaquada (Rt.198) and NYS Thruway (I-90). Accordingly, East Buffalo has higher rates of childhood asthma than Buffalo at large. [20]

Access to fresh foods was a primary concern for community leaders interviewed. An expanded public transportation system might help to connect residents to fresh food centers. There are four farmers markets along Buffalo's existing LRRT line, and the East Buffalo Airport Extension would add the Broadway Market to the list of easily accessible fresh food centers available to riders. Additionally, studies have pointed to LRRT having a positive effect on Body Mass Index and recommended physical activity levels. This is an issue especially relevant to East Buffalo, which sees high rates of obesity and obesity-related illnesses. [18] The extension would also link East Buffalo residents to major medical centers, including the Buffalo General Medical Center, Gates Vascular Institute, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, and other clinics at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (Allen Medical Campus Station), and to Sisters of Charity Hospital (at Humboldt Hospital Station).

## CLEAN AIR AND REDUCTION IN GREENHOUSE GASES

---

Using public transportation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can take many forms from expanding bus services to investing in bike paths; however, there is evidence that rail systems may be one of the most sustainable investments because they carry more people for the energy expended and attract choice riders at higher rates. The emissions from light rail transit systems across the world vary greatly dependent on the source of the electricity they run on. However, Buffalo's Metro Rail power source includes clean, renewable hydroelectricity locally generated by Niagara Falls, resulting in close to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. This clean power is further supplemented by clean electricity recaptured from the train's braking action. LRRT systems continue to produce less regional and urban emissions than Bus Rapid Transit systems. [34] (See Appendix) A typical passenger vehicle emits about 4.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year, assuming the average combustion-engine vehicle on the road today has a fuel economy of about 22.0 miles per gallon and drives around 11,500 miles per year. Every gallon of gasoline burned creates about 8,887 grams of climate-warming carbon dioxide.<sup>26</sup> Buffalo's light rail has the capacity to carry up to 720 passengers, each full 4-car train capable of replacing between 175 and 720 cars every ten minutes. [28]<sup>27</sup>

### Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled

Studies have shown reductions in car use between 30% and 49% within one-half mile surrounding a light rail corridor. [9]<sup>28</sup> While these figures are promising, some studies place the effect of LRRT on car ridership lower. There are about 8,869 car users in the half mile surrounding the East Buffalo Airport corridor. [36] If the corridor saw a 30% reduction in driving, residents would save a collective \$2.5 million in car-related expenses and save the 11,250 gallons of fuel wasted annually because of transportation delays and the 7,800 fewer gallons of gasoline burnt daily by car commuters. This would likewise result in annual reductions of 160,800 lb. of Volatile Organic Compounds, 167,400 lb. of Total Hydrocarbons, 1,459,800 lb. of Carbon Monoxide, 108,000 lb. of Nitrogen Oxides and 57,222,000 lb. of CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>29</sup> [9] Additionally, the low density of stations in the corridor, as well as the region's tendency to locate new employment centers far from the urban center, may decrease an expansion's effectiveness in reducing vehicle miles traveled.

To reap the full potential benefits of the light rail extension for the environment, smart-growth anti-sprawl policy principles outlined in the One Region Forward report would need to be adhered to, preserving farmland and greenspace in the process.

---

<sup>26</sup> Greenhouse Gas Emissions from a Typical Passenger Vehicle, US EPA, Nov 29, 2021

<https://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles/greenhouse-gas-emissions-typical-passenger-vehicle#burning>

<sup>27</sup> NFTA Metro. (2021). *Service Design Guidelines & Delivery Standards, Revision*. nfta.com.

[https://www.nfta.com/media/k2yhjha4/metro\\_service\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.nfta.com/media/k2yhjha4/metro_service_guidelines.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Ewing, R., Tian, G., & Spain, A. (2014). *Effect of Light-Rail The effect of Light-Rail Transit on Transit on Traffic in a Traffic in a Travel Corridor*. Portland State University.

[https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=trec\\_reports](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=trec_reports)

<sup>29</sup> Ewing, R., Tian, G., & Spain, A. (2014). *Effect of Light-Rail The effect of Light-Rail Transit on Transit on Traffic in a Traffic in a Travel Corridor*. Portland State University.

[https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=trec\\_reports](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=trec_reports)

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

**Fair Labor Practices and Transportation-Related Employment Opportunities**

Buffalo’s Metro Rail employees are employed through the NFTA. The NFTA has around 1,800 staff. [33] A rail extension would add both temporary and permanent jobs in the region. Initial construction would require contract workers; however, this industry does not make up a large proportion of the region's jobs. Long term however, there may be growth in the Administration & Support industry, which is already strong in the region. (See Table 10) NFTA employees are unionized under three primary unions: ILA Local 1949, the Police Benevolent Association, and the largest union is the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1342. [33]

East Side Airport Corridor Job Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Retail Trade 12.9%</li> <li>● Accommodation and Food Services 11.3%</li> <li>● Health Care and Social Assistance 10.1%</li> <li>● Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services 8.9%</li> <li>● Manufacturing 6.9%</li> <li>● Administration &amp; Support, Waste Management and Remediation 6.9%</li> </ul>
----------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Table 10: East Buffalo airport corridor job sectors, CBB

**Connectivity to Places of Employment, Education, Services, and Recreation**

Extending Buffalo’s LRRT system to East Buffalo would connect Buffalo’s downtown to its airport. This would connect two vital employment hubs as well as provide an easier inflow of visitors and guests into Buffalo. When the extension comes online, it would provide residents of East Buffalo with an immediate rapid connection to several employment, education, and recreation opportunities outside of their neighborhoods without the need for a car. [37] Community stakeholders listed job access as prime among their concerns regarding gaps in transportation efficiency in the region. An LRRT system could help to link the residents of East Buffalo to educational opportunities at the University at Buffalo’s North, South and Medical campuses, Erie County Community College’s Downtown Campus, and Canisius College with reasonably quick connections to Medaille, Daemen, and D'Youville colleges. Residents of the corridor graduate from high school at a rate .7% lower than Buffalo at large and have a 12.6% lower rate of degree attainment.<sup>30</sup> Improved access to these educational resources would have a disproportionately positive effect on the residents of the corridor. The LRRT system would also link East Buffalo residents to recreational opportunities at the waterfront and Fountain Plaza, professional sports venues such as Sahlen Field, and KeyBank Arena.

Besides connecting the residents of East Buffalo to Buffalo’s city center and points to the north and south of it, the extension would connect other parts of Buffalo to the unique destinations in East Buffalo. A detailed breakdown of local businesses and resources near the anticipated Metro Rail stations along the East Buffalo Airport Corridor is included below in the neighborhood profiles.

<sup>30</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). *Census Business Builder (CBB)*. The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.Census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb.html>

### **Inclusive Local Business & Economic Activity**

New York State is investing \$65 million in East Buffalo during phase 1 of the East Side Avenues Initiative, plus an additional \$180 million in Phase 2.<sup>31</sup> Directing eTOD at the region may help to capitalize on these investments. The East Side Avenues Initiative includes several general efforts which will likely impact the corridor's growth and characteristics. These investments include a \$10 million Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Fund aimed at increasing home ownership and decreasing vacant properties, and a \$5 million Commercial Building Stabilization Fund aimed at historic preservation. The corridor would also benefit from funds such as the \$10 million Infrastructure to Support and Enhance Investments, the \$7.4 million Direct Project Assistance to encourage business growth and support community projects, and the \$5 million Community-Based Real Estate Development Training course to enable East Buffalo residents to undertake their own development projects.<sup>32</sup>

Ed Note: Additional NY State funding through its Downtown Revitalization Program awarded the Broadway-Fillmore Business District \$10 million in funding for 11 transformational projects.

There is considerable evidence that LRRT expansion would positively influence economic growth in the corridor and thus that eTOD has potential to take hold on long-disinvested East Buffalo. A 2010 NFTA-commissioned study stated the East Buffalo Airport Corridor had the highest development potential of the proposed Metro Rail extensions considered, including the Amherst Extension now under advanced stages of pre-construction study. Managed to include affordable housing and business and employment opportunity for people of color, Transit-Oriented Development can capitalize on these investments and yield the positive effects associated with LRRT on business growth and housing value. [2, 4] Studies have found that Metro Rail construction increased property values, especially in wealthier neighborhoods. This impact resulted in premiums of around \$1,300-\$3,000 in Buffalo: 2% to 5% of the city's median home value. [32] Additionally, residential commercial and office sales per square foot within the existing Metro Rail corridor compared to the proposed Amherst Corridor are found to be growing at higher margins. This points to the potential greater growth impact of Metro Rail investment in Buffalo. Finally, the NFTA Amherst Light Rail Extension Study also anticipated LRRT would encourage the redevelopment of underutilized and vacant land. [15, 30] There is no reason to think it would not also encourage development on vacant land within the city limits, given existing trends to "return to the city" and One Region Forward's directive to reverse sprawl, increase density, and build on existing infrastructure in the name of sustainability and other positive economic and environmental impacts.

---

<sup>31</sup> Regional Revitalization Partnership, 2022, [2022-RegionalStrategy\\_May27.pdf \(buffalo.edu\)](#)

<sup>32</sup> NYS. (2019). East Buffalo Corridor Economic Development Fund | Buffalo Billion. <https://buffalobillion.ny.gov/east-side-corridor-economic-development-fund>



## NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

### LARKINVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

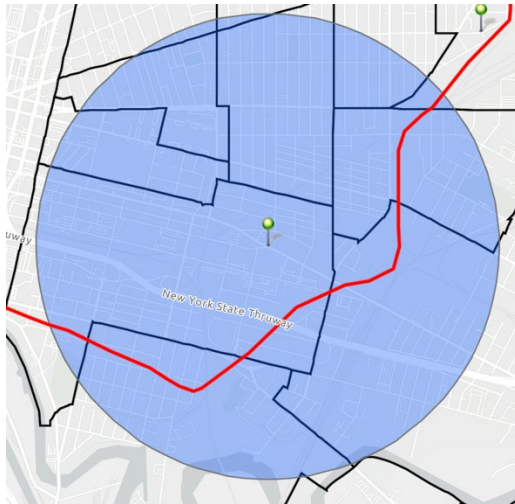


Figure 18: 1 mile around proposed Larkinville station, Route Map, ArcGIS

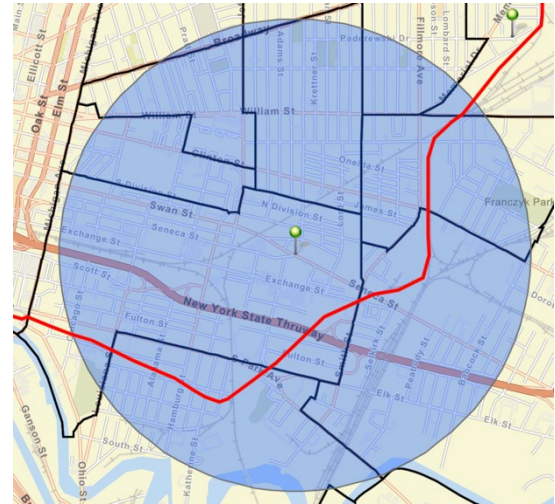


Figure 19: 1 mile around proposed Larkinville station, Street Map, ArcGIS

The area surrounding the proposed Larkinville Station has a population of 8,755 and has experienced an overall population increase of 7.65% since 2010. The area around the proposed Larkinville Station has a poverty rate well above the regional average. The poverty rate is 4.5% higher than in Buffalo at large. The unemployment rate is 9.3% higher than that of Buffalo.<sup>33</sup> The main employment sector in the region is finance and insurance. However, the region also has significantly lower educational attainment, both regarding high school graduation rates and college degrees, which is 53% lower than the Buffalo average. The region is more diverse than Buffalo with a larger Black population.

Larkinville Station Employment Sectors	Percentage
Finance and Insurance	19.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	16.6%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	15.4%
Manufacturing	11.1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	11.1%

Table 11: Larkinville Station Employment Sectors, CBB

<sup>33</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). *Census Business Builder (CBB)*. The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.Census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb.html>

Community	Poverty Rate	Employment Rate	Median Household Income	% of Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	% of Population with a High School Degree
Buffalo	30.1%	55.6%	\$37,354	27.6%	84.6%
Cheektowaga	10.7%	62.9%	\$54,002	23.6%	93.2%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	28.2%	54.9%	\$51,588	15.0%	84.9%
Larkinville Neighborhood	38.8%	49.6%	\$40,558	9.6%	77.2%

Table 12: Larkinville Social statistics, CBB

Community	Number of Residents 2015-2019	Share of Community	Population Growth
Buffalo and Cheektowaga	344,875	100%	-1.3%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	42,284	12.3%	-2.7%
Larkinville Neighborhood	8,133	2.4%	-10.2%

Table 13: Larkinville population, CBB

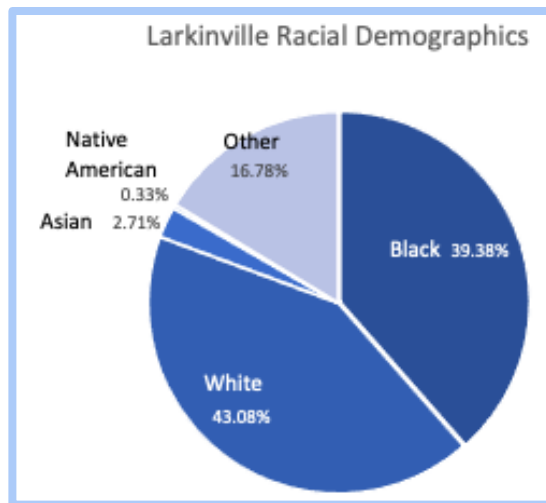


Figure 20: Larkinville population, CBB

## Growth Potential

As a result of investments over the past 20 years, Larkinville has grown to be a hub for cultural activities and local businesses centered around Larkin Square, which sits close to the proposed Metro Rail station. [16]

Community	Businesses	Out of Business	Vacancy Rate	Share of Community	Growth 2010-2019
Buffalo & Cheektowaga	20,887	6,084	22.6%	100%	7.6%
Larkinville Neighborhood	282	42	13.0%	1.4%	45.9%

Table 14: Larkinville Business Statistics, Ada Axle

Nonetheless, the Larkinville area has a residential vacancy rate considerably above the city's and even above the rest of the corridor. There are 1,211 unoccupied residences in the area surrounding the stop, meaning there is plenty of room for newcomers to the neighborhood without displacing local families. [37]<sup>34</sup> Vacant lots in need of infill and buildings in need of rehab provide ample opportunity for market rate housing, affordable housing, and eTOD.

Community	Jobs in Community 2018	Job Growth between 2008 and 2018	Number of Residents who Work Within the Corridor
Larkinville Neighborhood	5,647	27.40%	1,911

Table 15: Larkinville Jobs Statistics

Larkinville has seen considerable development because of the Larkin Development Group's efforts to resurrect the district. While the area has experienced population loss, it has seen significant business growth: 45% between 2010 and 2019. This has been accompanied by job growth of 27% in the district. [5] Nonetheless, the Larkin District has a vacancy rate of 13% and 42 closed businesses, allowing room to grow in the form of eTOD. [5]<sup>35</sup> The region will see continued investment because of the East Buffalo Avenues Initiative, especially because of the investment on Fillmore Avenue.

<sup>34</sup> Bureau, U. S. C. (2021, June 21). *Census Business Builder (CBB)*. The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.Census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb.html>

<sup>35</sup> Data Axle. (2021, August 18). *Helping businesses make money through data, technology, & services*. <https://www.data-axle.com/>



Community	Occupied Residences 2015-2019	Growth Rate	Vacancy Rate	Unoccupied Housing	Home Ownership Rate
Buffalo	110,427	-0.9%	3.3%	22,094	40.5%
Cheektowaga	35,424	-1.2%	2.3%	1,983	68.0%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	18,486	-0.7%	18.2%	4,111	53.4%
Larkinville Neighborhood	3,652	-8.0%	24.9%	1,211	42.1%

Table 16: Residential Statistics, CBB

**Points of Interest within ½-mile of prospective stop**

*Arts and Entertainment*

- The Birds Nest Circus Center
- Larkin Building Wal-l Frank Lloyd Wright [12]

*Religious and Cultural Centers*

- Try Jesus Ministries
- St Patrick Friary

*Groceries*

- B Rite Supermarket

*Educational Resources*

- Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School
- Bilingual Center

*Local Businesses*

- Ricota’s Center
- Tully’s Tavern
- Marinaro’s Larkin Tavern
- Kornerstone Cafe and Juice Bar Larkin
- Swan Street Dinner
- Hydraulic Heath
- Smokey Tavern
- Flying Bison Brew
- Buffalo Distilling Company
- Metro Pizza

*Community Centers*

- Larkin Square
- Seneca Babcock Community Center
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Buffalo
- Three parks available

*Transportation Accessibility*

28 bus stops within ½ mile of the proposed stop

*Transportation Use*

In the Larkinville neighborhood 98% of workers commute. Nonetheless, the corridor has a lower car access rate. Many in the corridor depend on carpooling to get to work, and the average commute time is below the corridor average at around 19 minutes. [36]

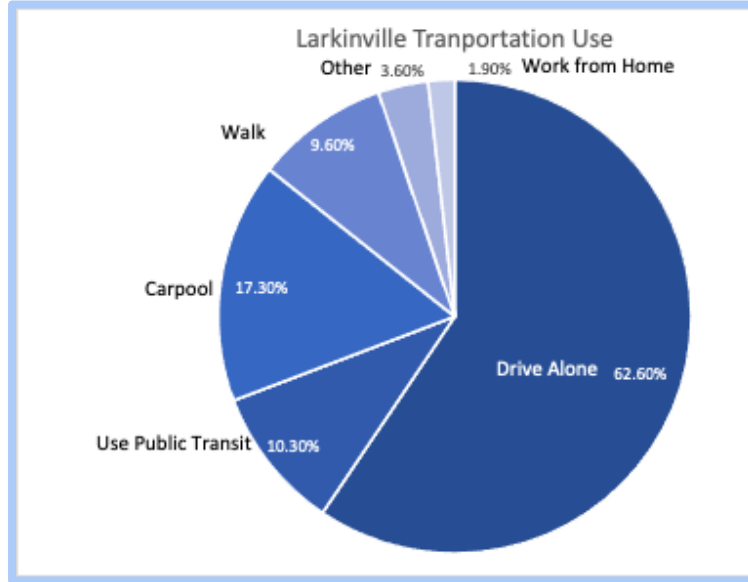


Figure 21: Larkinville commuter transportation statistics, CBB

Community	Average Travel Time	Percent of Population with no Vehicle Available	Percent with One Car Available	Percent with Two or More Cars Available
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	20.5 minutes	26.7%	41.4%	31.8%
Larkinville Neighborhood	18.7 minutes	36.1%	40.7%	23.2%

Table 17: Larkinville commuter transportation statistics, CBB

## BROADWAY-FILLMORE PROFILE

The proposed station in the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood would be placed at the Central Terminal. The area surrounding the Terminal has the highest density of the four proposed stops with a population of 15,071. However, the community has seen a population decline greater than that of the Greater Buffalo region between 2014 and 2019 at -3.73%. Yet, from 2010 to 2020 Census, the population increased significantly, fueling Buffalo's overall population growth. The area has a poverty rate over 40% above Buffalo's overall at 28.3%. Likewise, the employment rate and educational attainment is below all of Buffalo. [37] The unemployment rate of 15.53% is 12.5% lower than all of Buffalo, and only 74% of the population has a high school diploma compared to 85% in Buffalo at large. [36] The main employment sector in the neighborhood is Health Care and Social Assistance. The region has a smaller Black population and a larger Asian population than Buffalo as a whole. [37]

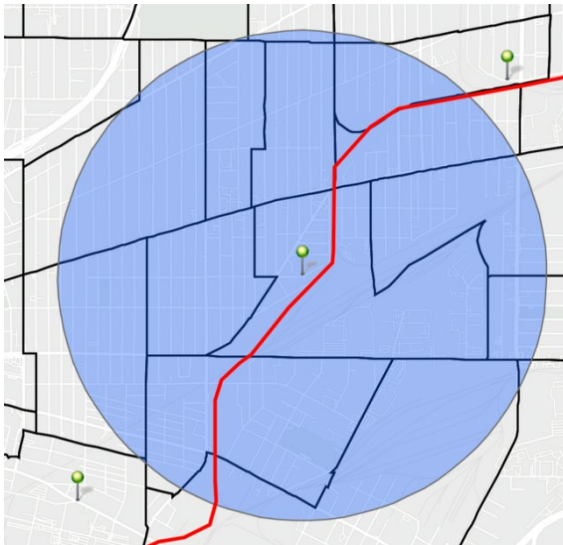


Figure 22: 1 Mile Around Proposed Broadway-Fillmore Station, Route Map, ArcGIS

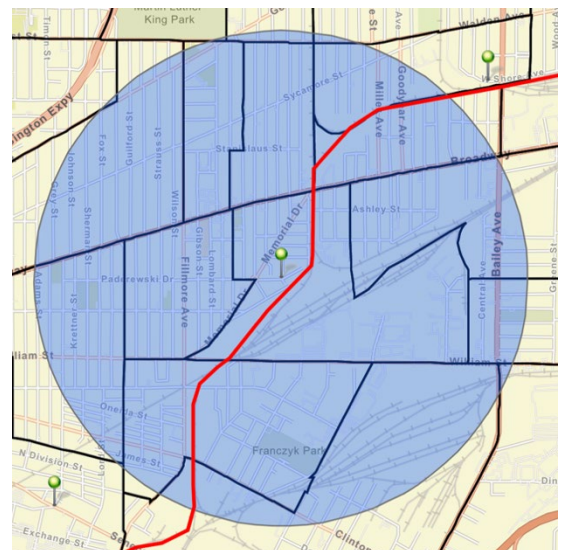


Figure 23: 1 Mile Around Proposed Broadway-Fillmore Station, Street Map, ArcGIS

Community	Number of Residents 2015-2019	Share of Community	Population Growth
Buffalo and Cheektowaga	344,875	100%	-1.3%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	42,284	12.3%	-2.7%
Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood	13,096	3.8%	-3.7%

Table 18: Broadway Population Statistics, CBB

Neighborhood	Poverty Rate	Employment Rate	Median Household Income	% of Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	% of Population with a High School Diploma
Buffalo	30.1%	55.6%	\$37,354	27.6%	84.6%
Cheektowaga	10.7%	62.9%	\$54,002	23.6%	93.2%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	28.2%	54.9%	\$51,588	15%	84.9%
Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood	46.1%	48.6%	\$36,669	10.5%	74.2%

Table 19: Broadway Population Statistics, CBB

Broadway Fillmore Stop Job Sector	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Health Care and Social Assistance 35.2%</li> <li>● Retail Trade 16.6%</li> <li>● Wholesale Trade 11.3%</li> <li>● Accommodation and Food Services 10.5%</li> <li>● Manufacturing 9.6%</li> </ul>

Table 20: Broadway-Fillmore Station Job Sector

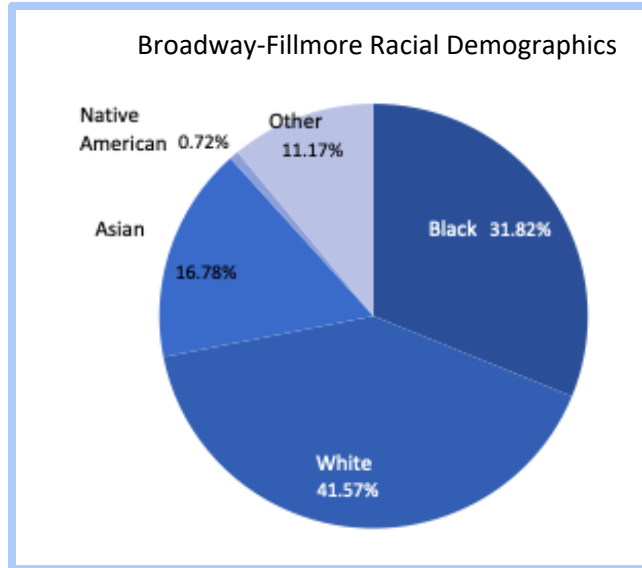


Figure 24:Broadway Filmore Racial Demographics, CBB

**Growth Potential**

The area surrounding the proposed Broadway-Fillmore stop is receiving considerable investment. The Central Terminal, a regional landmark and event venue where an LRRT stop would be located, is due to see a \$5.4 million investment as part of the East Buffalo Avenues Initiative (this has been distributed). The Broadway Market, a local food-shopping center and cultural attraction within half a mile of the proposed station, is expecting a \$4 million state investment. Fillmore Avenue is one of the four selected East Buffalo thoroughfares which will see investment from the initiative. Broadway-Fillmore has additionally been selected as one of four neighborhoods to receive a share of the East Buffalo Commercial District Investment of \$2.6 million. [31] Broadway and William Streets also provide opportunity for potential investment and growth.

Community	Businesses	Out of Business	Vacancy Rate	Share of Community	Growth 2010-2019
Buffalo & Cheektowaga	20,887	6,084	22.6%	100%	7.6%
Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood	183	39	17.6%	0.9%	35.6%

Figure 25: Broadway-Fillmore Business Statistics, Data Axle

Even prior to these East Buffalo Avenues investments, the Broadway-Fillmore District has seen significant business growth of 35.6% between 2010 and 2019. Nonetheless, the region has seen an overall decline in number of jobs. However, most residents do not work in the area surrounding the proposed station.

There is a neighborhood business vacancy rate of around 26.4%, well above Buffalo and Cheektowaga's: 2.3%. [5] While above Buffalo's vacancy rate, this rate can accommodate business expansion because of eTOD. Like Larkinville, Broadway-Fillmore has a residential vacancy rate well above Buffalo's, granting the region space to grow into with eTOD. Some of the most promising growth opportunities in the region are the Schreiber Brewery and the Broadway Market, which sit within a half mile of the proposed station. There are several buildings in the region which are prime for development, including the Eckhardt Building, 998 Broadway, Buffalo Central Terminal, and 59 Memorial Drive. While over half a mile from the proposed station, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park is a vital community center for this area's residents. This historic Olmsted Park is significant to Buffalo as a whole and has seen significant recent improvements.

Community	Occupied Residences 2015-2019	Growth Rate	Vacancy Rate	Unoccupied Housing	Home Ownership Rate
Buffalo	110,427	-0.9%	3.3%	22,094	40.5%
Cheektowaga	35,424	-1.2%	2.3%	1983	68.5%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	18,486	-0.7%	18.2%	4111	53.4%
Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood	5,498	-0.8%	26.4%	1973	37.1%

Table 21: Broadway-Fillmore Residential Statistics, CBB

Community	Jobs in Community 2018	Job Growth Between 2008 and 2018	Number of Residents who Work Within the Corridor	Number of Workers who Work inside the Corridor but Live Outside
Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood	754	-12.5%	23	731

Table 22: Broadway-Fillmore Job Statistics

The area surrounding the proposed Broadway-Fillmore Metro Rail station is receiving considerable investment, which may help to reverse the business and job loss that occurred in the neighborhood between 2008 and 2018. The Central Terminal, which would host an LRRT station, has already been promised \$65 million under the East Buffalo Avenues Initiative. The Broadway Market, which sits within a half mile of the proposed station, is due to see a total NY State Investment in 2022 of \$39.5 million investment. Fillmore Avenue is one of the four selected East Buffalo Avenues which receives New York State investment.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> East Buffalo Avenues, <https://eastsideavenues.org/>

**Points of Interest within ½-mile of prospective stop**

*Community centers*

- Lincoln Park
- FeedMore WNY Community Garden
- Bricklayers Local 3-NY
- Matt Urban Hope Center

*Local Businesses*

- Twilight Grill
- Alibaba Kebab
- Father Sam's Bakery
- Amana Plaza Halal Food
- R&L Lounge
- Al Cohen's Famous Rye Bread
- Golden Garden
- The Groove Lounge & Cafe
- Goodwill
- Shys Original Steak House
- Hot Spot
- Bobs Wholesale Meats

*Religious and Cultural Centers*

- Corpus Christi Church
- St. Stanislaus B&M Roman Catholic Church
- Adam Mickiewicz Library and Dramatic Circle, Inc
- Chua Tu Hieu Buddhist Cultural Center
- Soul Saving Revival Center

*Educational Resources*

- Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School
- Darul Khalil Religious School
- Darul Uloom Al-Madania Religious School
- King Urban Life Center
- Madinatul Uloom
- PS-59 School. Charles R. Drew Magnet School

*Groceries*

- Yen Pao
- Save a Lot
- Broadway Convenience Deli
- Price right
- Broadway mart
- Aldi
- Buffalo Fresh

*Arts and Entertainment*

- Normel Paintball

*Health and Childcare*

- Ladies of Charity
- Counseling Services of Upstate New York [12]

*Transportation Accessibility*

27 bus stops within ½ mile of the proposed stop

*Transportation use*

In the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood 73.3% of workers get to work by automobile, primarily by carpooling. Nonetheless, the corridor has three times lower car access than the city. Many in the neighborhood depend on public transit to get to work, and the average commute time is longer than most have in the East Buffalo Airport Corridor and slightly above the city average at around 21 minutes.

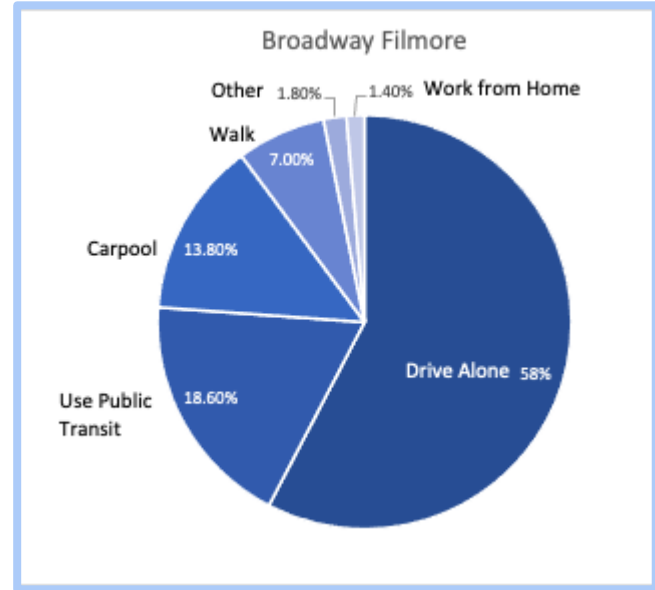


Figure 26: Broadway-Fillmore Commuter Transportation Statistics, Census Business Builders

Community	Average Travel Time	Percent of Population With no Vehicle Available	Percent with One Car Available	Percent with Two or More Cars Available
Buffalo	21.0 Minutes	11.8%	35.2%	53.0%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	20.5 minutes	26.7%	41.4%	31.8%
Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood	22.3 minutes	38.5%	40.6%	20.8%

Table 23: Broadway-Fillmore Commuting Statistics, CBB



WILDROOT NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

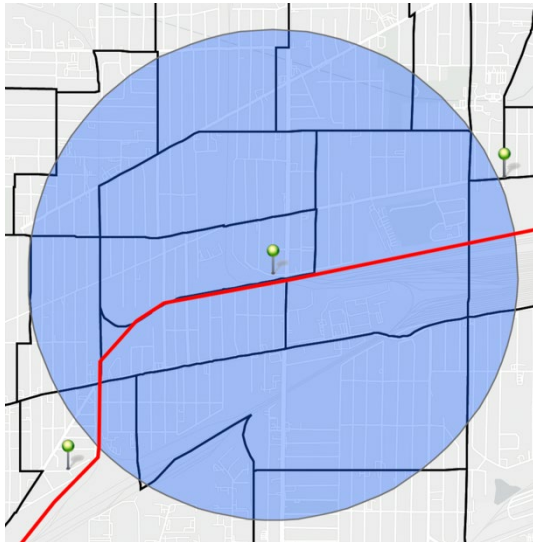


Figure 27: 1 Mile Around Proposed Wildroot Station, Route Map, ArcGIS

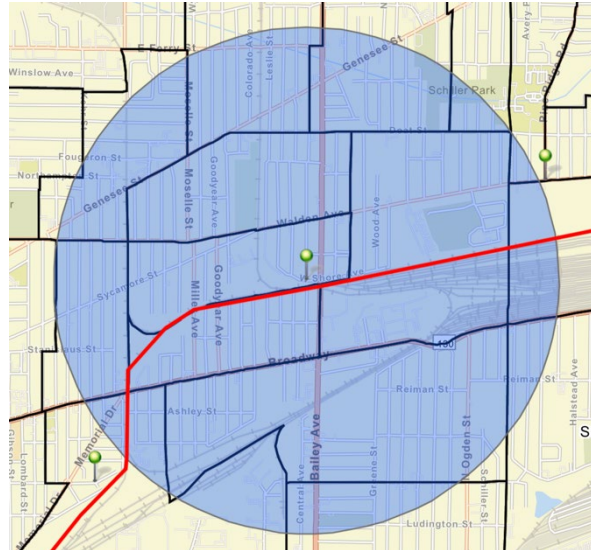


Figure 28: 1 Mile Around Proposed Wildroot Station Street Map, ArcGIS

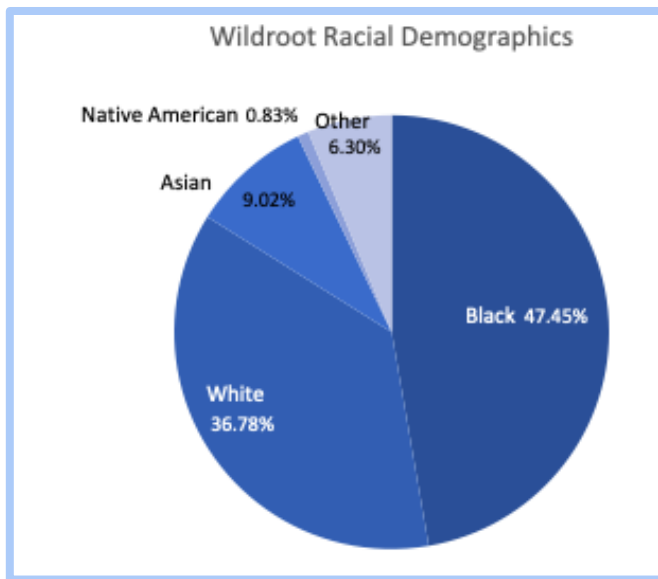


Figure 29: Wildwood Racial Demographics

The area surrounding the proposed Wildroot stop has a population of 16,921. The community has seen a population decline above that of the East Buffalo Airport Corridor at large of -9.5% between 2014 and 2019. The Wildroot area has a poverty rate 11% above Buffalo’s at 39.3%. Like the other stops examined, the population in the Wildroot neighborhood has lower levels of educational attainment, particularly college education, which is 27% lower here than in Buffalo at large. The unemployment rate is 6.9% above Buffalo’s, perhaps reflecting poor access to job and education centers. The main employment sector in the area is educational services, likely due to Harvey Austin Elementary School. The neighborhood’s Black population is 14.6% higher than Buffalo’s and likewise has a larger Asian population.

Community	Number of Residents 2015-2019	Number of Residents 2010-2014	Share of Community	Population Growth Region
Buffalo and Cheektowaga	344,875	349,383	100%	-1.3%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	42,284	43,429	12.3%	-2.7%
Wildroot Neighborhood	10,081	11,144	2.9%	-9.5%

Table 24: Wildroot population statistics, CBB

Community	Poverty Rate	Employment Rate	Median Household Income	Percent of Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Percent of population with a High School Diploma
Buffalo	30.1%	55.6%	\$37,354	27.6%	84.6%
Cheektowaga	10.7%	62.9%	\$54,002	23.6%	93.2%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	28.2%	54.9%	\$51,588	15%	84.9%
Wildroot Neighborhood	35.6%	48.3%	\$41,555	10.6%	79.8%

Table 25: Wildroot Social Statistics, CBB

Wildroot Stop Job Sector	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educational Services 22.2%</li> <li>● Wholesale Trade 20.1%</li> <li>● Retail Trade 18.3%</li> <li>● Health Care and Social Assistance 16.3%</li> <li>● Administration &amp; Support, Waste Management and Remediation 13.2%</li> </ul>

Table 26: Wildroot Station Job Sector

## Growth Potential

Within the community several development opportunities exist, including the landmark Wildroot Building, Buffalo Business Park, 629, 630, 631, 634 Walden Avenue, 1947 Bailey Avenue, and 22 West Shore Avenue.

Community	Occupied Residences 2015-2019	Growth Rate	Vacancy Rate	Unoccupied Housing	Home Ownership Rate
Buffalo	110,427	-0.9%	3.3%	22,094	40.5%
Cheektowaga	35,424	-1.2%	2.3%	1,983	68.5%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	18,486	-0.7%	18.2%	4,111	53.4%
Wildroot Neighborhood	4,466	-3.1%	23.8%	1,394	42.2%

Table 27: Wildroot Residential Statistics, CBB

Investment in Buffalo’s Wildroot District has seen significant business growth of 35.6% between 2010 and 2019. Nonetheless, the region has seen a decline in jobs. However, most residents do not work in the area surrounding the stop. There is a business vacancy rate of around 24%, which is above Buffalo’s: 22.6%.

While below Buffalo’s vacancy rate, this rate indicates room for business expansion via eTOD investment. [5] Like Larkintown, this region has a residential vacancy rate well above Buffalo’s, granting the neighborhood space to grow leveraging eTOD. The region is already home to many local businesses, a local elementary school, and Walden Park, which provides recreation for local families.

Community	Jobs in Region 2008	Jobs in Region 2018	Job Growth Between 2008 and 2018	Number of Residents who Work Within the Corridor
Wildroot	1,568	1,618	3.20%	146

Table 28: Wildroot job statistics

Community	Businesses	Out of Business	Vacancy Rate	Share of Region	Growth Rate 2010-2019
Buffalo & Cheektowaga	20,887	6,084	22.60%	100%	7.6%
Wildroot	114	36	24.00%	0.5%	-9.5%

Table 29: Wildroot business statistics, data Axle

## Points of Interest within ½-mile of prospective stop

### *Local Businesses*

- Anthor Glass Inc.
- Yemen Cafe and Bakery
- Club 77 Bar & Grill
- China Kitchen
- Bonetti's Pizzeria
- Happy Swallow Restaurant
- Smiling Teds's Used Cars
- Signature Apparel & Footwear
- Hahalapenios Mexican-American Deli
- Powerflow, Inc.
- Big Moe's Tires
- Linde Welding Gas and Equipment Center
- As-Salam Diner & Kabob House
- Buffalo Goldrush
- Tripi Foods
- Federal Baking Supply
- B&L Wholesale Supply
- International Paper
- American Douglas Metals
- Father Sam's Bakery
- Laser Ship, Inc.
- Imperial Textile
- GoodNature Products

### *Groceries*

- Aden Mini Mart
- Community Food Market
- Sam's Quick Stop

### *Religious and Cultural Centers*

- Madinah Masjid Mosque
- Baitul Mamoor Jam-E-Masjid
- St John Kanty Church
- Catholic Charities
- Buffalo Islamic Cultural Center At Masjid Baitul Aman
- Church of God in Christ
- Thankful Missionary Baptist
- St. Luke's Mission of Mercy

### *Arts and Entertainment*

- Softball Center

### *Health and Childcare*

- Hennepin Senior Center
- Kimmycakes Daycare
- Rite-Aid [12]

### *Points of Interest with half mile of Wildroot Station*

- Buffalo Fire Historical Society
- Hennipin Park
- Iron Island Museum
- Scheu Park (Mary Jean Sloan Park)
- Softball Center

### *Educational Resources*

- Mathclub by Apian Tutorial
- Harvey Austin Elementary School
- Public School 43 Discovery Elementary School

**Transportation Accessibility**

20 bus stops within ½ mile of the proposed stop

**Transportation use**

Of the 99% of working residents who commute in Wildroot, 22.2% have no access to cars. Car access is nearly 4 times lower than that of Buffalo at large. As such, this neighborhood has the highest use of public transportation of the neighborhoods examined. On par with this trend, residents in the neighborhood have the longest commute times of neighborhoods examined and 5 minutes longer than the corridor at large. [36] Despite the higher rate of dependence on public transportation in this neighborhood, Wildroot has the lowest number of bus stops.

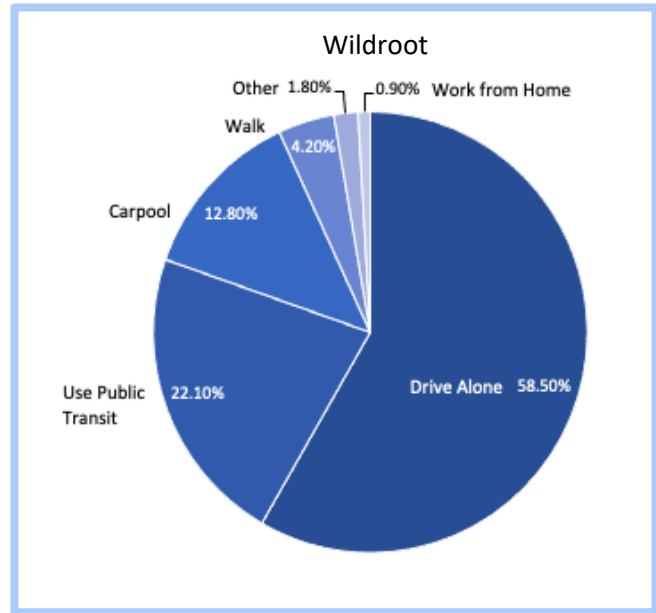


Figure 30: Wildroot Commuter Transportation Statistics CBB

Community	Average Travel Time	% of Population With No Vehicle Available	% With One Car Available	% With Two or More Cars Available
Buffalo	21.0 Minutes	11.8%	35.2%	53.0%
Cheektowaga	19.2 Minutes	3.2%	27.8%	69.1%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	20.5 Minutes	26.0%	41.4%	31.8%
Wildroot Neighborhood	25.2 Minutes	40.2%	36.6%	23.2%

Table 30: Wildroot Commuting Statistics, CBB

## WALDEN NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

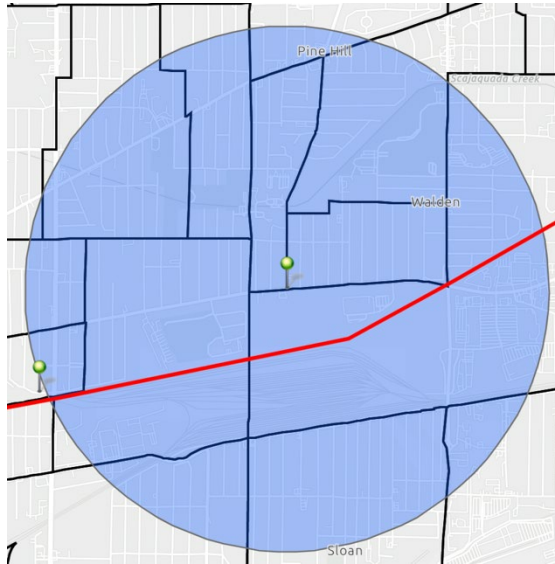


Figure 31: 1 Mile Around Proposed Walden Station, Route Map, ArcGIS

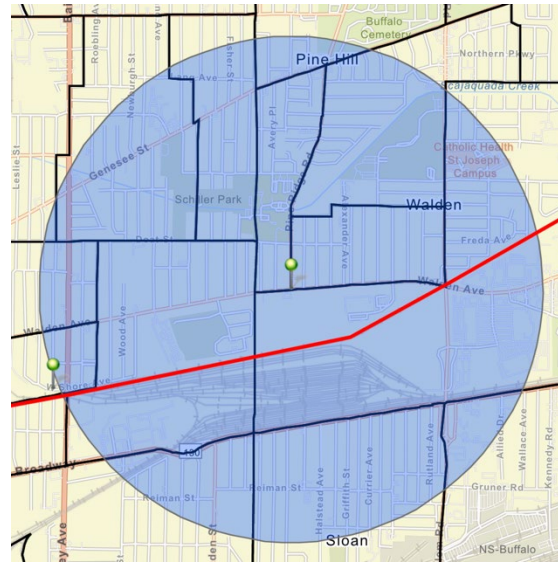


Figure 32: 1 Mile Around Proposed Walden Station, Street Map, ArcGIS

The Walden neighborhood spans the inner ring Buffalo suburb of Cheektowaga and the City of Buffalo. With a population of 17,489, it has the largest residential population of the station stops examined and has seen a population decline of 2.51% between 2014 and 2019, just below the rate for the corridor although still above that of Buffalo. The Walden neighborhood has a poverty rate of 13%, above that of Cheektowaga as a whole, but well below the East Buffalo corridor or that of Buffalo. The percent of the population with a high school diploma, between 40 to 44%, mirrors that of Cheektowaga almost perfectly and is nearly 10 percentage points above the corridor average. The proportion of the population that is college educated is larger than the corridor's at 18.5%, but lower than the Cheektowaga average of 42.4%. The primary employment sector in the area is healthcare and social assistance. [37] The neighborhood's Black community is smaller than Buffalo's and the corridor's but larger than the proportion of Cheektowaga at large. The region likewise has a relatively small minority population overall. [37]

Community	Number of Residents 2015-2019	Number of residents 2010-2014	Share of Region	Population Growth
Buffalo and Cheektowaga	344,875	349,383	100%	-1.3%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	42,284	43,429	12.3%	-2.7%
Walden Neighborhood	7,022	7,203	2.0%	-2.5%

Table 31: Walden Population Statistics, CBB

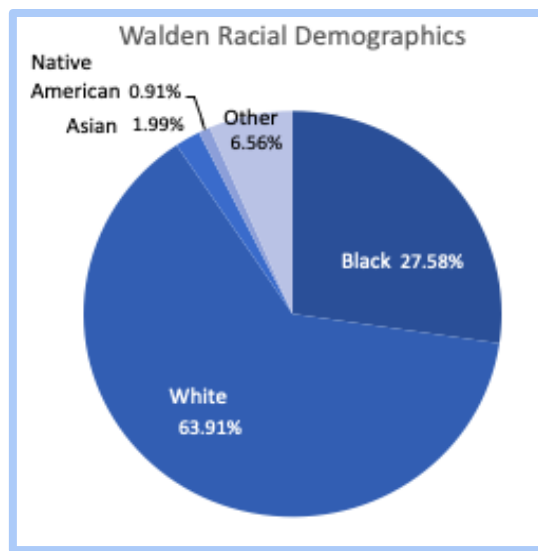


Figure 33: Walden Racial Demographics, CBB

Community	Poverty Rate	Employment Rate	Median Household Income	% of Population With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	% of Population With a High School Diploma
Cheektowaga	10.7%	62.9%	\$54,002	23.6%	93.0%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	28.2%	54.9%	\$51,588	15.0%	84.9%
Walden Neighborhood	13.4%	65.6%	\$77,953	20.3%	93.8%

Table 32: Walden Social Statistics, CBB



Walden Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Health Care and Social Assistance 36.8%</li> <li>● Administration &amp; Support, Waste Management and Remediation 15.3%</li> <li>● Retail Trade 35.1%</li> <li>● Accommodation and Food Services 4.0%</li> <li>● Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services 1.9%</li> </ul>
----------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Table 33: Walden Station Job Sector

**Growth Potential**

Community	Occupied Residences 2015-2019	Growth Rate	Vacancy Rate	Unoccupied Housing	Home Ownership Rate
Cheektowaga	35,424	-1.2%	2.3%	1,983	68.5%
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	18,486	-0.7%	18.2%	4,111	53.4%
Walden Neighborhood	3,026	-2.8%	13.2%	460	69.6%

Table 34: Walden Residential Statistics, CBB

Community	Businesses	Out of Business	Vacancy Rate	Share of Region	Growth 2010-2019
Buffalo & Cheektowaga	20,887	6,084	22.60%	100%	7.60%
Walden Station	153	54	26%	0.70%	8.50%

Table 35: Walden Business Statistics

Community	Jobs in Region 2008	Jobs in Region 2018	Job Growth Between 2008 and 2018	Number of Residents who Work Within the Corridor
Walden Station	1,568	1,618	3.20%	146

Table 36: Walden Job Statistics

As part of the suburban Township of Cheektowaga, just beyond the city limits of Buffalo, the Walden neighborhood is not eligible for the East Buffalo investment funds that many of the neighborhoods along the East Buffalo Airport Corridor will benefit from. However, the area has been identified by the Town of Cheektowaga planners as an eTOD Ready Corridor for Bus Rapid Transit (See Figure 32). There are considerable retail assets surrounding the proposed stop, including the Thruway Mall, Walden Consumer Square, and the Walden Galleria

Mall. The Walden Galleria is Greater Buffalo's largest mall, drawing shoppers from all over the Buffalo Niagara Region.

Alongside the railroad right-of-way that the LRRT would run on, the Walden Galleria Mall is a logical choice to host a Metro Rail station. While the Walden Galleria is a going concern, the Thruway Mall, which is closest to the proposed station stop, has room for eTOD-related expansion. The Walden neighborhood has seen business growth of 8.5% between 2010 and 2019, above that of Buffalo and Cheektowaga, and has likewise seen 3.2% job growth between 2008 and 2018. However, the region has a business vacancy rate of 26%, above Buffalo and Cheektowaga's rate of 23%. [37] This slightly elevated vacancy rate allows room for further eTOD-driven expansion, especially in the Thruway Mall and southwest quadrant surrounding the stop. This neighborhood has a residential vacancy rate of 13% – on par with Cheektowaga as a whole and is experiencing further decline. [37] This may help to protect residents from potential eTOD-related displacement.



Figure 34: LRRT Transit Ready Airport Corridor, Buffalo/Town of Cheektowaga 2019<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> [Map source \(PDF\)](#)

**Points of Interest within ½-mile of prospective stop**

*Local Businesses*

- Target
- Basil Ford
- Indo-pak Bangla Bazar Halal Meat and Grocery
- Sonwil Distribution Center
- Value City Furniture
- Home Depot
- Planet Fitness
- CSX Transportation Facility Office
- NFTA Information Center
- Citizens Bank
- Citi Trends
- M&T Bank
- Residence Inn Marriott Buffalo
- Holiday Inn Express Cheektowaga North
- Park View Soul Food Bar and Restaurant
- Dimar Manufacturing Corporation
- Davis Electrical Supply
- Upstate Farms Cooperative
- Upstate Steel
- Niagara Transformer Corporation
- Niagara Power Transformer
- Key Bank
- IHOP
- Raymour & Flanigan Furniture and Mattress
- China Jade Kitchen

- The Louisiana Cookery

*Educational Resources*

- Villa Maria College
- Erie 1 Boces
- Reinstein Memorial Library

*Groceries*

- Izzy's Mini Market
- Express Mini Mart
- TOPS Friendly Markets
- Redlinski Meats
- Price Rite

*Medical and Childcare*

- Rheumatology Center of WNY
- St. Joseph Campus and Hospital
- Aftercare Nursing Services
- CVS

*Community centers*

- Walden Park
- Walden Park Senior Apartments

*Transportation Accessibility*

22 bus stops within ½ mile of the proposed stop

*Transportation use*

Of the 99% of working residents in the Walden Neighborhood who commute, 77.1% drive. Only 37.3% of the population has no car access, a car access rate above that of Buffalo or Cheektowaga, but a significantly lower percentage than the corridor. Residents of this neighborhood use public transportation the least of any of the communities examined with just 14.7% of the population depending on public transit to reach their places of employment. The region has a commute time on par with the corridor at large at around 21.13 minutes. [37]

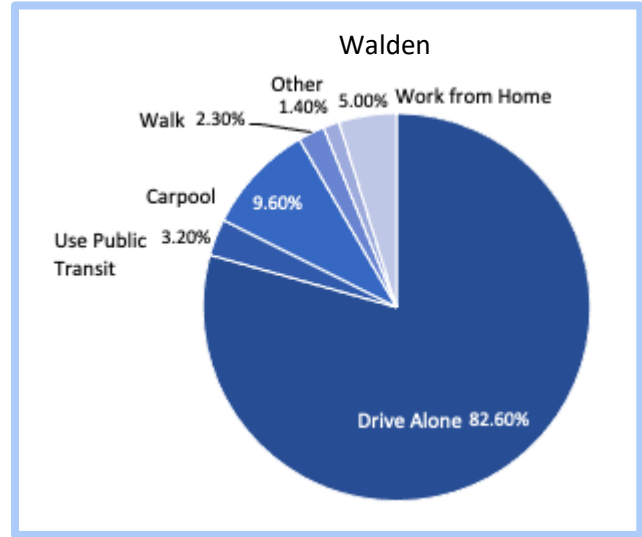


Figure 35: Walden Commuter Transportation Statistics, CBB

Community	Average Travel Time	Percent of Population with No Vehicle Available	Percent with one Car Available	Percent with Two or more Cars Available
East Buffalo Airport Corridor	20.5 minutes	26.7%	41.4%	31.8%
Walden Neighborhood	20.4 minutes	9.0%	48.1%	42.0%
Buffalo	21.0 Minutes	11.7%	35.2%	53.0%
Cheektowaga	19.2 minutes	3.8%	27.8%	69.1%

Table 37: Walden Commuting Statistics, CBB



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – METRO RAIL EXTENSION EVALUATION CRITERIA

TABLE 1

This table represents the evaluation criteria that the NFTA used to evaluate Metro Rail Extension alternatives.

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Metrics	
Order of Magnitude Costs	Difference in tunneling length	Minimize the cost of tunneling (based on linear feet of tunneling)	
	Number of underground stations	Minimize cost of station (based on number of at-grade and underground stations)	
	Purchase of ROW		Minimize cost of right-of-way (ROW) needed for purchase to accommodate Metro Rail running outside of ROW (based on acres of ROW easement)
			Minimize cost for easements to accommodate Metro Rail running outside of ROW (based on acres of ROW easement)
			Minimize cost of ROW needed for easement to accommodate Metro Rail running inside ROW to account for station areas and/or intersection widenings (based on acres of ROW easement)
O&M Costs	Minimize cost of Operations & Maintenance		
Overall Constructability	Availability of contractors	Availability of local contractors that can perform work	
	Schedule / Length of construction	Minimize construction schedule	
	Impacts to traffic and business operations	Minimize temporary street and/or driveway closures	
	Utility conflicts	Minimize utility relocations and reconstruction	
Travel Time	ROW impacts	Amount of private property impacted (either by purchase or easement) to accommodate project	
	Length of time Metro Rail travels from I-990 to University Station	Minimize travel time (in minutes)	
Community / Economic Development	Transit-supportive elements in place or can be put in place (zoning, policy, community support, plans, etc.)	Maximize existing transit supportive zoning	
	Opportunity for Transit Oriented Development	Opportunity for TOD zoning to be approved	
Municipal Coordination	Local and regional stakeholder preference / acceptance	Preferred alignment option of Town of Amherst	
		Preferred alignment option of Town of Tonawanda	
		Preferred alignment option of other regional, municipal, or other stakeholder entities	
Ridership	Maximizes ridership	Maximizes ridership	
Accessibility	Impacts to adjacent property (acres)	Minimize number of driveways closed Minimize number of driveways experiencing reduced accessibility (in-ability to make a left turn)	
	Accessibility by transit supportive populations	Number of transit dependent population within ½ mile radius of station areas	

	ROW impacts	Amount of private property impacted (either by purchase or easement) to accommodate project
Travel Time	Length of time Metro Rail travels from I-990 to University Station	Minimize travel time (in minutes)
Community / Economic Development	Transit-supportive elements in place or can be put in place (zoning, policy, community support, plans, etc.)	Maximize existing transit supportive zoning
	Opportunity for Transit Oriented Development	Opportunity for TOD zoning to be approved
Municipal Coordination	Local and regional stakeholder preference / acceptance	Preferred alignment option of Town of Amherst
		Preferred alignment option of Town of Tonawanda
		Preferred alignment option of other regional, municipal, or other stakeholder entities
Ridership	Maximizes ridership	Maximizes ridership
Accessibility	Impacts to adjacent property (acres)	Minimize number of driveways closed Minimize number of driveways experiencing reduced accessibility (in-ability to make a left turn)
	Accessibility by transit supportive populations	Number of transit dependent population within ½ mile radius of station areas
Traffic	Change to existing travel patterns	Minimize in travel distance or durations for local trips
	Impact to AM/PM Peak period volumes	Minimize increases in Peak period daily volumes (comparing no-build to build)
	Impact to Level of Service	Minimize reductions in LOS of project in build versus no-build
	Impacts to intersection LOS	Minimize reductions of intersection LOS in build versus no-build
Environmental	Minimizes impact on natural and human environments	Minimize acres of environmentally sensitive areas impacted by project
	Ability to reduce auto-dependency	Reduces vehicle miles travelled based on regional travel demand model

TABLE 1

NFTA Metro. (2019). *Metro Rail Expansion Project*. Locally Preferred Alternative Refinement Technical Report. [https://www.nftametrorailexpansion.com/pdfs/LPA\\_refinement\\_technical\\_report\\_012019.pdf](https://www.nftametrorailexpansion.com/pdfs/LPA_refinement_technical_report_012019.pdf)

APPENDIX B – COMPARISON OF EMISSIONS FROM TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES

[These tables compare key emissions generated by alternative transit modes.]

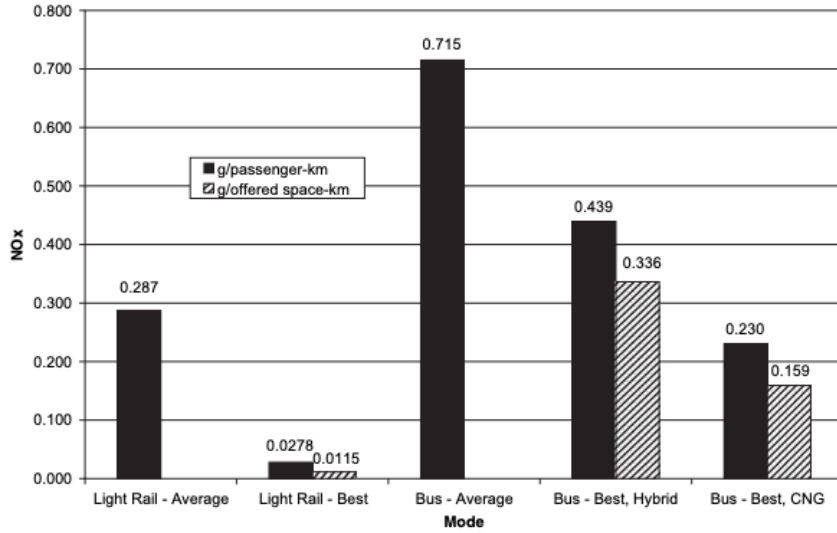


FIGURE 3 Comparison of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions from LRT and BRT systems.

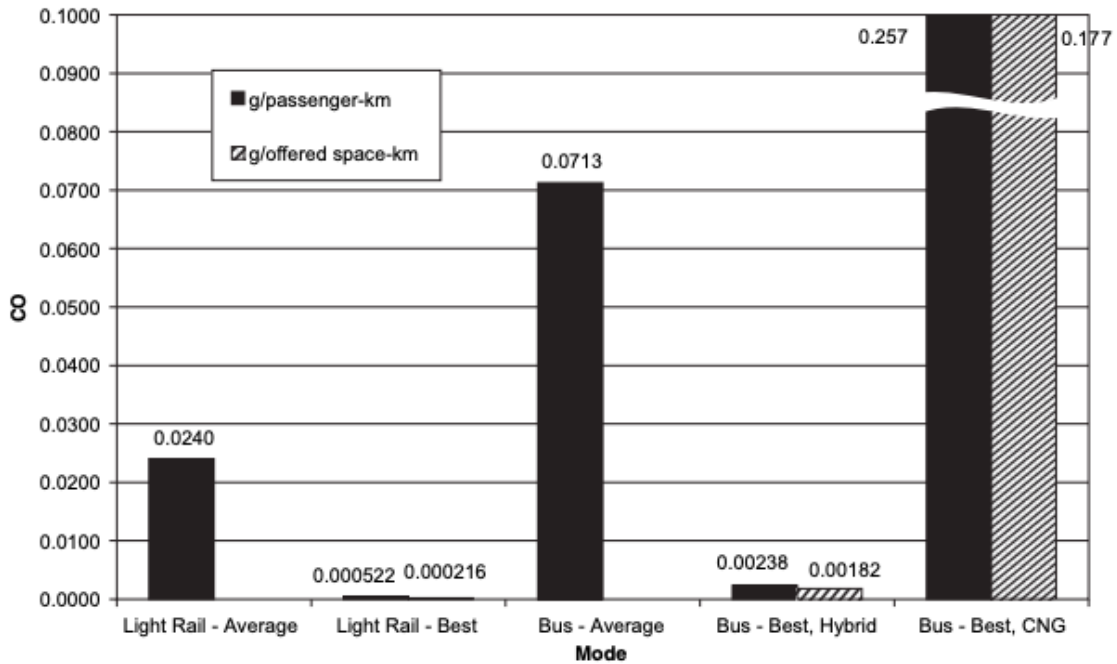


FIGURE 5 Comparison of CO emissions from LRT and BRT systems.



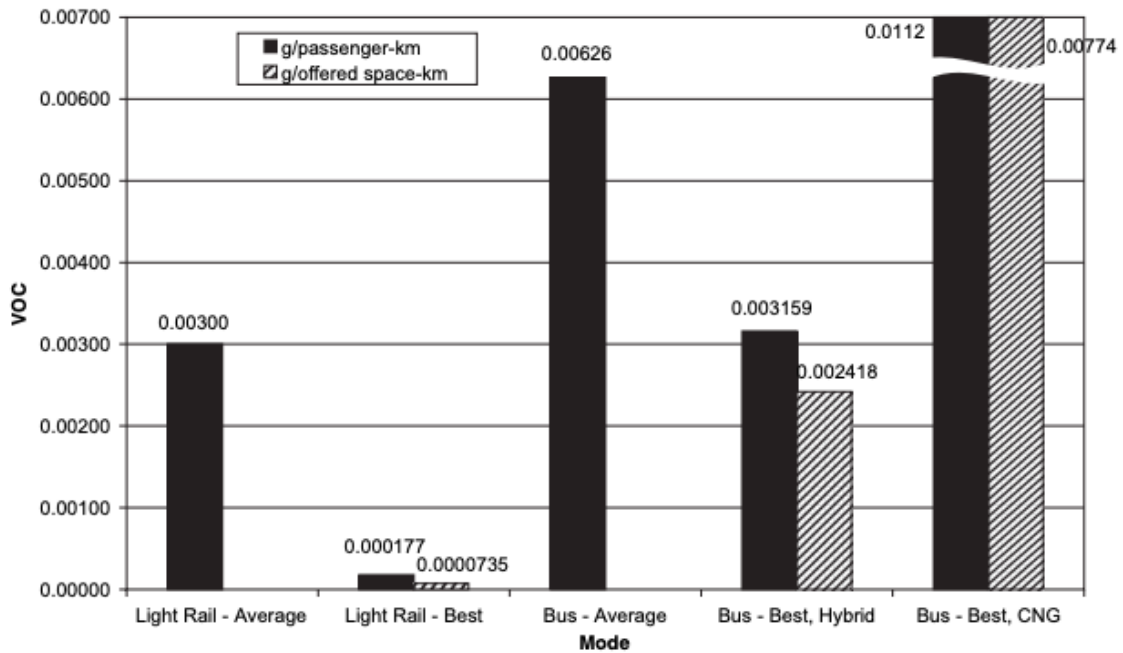


FIGURE 4 Comparison of VOC emissions from LRT and BRT systems.

Ewing, R., Tian, G., & Spain, A. (2014). Effect of Light-Rail The effect of Light-Rail Transit on Transit on Traffic in a Traffic in a Travel Corridor. Portland State University.

[https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=trec\\_reports](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=trec_reports)

APPENDIX C – UPDATED 2020 US CENSUS DATA

Community	Occupied Residences	Vacancy Rate	Unoccupied Housing	Homeownership Rate
Buffalo	119,119	12.64%	17,231	41.50%
Cheektowaga	40,643	5.37%	2,305	68.80%
Larkinville	4,600	15.20%	771	33.20%
Broadway-Fillmore	5,615	21.60%	1,556	39.60%
Wildroot	6,275	17.60%	1,303	36.70%
Walden Park	6,634	11.60%	905	49.80%

**Updated Data for Table 1, 16, 21 and 34**

Community	Average Travel Time	% of Population with No Vehicle	% of Population with One Vehicle	% of Population with Two or more Vehicle
Buffalo	20.0 minutes	26.32%	37.50%	50.10%
Cheektowaga	20.2 minutes	2.80%	25.90%	71.30%
Larkinville	19.24 minutes	23.70%	50.60%	35.20%
Broadway-Fillmore	20.96 minutes	35.00%	43.00%	31.20%
Wildroot	20.84 minutes	22.20%	46.00%	32.40%
Walden Park	21.13 minutes	37.30%	36.10%	46.40%

**Updated Data for Table 4, 17, 23, 30, and 37**

Community	Poverty Rate	Unemployment Rate	Median Household Income	% of Population With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	% of Population With a High School Diploma
Buffalo	28.30%	7.60%	\$55,304	42.40%	54.80%
Cheektowaga	9.60%	3.80%	\$55,984	42.40%	73.10%
Larkinville	32.80%	16.90%	\$32,733.60	10.40%	32.70%
Broadway-Fillmore	44.30%	15.53%	\$26,840.25	12.50%	31.80%
Wildroot	39.30	14.50%	\$29,528.86	14.60%	33.30%
Walden Park	22.60%	8.55%	\$43,552	18.50%	40.40%

**Updated Data for Table 6, 12, 19, 25, and 32**

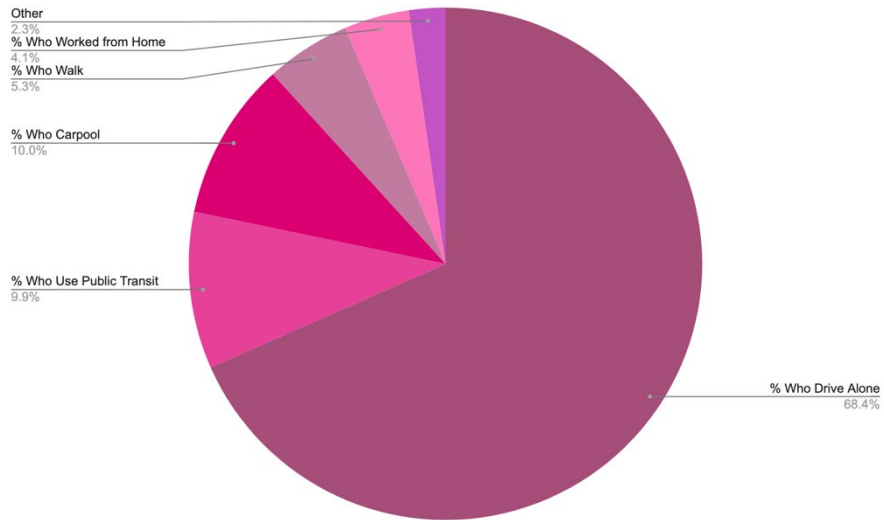
Community	% of Population that is Foreign Born	% of Population with a Disability	% of Population over 65 years old	% of Population under 18 years old
Buffalo	10.40%	16.90%	13.00%	22.40%
Cheektowaga	5.90%	13.40%	19.60%	17.80%
Larkinville	5.14%	23.70%	16.20%	19.50%
Broadway-Fillmore	18.60%	20.00%	10.90%	29.90%
Wildroot	17.10%	18.70%	11.30%	32.10%
Walden Park	6.95%	17.80%	12.40%	30.10%

**Updated Data for Table 9**

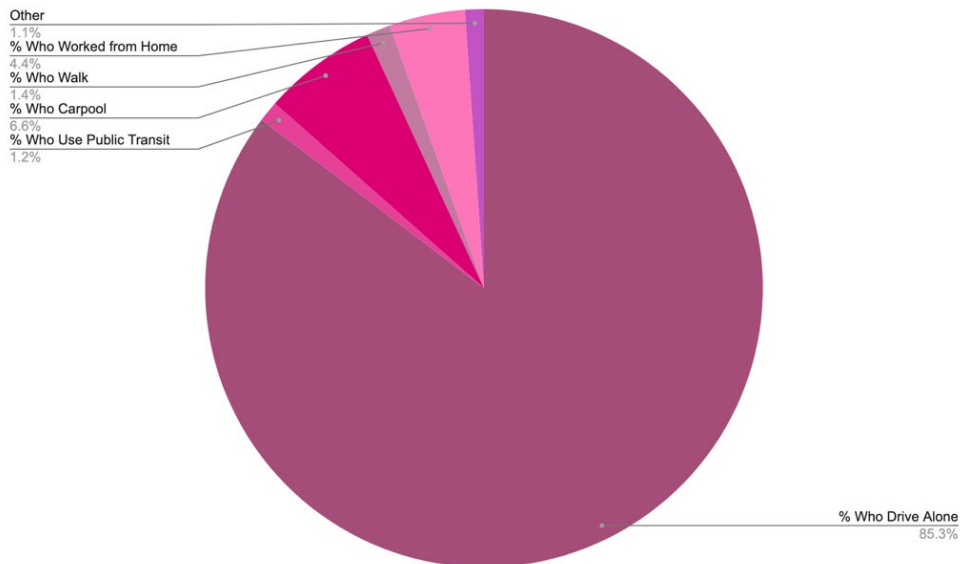
Community	Number of Residents	Share of Community
Buffalo	278,349	75.59%
Cheektowaga	89,877	24.41%
Larkinville	8,755	2.38%
Broadway-Fillmore	15,071	4.09%
Wildroot	16,921	4.60%
Walden Park	17,489	4.75%

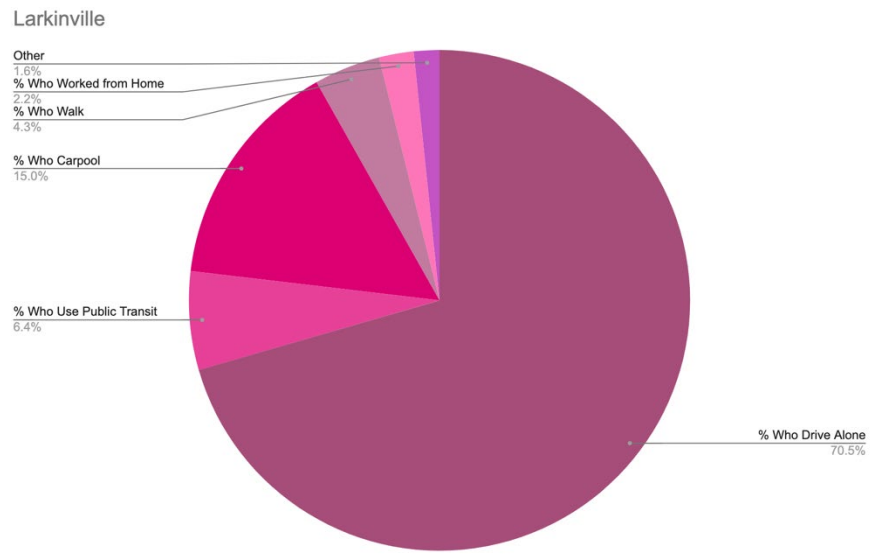
**Updated Data for Table 2, 13, 18, 24, and 31**

### Buffalo

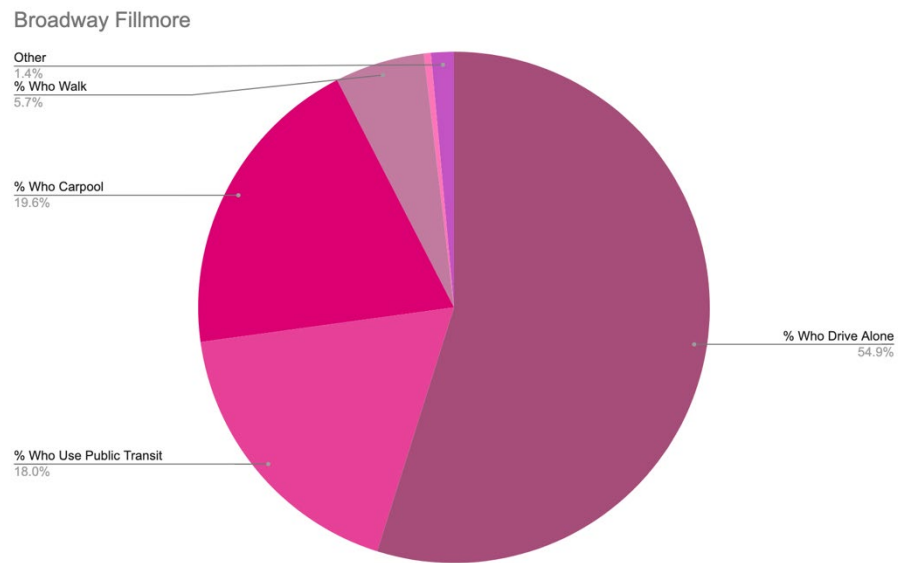


### Cheektowaga



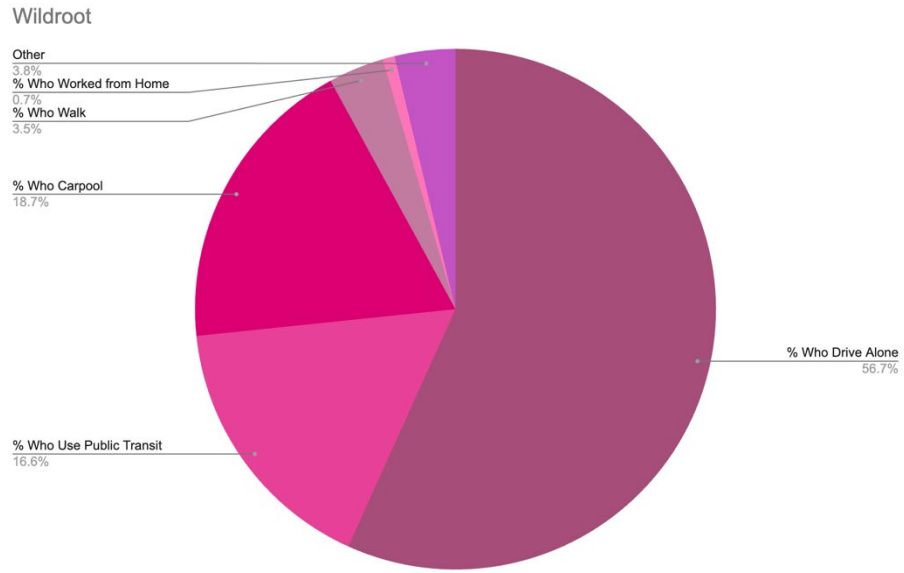


Updated Data for Figure 21



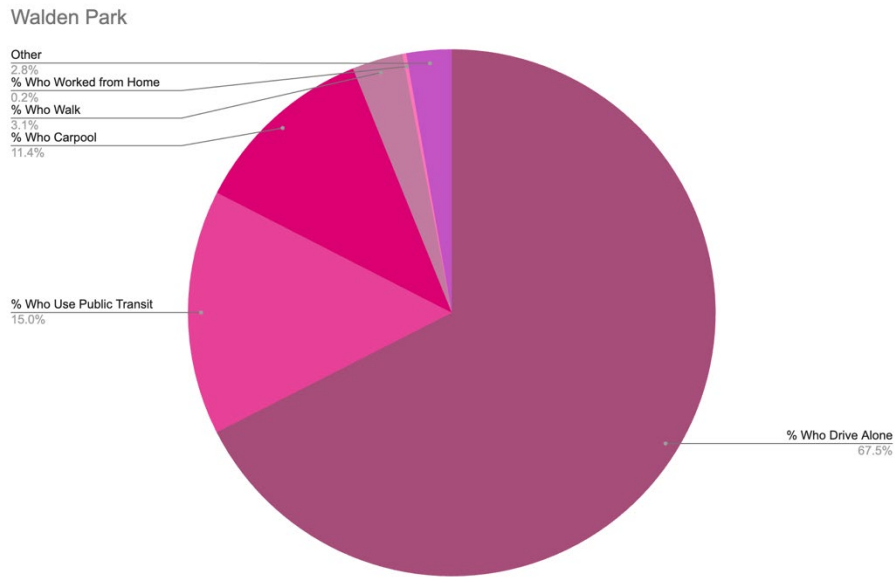
Updated Data

Figure 26



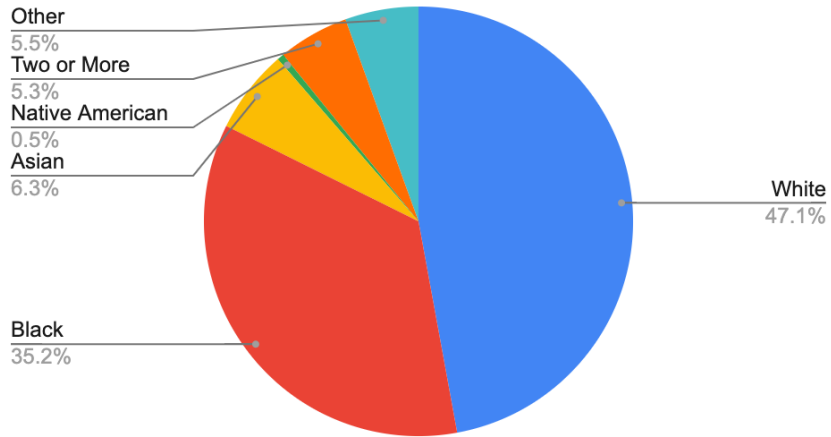
Updated Data

for Figure 30



Updated Data for Figure 36

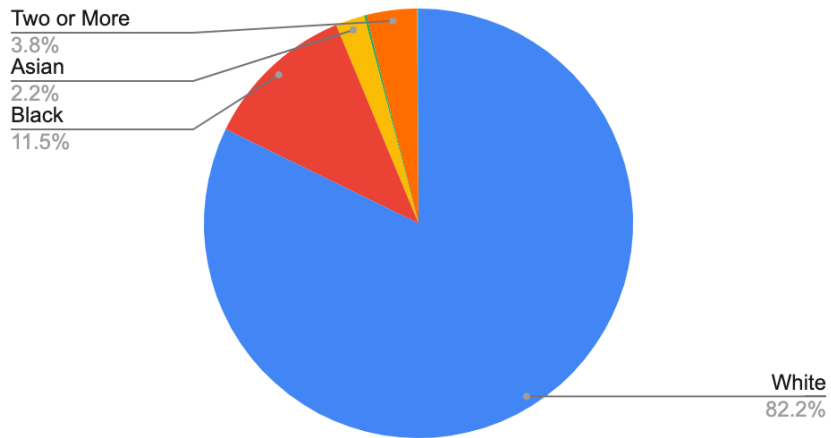
### Buffalo Racial Demographics



Updated Data for Figure 9

---

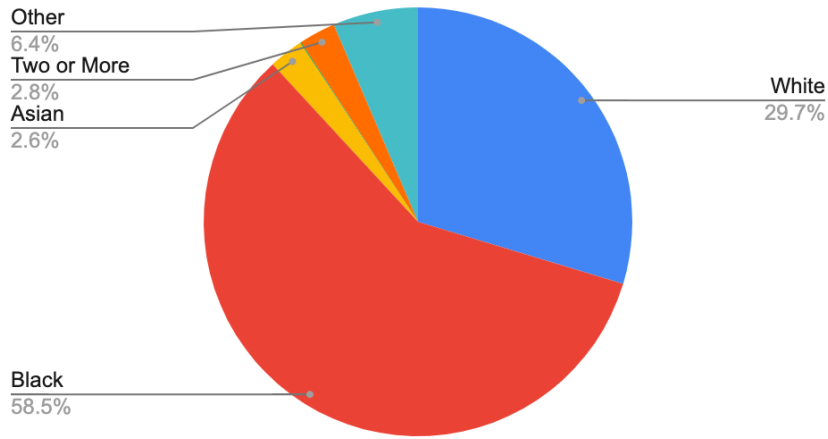
### Cheektowaga Racial Demographics



Updated Data for Figure 10

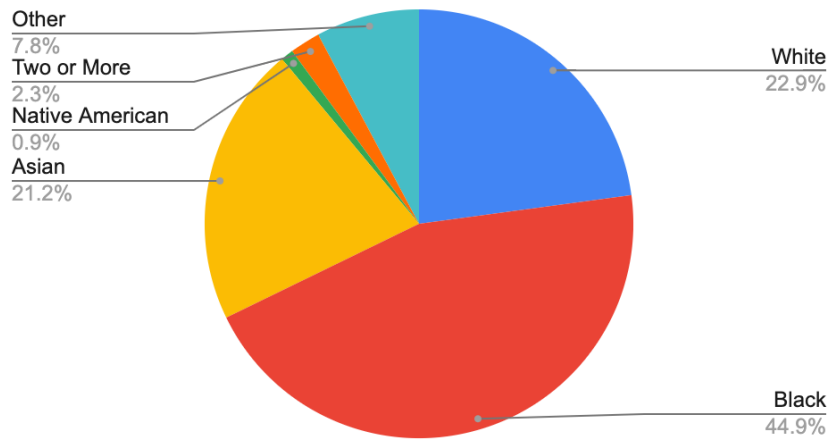


### Larkinville Racial Demographics



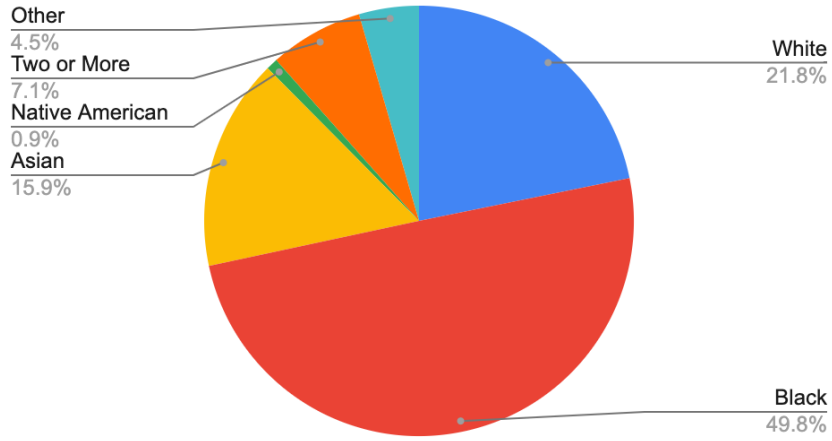
Updated Data for Figure 20

### Broadway Fillmore Racial Demographics



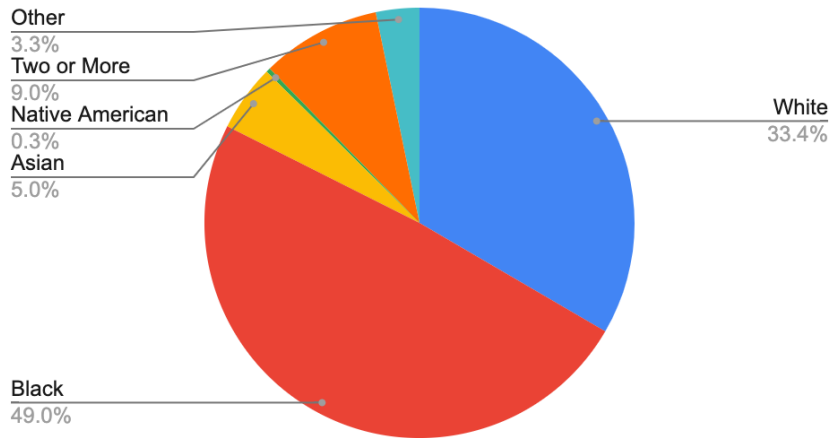
Updated Data for Figure 24

### Wildroot Racial Demographics



Updated Data for Figure 29

### Walden Park Racial Demographics



Updated Data for Figure 33

## SOURCES

---

- [1] Bernstein, Jared. (2013) The Impact of Inequality on Growth. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/doc/189210579/The-Impact-of-Inequality-on-Growth> on November 1, 2017
- [2] Chen, Y., Yazdani, M., Mojtahedi, M., & Newton, S. (2019, November 15). The impact on neighborhood residential property valuations of a newly proposed public TRANSPORT project: The SYDNEY NORTHWEST METRO case study. Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590198219300697#:~:text=That%20study%20found%20that%20the,is%20another%20important%20impact%20factor>
- [3] Creger, H., Sanchez, A., & Espino, J. (2019, November 20). Mobility equity: Turning theory into reality. The Greenlining Institute. <https://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Mobility-Equity-Framework-Final.pdf>
- [4] CRT. (2019). EASTSIDE AIRPORT METRO RAIL EXTENSION. [https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/73615/the\\_eastside\\_airport\\_metro\\_rail\\_extension\\_AC.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/73615/the_eastside_airport_metro_rail_extension_AC.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
- [5] Data Axle. (2021, August 18). Helping businesses make money through data, technology, & services. Data Axle. <https://www.data-axle.com/>
- [6] Economic Development Research Group. (2020). Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment.
- [7] EEO Administrator. (n.d.). Special services - accessibility. Metro Bus & Rail. <https://metro.nfta.com/special-services/accessibility>.
- [8] Erie County. (n.d.). Real property parcel search. Real Property Tax Services. <https://www3.erie.gov/ecrpts/real-property-parcel-search>
- [9] Ewing, R., Tian, G., & Spain, A. (2014). Effect of Light-Rail The effect of Light-Rail Transit on Transit on Traffic in a Traffic in a Travel Corridor. Portland State University. [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=trec\\_reports](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=trec_reports)
- [10] GBNRTC. (2010). Erie County Transit Service Restructuring and Fare Study–Strategic Assessment. Final Report 2010. <https://app.box.com/s/vhju03f9iqrwnl91mc9439k53xd5xmln>
- [11] GBNRTC. (2020). 2020-2024 TIP Project Locations. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56ccbbfd3c44d8670dbd1d84/t/5d8b82f515c46a712a03de09/1569424122472/Project+Location+Maps.pdf>
- [12] Google. (2020). Google Maps. Google maps. <https://maps.google.com/>
- [13] Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council, Niagara Frontier Transportation, Buffalo Niagara Partnership Authority, School of Architecture and Planning, University at Buffalo, (2015). Making connections survey results (MARCH-APRIL). One Region Forward. <http://www.oneregionforward.org/data-tools/making-connections-survey-results-march-april/>

- [14] Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council, Niagara Frontier Transportation, Buffalo Niagara Partnership Authority, School of Architecture and Planning, University at Buffalo, (2015). Towards a more sustainable Buffalo Niagara. One Region Forward. <http://www.oneregionforward.org/>
- [15] Hess, D. B., & Almeida, T. M. (2007). Impact of Proximity to Light Rail Rapid Transit on Station-area Property Values in Buffalo, New York. *Urban Studies*, 44(5–6), 1041–1068.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980701256005>
- [16] Larkin Square Home page. Larkin Square. (2021, July 8). <https://larkinsquare.com/>
- [17] Maciag, M. (2021, June 14). Vehicle ownership in U.S. Cities data and map. *Governing*.  
<https://www.governing.com/archive/car-ownership-numbers-of-vehicles-by-city-map.html>
- [18] MacDonald, J. M., Stokes, R. J., Cohen, D. A., Kofner, A., & Ridgeway, G. K. (2010, July 9). The effect of light rail transit on body mass index and physical activity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.  
[https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749379710002977?casa\\_token=zqzRj4fJM8AAAAAA%3A\\_FILp2dM-5JttOCIGZpwIIPGQqIeAQMzE-mGfSkb-sE8I9OiarC43ddhWMaE6iqYEKUlnTi6\\_6g](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749379710002977?casa_token=zqzRj4fJM8AAAAAA%3A_FILp2dM-5JttOCIGZpwIIPGQqIeAQMzE-mGfSkb-sE8I9OiarC43ddhWMaE6iqYEKUlnTi6_6g)
- [19] Metro Transit. (2021). How to Pay Bus. <https://www.metrotransit.org/how-to-pay-bus>
- [20] Missing the Target: How Economic Development Programs Have Failed to Revive Buffalo’s Most Challenged Neighborhoods, by Sam Magavern et al, Partnership for the Public Good (2009).
- [21] Mobile Safety Net Team. (2020). The Buffalo Niagara Region. <http://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/07/NumbersInNeed.pdf>
- [22] New York State Department of Transportation. (n.d.). Department of Transportation. Grade Crossings.  
<https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/operating/oss/ptsb/rail/accident-reports/grade-crossings>
- [23] NFTA. (n.d.). Metro fares. Metro Bus & Rail. <https://metro.nfta.com/schedules/fares-and-pass-sales>
- [24] NFTA Metro. (2019). Metro Rail Expansion Project. Locally Preferred Alternative Refinement Technical Report. [https://www.nftametrorailexpansion.com/pdfs/LPA\\_refinement\\_technical\\_report\\_012019.pdf](https://www.nftametrorailexpansion.com/pdfs/LPA_refinement_technical_report_012019.pdf)
- [25] NFTA. (2020). Metro rail. Metro Bus & Rail. <https://metro.nfta.com/schedules/route/145>
- [26] NFTA-Metro. (2020). NFTA 2019-2020 Annual Performance Report.  
<https://www.nfta.com/media/jdubj5z3/metroperformancereport2020.pdf>
- [27] NFTA-Metro Performance. (2022, March). FY 2022 Metro Performance. Key Performance Indicators.  
<https://elements.nfta.com/media/n1ihvike/metro-annual-performance-report-2022.pdf>
- [28] NFTA Metro. (2021). Service Design Guidelines & Delivery Standards, Revision.  
[https://www.nfta.com/media/k2yhjha4/metro\\_service\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.nfta.com/media/k2yhjha4/metro_service_guidelines.pdf)
- [29] Numbers in Need. (2020). The Buffalo Niagara Regional Report. <http://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/07/NumbersInNeed.pdf>. NFTA-Metro (2020).
- [30] NYS. (2017). Light rail extension study: Buffalo billion. Light Rail Extension Study | Buffalo Billion.  
<https://buffalobillion.ny.gov/light-rail-extension-study>

- [31] NYS. (2019). East Buffalo Corridor economic development FUND: Buffalo billion. East Buffalo Corridor Economic Development Fund | Buffalo Billion. <https://buffalobillion.ny.gov/east-side-corridor-economic-development-fund>
- [32] PROPERTY VALUES IN BUFFALO, NEW YORK, Daniel Baldwin Hess and Tangerine Maria Almeida, Urban Studies, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43084814>, Vol. 44, No. 5/6 (May 2007), pp. 1041-1068 (28 pages), Published By: Sage Publications, Inc.
- [33] Public Authorities Reporting Information System. (2017). Annual Report for Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority. <https://www.abo.ny.gov/annualreports/PARISAnnualReports/FYE2017/State/ARNiagaraFrontierTransportationAuthority2017.pdf>
- [34] Puchalsky, C. M. (n.d.). Comparison of emissions from light rail transit and bus rapid transit - Christopher M. Puchalsky, 2005. SAGE Journals. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0361198105192700104>
- [35] Texas A&M Transportation Institute (2021). Roadway Traffic Congestion by Urbanized Area: 2017 [Vehicle Miles Traveled, Hours of Delay, And Congestion Cost] ProQuest Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 2021 Online Edition.
- [36] Transportation Management & Design, Inc. (2010). Erie County Transit Service Restructuring and Fare Study–Strategic Assessment. <https://app.box.com/s/vhju03f9iqrwnl91mc9439k53xd5xm1n>
- [37] U.S. Census Bureau (2021, June 21). Census business builder (CBB). The United States Census Bureau. <https://www.Census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb.html>
- [38] WBFO-FM 88.7 | By Marian Hetherly. (2019, October 17). State says higher cancer rates along Buffalo-Cheektowaga border found 'mainly IN MEN'. WBFO. <https://www.wbfo.org/health-wellness/2019-10-16/state-says-higher-cancer-rates-along-buffalo-cheektowaga-border-found-mainly-in-men>
- [39] WSP, & GBNRTC. (2018). Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan. Transit-Oriented development resources. <https://www.gbnrtc.org/todresources>
- [40] WSP. (2018). Extending light rail in Buffalo. WSPglobal. <https://www.wsp.com/en-NZ/insights/extending-light-rail-in-buffalo>
- [41] 5 Surface Transportation Policy Project. (2003). Why a Lack of Transportation Choices Strains the Family and Budget and Hinders Home Ownership. Smart Growth America. Retrieved from <http://old.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/transportation-costs-and-the-american-dream.pdf>, on August 3, 2017.
- [42] 7 Chetty R. & Hendren N. (2015) The Impacts of Neighborhoods on Intergenerational Mobility. Harvard University. Retrieved from [http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/nbhds\\_exec\\_summary.pdf](http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/nbhds_exec_summary.pdf) on November 2, 2017.
- [43] NFTA 2019-2020 Annual Performance Report. <https://www.nfta.com/media/jdubj5z3/metroperformancereport2020.pdf>