Section 4.2
Land Use

Contents

Figures

No table of figures entries found.

Tables

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BRT ..... Bus Rapid Transit
LRT ..... Light Rail Transit
Project ..... Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda Corridor Transit Expansion

4. Environmental Consequences

4.2 LAND USE

This section describes the impacts of the Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda Corridor Transit Expansion (the Project) on existing land use conditions, policies, and regulations within the Project study area, as well as the Project's impact on planned developments. Existing land use conditions, planned developments, and land use policies and regulations are described in Appendix D2, "Land Use Supplemental Information".

Table 4.2-1 summarizes the environmental consequences of the Project No Build Alternative, LRT Build Alternative, and BRT Build Alternative, as they relate to existing and future land use and development considerations. During preliminary and final design, the Niagara Frontier Transit Metro System, Inc. (Metro) will prepare station area plans in coordination with local municipalities and other stakeholders. Metro will also evaluate sustainable design features and aesthetics to be incorporated into the proposed stations, including substations, in accordance with municipal land use regulations and zoning provisions.

Table 4.2-1. Land Use and Future Development – Impacts Summary

Alternative	Land Use Impacts
No Build Alternative	No impacts
LRT Build Alternative	No adverse impact to the overall land use because of proposed real property interests for stations and right-of-way for transit service. Proposed property acquisition would not adversely conflict with land use plans and policies, nor substantially displace businesses. No adverse impact after mitigation as a result of constructing power substations. Includes investments in sidewalks, crosswalks with improved bicycle, pedestrian, and wheelchair access, which would be a benefit to the land uses within the study area.
BRT Build Alternative	No adverse impact to the overall land use because of proposed real property interests for stations and right-of-way for transit service. Proposed property acquisition would not adversely conflict with land use plans and policies, nor substantially displace businesses. Includes investments in sidewalks, crosswalks with improved bicycle, pedestrian, and wheelchair access, which would be a benefit to the land uses within the study area.

4.2.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would make no changes to planned transportation services or facilities in the Project Corridor and proposed project-generated changes to study area land uses would not occur. Under the No Build Alternative, enhanced access to transit associated with the implementation of the Project would not occur to support future land use, as called for in adopted plans and policies.

4.2.2 Build Alternatives

The analysis addresses the Build Alternatives' compatibility with surrounding uses and densities and consistency with local plans and ordinances. Differences between the two alternatives are noted.

4.2.2.1 Land Use

The Build Alternatives would alter existing land uses to transportation right-of-way through real property interests and displacements at the proposed Decatur and Eggert station locations and along the alignment where right-of-way is needed to construct the Project. Anticipated land use impacts at both the corridor and station levels, including property acquisitions, displacements, and increased transit access and mobility, are discussed below. See Section 4.1, "Property Acquisitions and Displacements," for more information.

CORRIDOR IMPACTS

Metro would construct the LRT Build Alternative and the BRT Build Alternative primarily along existing transportation rights-of-way (See Appendix B2, "Conceptual Design Plans"). Within existing transportation right-of-way, both Build Alternatives would be consistent with the Town of Amherst's plans to convert John James Audubon Parkway to a two-lane roadway that uses the southbound lanes and closes the northbound lanes. This initiative is unrelated to the Project.

Portions of both Build Alternatives would be constructed in areas where there is insufficient right-of-way width. As such, implementing the Build Alternatives would require Metro to acquire property and, in some cases, displace commercial and residential uses (Table 4.2-2). See Section 4.1, "Property Acquisitions and Displacements," for more information.

Table 4.2-2. Summary of Affected Properties

Alternative	Total Affected Real Property Interests	Full Acquisition of Real Property Interests	Partial Acquisition of Real Property Interests or Easement	Building Displacements
No Build Alternative	0	0	0	0
LRT Build Alternative	192	14	178	15
BRT Build Alternative	178	14	164	15

*Note: total affected properties as a result of the LRT Build Alternative includes Gateway Park which would be a permanent easement and is documented in Chapter 5, "Section 4(f) Evaluation."

Corridor-level land use impacts would involve commercial and residential properties. Displacement and direct land use changes to residential properties would be limited for both the LRT Build Alternative and the BRT Build Alternative; therefore, the overall land use composition would not change substantially. Some loss of business property and parking facilities would also occur on individual properties. No adverse land use impacts would be expected from these changes due to the limited amount of direct land use changes to residential and commercial properties.

Although new transportation right-of-way acquisition would impact property along the Project alignment, these acquisitions would neither meaningfully alter the balance of land uses in the study area nor would they have an adverse impact on surrounding land uses. See Section 4.1, "Property Acquisitions and Displacements." Both Build Alternatives would be consistent with local underlying zoning, comprehensive plans, and future development by enhancing transit service to support more walkable, mixed-use, and transit-oriented land uses. Implementation of the Project could spur economic revitalization and the development of more livable, transit-supportive communities near the proposed stations. More foot traffic near stations would benefit local businesses and encourage community development. In addition, the improved transportation access and travel options of the Build Alternatives would serve existing and future development.

STATION AREA IMPACTS

Most land use impacts would occur on parcels around the proposed stations or substations, resulting from the conversion of existing land uses to transportation uses needed to accommodate the stations, substations, and the two proposed park and ride facilities. Although new transportation right-of-way acquisition would impact property along the Project alignment, these acquisitions would neither meaningfully alter the balance of land uses in the study area nor would they have an adverse impact on surrounding land uses.

The proposed Project includes investments in sidewalks and crosswalks with improved bicycle, pedestrian, and wheelchair access, which would benefit the land uses within the study area. The proposed stations would be consistent with local plans and policies and would have beneficial land use and environmental impacts that support existing and future development in the station areas and would act as focal points for future growth. Appendix D2, "Land Use Supplemental Informational" describes anticipated changes to land use within each station area.

4.2.3 Potential Mitigation Strategies

Construction of the Build Alternatives would result in property acquisitions and displacements. As described in Section 4.1, "Property Acquisitions and Displacements," these property acquisitions would be required primarily for proposed stations and widening the right-of-way to accommodate transit operations.

Metro will prepare station area plans during preliminary and final design in coordination and consultation with local municipalities and other stakeholders. In addition, during final design Metro will evaluate sustainable design features that could be incorporated into the proposed stations in accordance with municipal regulations and guidance that apply to land use. These Project changes would not impact the overall land use composition of the corridor. Therefore, no mitigation is warranted.

The LRT Build Alternative proposes the construction of power substations in support of LRT operations. The proposed substations would result in a Project impact as they are not consistent

with existing study area land uses. The following mitigation strategies would offset the potentially adverse impacts associated with the LRT Build Alternative substations.

- Metro will design the substations using aesthetic treatments to be compatible with existing surrounding land use and municipal zoning requirements.
- Metro will consider incorporating substations into the proposed station design.