Appendix D2:
Land Use
Supplemental Information

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BNMC ..... Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus
BRT ..... Bus Rapid Transit
EIS ..... Environmental Impact Statement
GBNRTC ..... Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council
GC ..... General Commercial
LC ..... Local Center
LRT ..... Light Rail Transit
Metro ..... Niagara Frontier Transit Metro System, Inc.
Metro Rail ..... Metro Light Rail Transit System
NCD ..... New Community District
ND ..... Neighborhood District
NFTA ..... Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
Project ..... Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda Corridor Transit Expansion
MOS ..... Major Open Space
SA ..... Suburban Agriculture
SUNY UB ..... State University of New York University at Buffalo

TOD.....Transit Oriented Development
UB.....University at Buffalo
WNY.....Western New York

Appendix D. Land Use

This appendix 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. In addition, this appendix also describes the Project's impact on planned developments. Table D-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, 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 city and town land use regulations and zoning provisions as defined in Section 4.2.1.

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

Alternative	Land Use Impacts
No Build Alternative	No impacts
LRT Build Alternative	No adverse impact to land use because of proposed property acquisition 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 as a result of constructing power substations after mitigation. 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 land use because of proposed property acquisition 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.

D.2 REGULATORY CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

Regional and local planning bodies govern land use and zoning regulations. Metro obtained land use and zoning information from Erie County,[1] the City of Buffalo,[2] and the Towns of Tonawanda[3] and Amherst.[4] For this Draft EIS, a land use change may result in an adverse

1 *https://www3.erie.gov/gis/internet-mapping*

2 *https://www.buffalony.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6105/Citywide_Zoning_Map_January2017?bidId=*

3 *https://www.tonawanda.ny.us/document-center/planning-development/2005-comprehensive-plan-resources/320-map-03-zoning/file.html*

4 *https://www.amherst.ny.us/content/mapping.php*

impact if it would be incompatible with surrounding land uses or could encourage land use and development inconsistent with local plans, goals, and objectives.

For each municipality, Metro considered whether each Build Alternative could result in the following:

- Conflict with, or disruption of access to, land uses adjacent to the alternative alignments
- Conflicts with local land use plans, policies, or regulations
- Land use benefits of the Project, such as opportunities for economic development and transit-supportive land uses
- Direct intensification of land uses not consistent with study area land use policies
- Substantial displacement of businesses (especially major employers) and individuals, defined in this analysis as those of a magnitude that would preclude relocation in the immediate area due to lack of available real estate
- Long-term disruption of business activities

The study area identified to evaluate the Project's impacts to land use and future development is defined as a 0.25-mile radius on either side of the Build Alternatives' alignment and a 0.5-mile radius around each proposed station. Some adjustments were made to the land use datasets through field verification to supplement the desktop analysis.

D.2.1 Study Area Land Use Policies

Metro reviewed the following plans that establish the regional, community, and local land use policies:

- **One Region Forward: A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara** is a regional plan that explores ideas and potential strategies to align actions and values. The plan (published in February 2015) provides a framework for moving the region toward a more sustainable, resilient, prosperous, and opportunity-rich future.[5]
- **Moving Forward 2050** is a regional transportation plan produced by the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) in May 2018 that details the trajectory of regional population and economic activity and provides transportation solutions to accommodate better economy, community, environment, and innovation to 2050.[6]
- **Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth** is a framework developed through a partnership between Erie and Niagara Counties. The final report, published in October 2006, outlines a framework to guide the future growth and development of the region.[7]

5 One Region Forward: A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara. 2015. *http://www.oneregionforward.org/the-plan/*

6 Moving Forward 2050. 2018. *https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zx66cjKbPy9y1IWzz2ICpoxVwdx5hOfe/view*

7 Erie-Niagara Framework for Regional Growth. 2006. *http://www2.erie.gov/regionalframework/*

- **Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan** prepared by the GBNRTC and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA)—is a plan for implementing transit-oriented development along the existing Metro Rail corridor, as well as the proposed expansion. The plan, outlined in the *Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development 2019 Final Report* and the 2023 *Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Strategic Implementation Plan, Planning Program – Phase II*[8], includes land use and zoning recommendations for the towns of Amherst and Tonawanda to promote a transit-supportive environment and sets the stage to support transit-supportive zoning and land use policies.
- **WNY Regional Economic Development Plan (A Strategy for Prosperity)** from November 2011, emphasizes implementing smart growth[9] principles, investing in the Buffalo Central Business District, and reestablishing high quality multimodal transportation corridors that strategically link Main Street, the Genesee Gateway, and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) to the Downtown Buffalo districts.[10]
- **Buffalo Comprehensive Plan** is also known as the *Queen City in the 21st Century* (February 2006) and is a 20-year comprehensive plan created by the City of Buffalo's Office of Strategic Planning and adopted by the Common Council in 2006. The plan stresses the importance of adopting a form-based land use and zoning code that would encourage reinvestment and reinforce the city's traditional walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. The plan also notes the importance of public transit and the need to continue to improve and extend the system.[11]
- **Buffalo Green Code Land Use Plan** is a place-based development strategy that is designed to provide a framework for decision-making about physical development. The plan, which was developed in September 2016, outlines the community's expectations and preferences regarding future development. The plan serves as a connection between the City of Buffalo's comprehensive plan and zoning code by recommending the appropriate type, intensity, and character of development.[12]
- **Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan** provides a long-range guide for physical development and outlines the goals, objectives, and principles for short-term and medium-term growth. Rather than focusing on individual neighborhoods, the plan focuses on the larger context of the town while also identifying strategic areas known as "focal planning areas."[13] The bicentennial plan was amended in 2017 and 2019. The most recent 2019

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8 *https://www.gbnrtc.org/todresources*

9 Smart growth is a way to build cities, towns, and neighborhoods that are economically prosperous, socially equitable, and environmentally sustainable.

10 WNY Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan, A strategy for prosperity in Western New York. 2011. *https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2017-11/A_Strategy_for_Prosperity_in_Western_New_York_November_2011.pdf*

11 One Region Forward Queen City in the 21st Century. 2006. *http://www.oneregionforward.org/plan/queen-city-in-the-21st-century-comprehensive-plan/*

12 Buffalo Green Code: Using the Unified Development Ordinance. 2016. *http://www.buffalogreencode.com/green-code-components/land-use-plan-2/*

13 Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan. 2014. *http://www.amherst.ny.us/pdf/planning/compplan/sept_2015.pdf*

amendment incorporates new mixed-use zoning districts[14] to prepare Amherst for the Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda Corridor Transit Expansion Project and the potential for transit-oriented development.

- **Imagine Amherst** is a rezoning effort that looks at establishing form-based and mixed-use centers to be more walkable and multimodal while allowing for contextual transition to adjacent residential neighborhoods. The Town Board adopted the plan as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment on December 11, 2017.[15]
- **Tonawanda 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update** provides a framework for managing and adapting to changes in the town. The plan, released in January 2015, serves as the basis for land use decisions, community projects, and public and private investment in the town.[16] As noted in the 2023 *Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Strategic Implementation Plan, Planning Program – Phase II*[17], the Tonawanda Comprehensive Plan offers moderate support for TOD and there is opportunity to update the comprehensive plan to improve transit support within Tonawanda, especially along Niagara Falls Boulevard.
- **Boulevard Central District (BCD) Action Plan** is the district's vision for future development in the Boulevard Central District in Amherst published in 2021. The plan covers the potential for future development and future mobility as well as implementable actions.[18]
- **Main Street/South Campus Streetscape Plan** is a vision for a mixed-use transit-oriented community in the South Campus Area of the Town of Amherst and the City of Buffalo. The plan, published in 2023, covers the existing conditions, vision, and implementation actions and partners.[19]
- **UB 2020** calls for growth, migration, and transformation, using the theme "Three Campuses, One University." The plan, originally released in 2004, guides development of a single university located on three well-connected campuses across the North Campus in the Town of Amherst, the South Campus in the University Heights neighborhood in the City of Buffalo, and the Downtown Campus within the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus in the City of Buffalo. A key concept in the 2020 plan is to create a "Heart of the Campus" at each campus that builds community and a sense of place while providing centralized student services and retail options. The plan also supports the creation of more on-campus housing options for students to meet rising demand.[20] The current Campus Master Plan identifies

[14] Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan Amendments. 2019. *http://www.amherst.ny.us/pdf/planning/compplan/190709_plan_revisions_and_all_maps.pdf*

[15] Town of Amherst Imagine Amherst. 2017. *https://www.amherst.ny.us/content/projects.php?dept_id=dept_15&proj_id=proj_06&neworder=00*

[16] Town of Tonawanda 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update. 2015. *http://www.tonawanda.ny.us/departments/planning-development/comprehensive-plan/228-2014-comprehensive-plan-update/file.html*

[17] *https://www.gbnrtc.org/todresources*

[18] Boulevard Central District (CBD) Action Plan. 2021. *https://www.amherst.ny.us/pdf/planning/bcd/210726_final_bcd_action_plan.pdf*

[19] Main Street/South Campus Streetscape Plan. 2023. *https://www.amherst.ny.us/pdf/planning/south_campus/streetscapes/230815_final_report.pdf*

[20] University at Buffalo, Top 25 Ambition. 2004. *https://www.buffalo.edu/top25ambition.html*

several specific "Heart of the Campus" initiatives, including a new dining facility "One World Café" on the North Campus and new one-stop shop facilities for student services, 1Capen on the North Campus and 1Diefendorf on the South Campus, along with significant renovations and a new engineering building on the North Campus to accommodate record enrollment in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.[21]

- **Draft Audubon Development Plan Update (2023)** is an effort being undertaken by the Town of Amherst to update its existing Audubon Development Plan, completed in 1972, and corresponding zoning amendments for the Audubon New Community District (NCD) between North French Road and the north boundary of the University at Buffalo (UB), approximately 1,726 acres.

The following municipality zoning codes regulate the land uses in the study area:

- **Buffalo Green Code** administers zoning controls for the City of Buffalo. The Buffalo Green Code is a Unified Development Ordinance that was adopted in 2016 and represents the first major update to the City's zoning code since 1953. The Green Code translates the Comprehensive Plan's smart growth and sustainability principles into a land use plan to Buffalo's physical development for the next twenty years or more.
- **Zoning Code for Amherst (Chapter 203)** administers zoning controls for the Town of Amherst. The zoning code is consistent with the Town of Amherst Comprehensive Plan, which serves as the basis for the Town's land use and zoning decisions.[22] Section 5A covers the town's Mixed-Use Districts.[23]
- **Zoning Code for Tonawanda (Chapter 215)** administers zoning controls for the Town of Tonawanda. The zoning code is consistent with the Town of Tonawanda Comprehensive Plan, which serves as the basis for the Town's land use and zoning decisions. The Town of Tonawanda initiated an update to their zoning ordinance to recognize the potential for the proposed transit expansion along the west side of Niagara Falls Boulevard. A draft zoning code was released in February 2024. [24]

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21 Campus Master Plan. 2020. *https://www.buffalo.edu/top25ambition/beyond-UB-2020/living_learning_environment.html*

22 Chapter 203 Zoning, Town of Amherst, NY. Adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Amherst 5-1-2006 by L.L. No. 6-2006. *https://ecode360.com/15500238*

23 Section 5A Zoning Town of Amherst. NY. 2019. *https://www.amherst.ny.us/pdf/planning/compplan/zcrc/191002_zoning_mixed_use_code_adopted.pdf*

24 Chapter 215 Zoning, Town of Tonawanda, NY. Adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Tonawanda 4-5-1982 by L.L. No. 4-1982. *https://ecode360.com/10934678*

D.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

D.3.1 Land Use

The study area comprises a variety of residential, commercial, and institutional uses (Figure D-1). This study area is described by the following subareas of the Project Corridor:

- Southern segment (from University Station to Sheridan Drive)
- Middle segment (from Sheridan Drive to Rensch Road)
- Northern segment (from Rensch Road to north of I-990)

D.3.1.1 Southern Segment

The study area of the Project Corridor begins in the City of Buffalo, at the existing University Station on the Metro Rail system (Figure D-2). The University at Buffalo (UB) South Campus is the main feature in the southern portion of the study area. The campus, designed in the 1920s, contains the tallest buildings in the area, a large student population, and a major transportation hub at the University Station. Low- to medium-density commercial, residential, and university facilities are concentrated along Main Street.

Moving north from University Station, the Project Corridor extends along Kenmore Avenue, with a mix of residential and commercial uses to Niagara Falls Boulevard. The Project Corridor then extends north on Niagara Falls Boulevard where predominately single-family residential uses are to the east and west of the right-of-way. The community is served by a traditional grid street pattern, with one- to two-story, single-family homes set back from the street. A few small single-story commercial uses (e.g., an aquarium store, mini mart, autobody shop, restaurant) are interspersed along Niagara Falls Boulevard and at the intersection of Decatur Road and Niagara Falls Boulevard. East of Niagara Falls Boulevard, the residential homes transition to single-family and some multifamily housing. Medium-density residential uses surround the proposed Decatur Station area and single-story commercial uses are scattered along Niagara Falls Boulevard near the intersection of Decatur Road.

The residential suburban character continues north along Niagara Falls Boulevard. At Longmeadow Road, larger community facility uses (Trinity and Korean United Methodist Churches, and Christian Fellowship Baptist Church) and single-story commercial uses become the more predominant land use as the roadway widens to a five-lane road. At Eggert Road and the proposed Eggert Station area, the land uses and community character change from a single-family residential community to more suburban commercial uses along Niagara Falls Boulevard with big-box commercial establishments.

Figure D-1. Existing Land Use within the Study Area

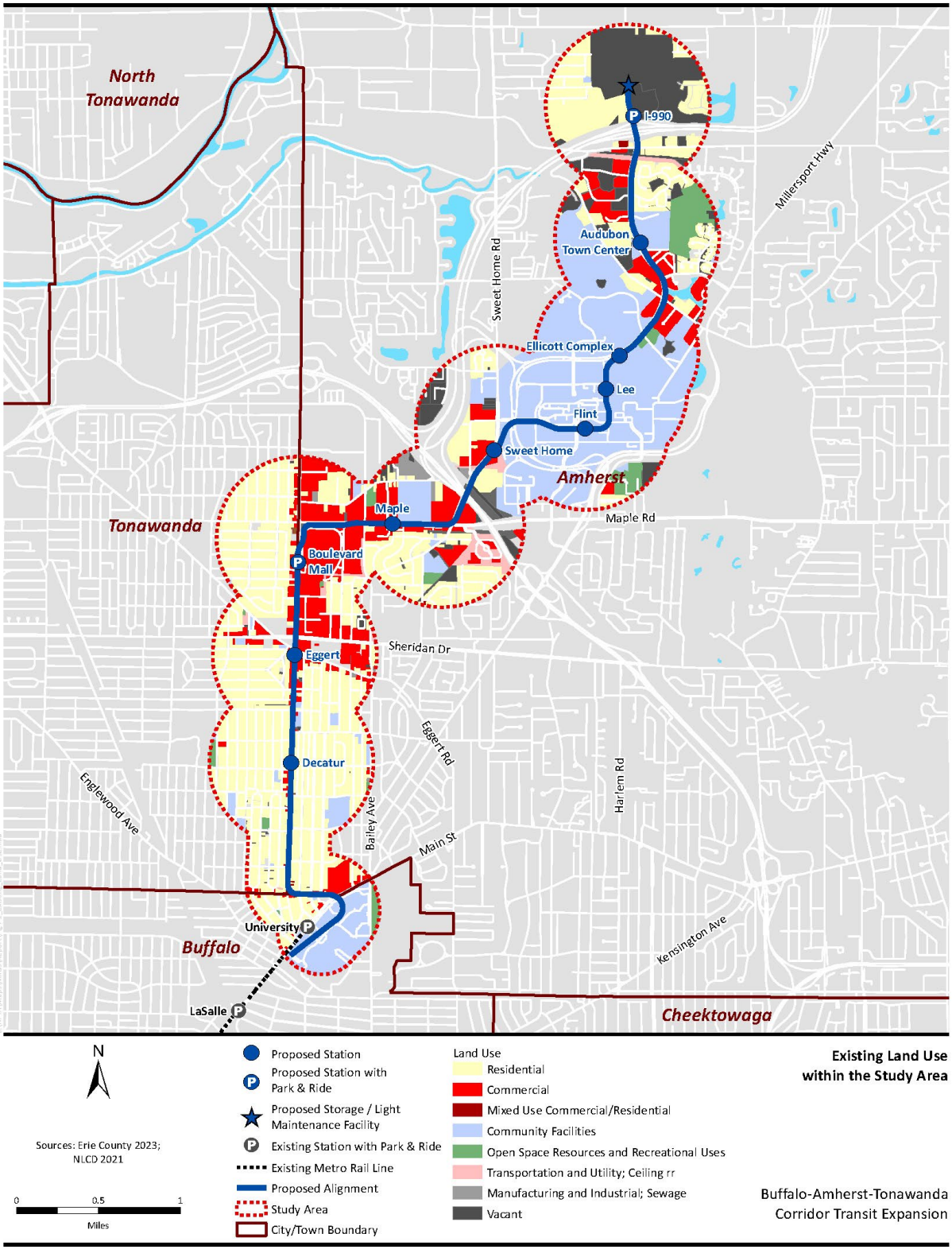
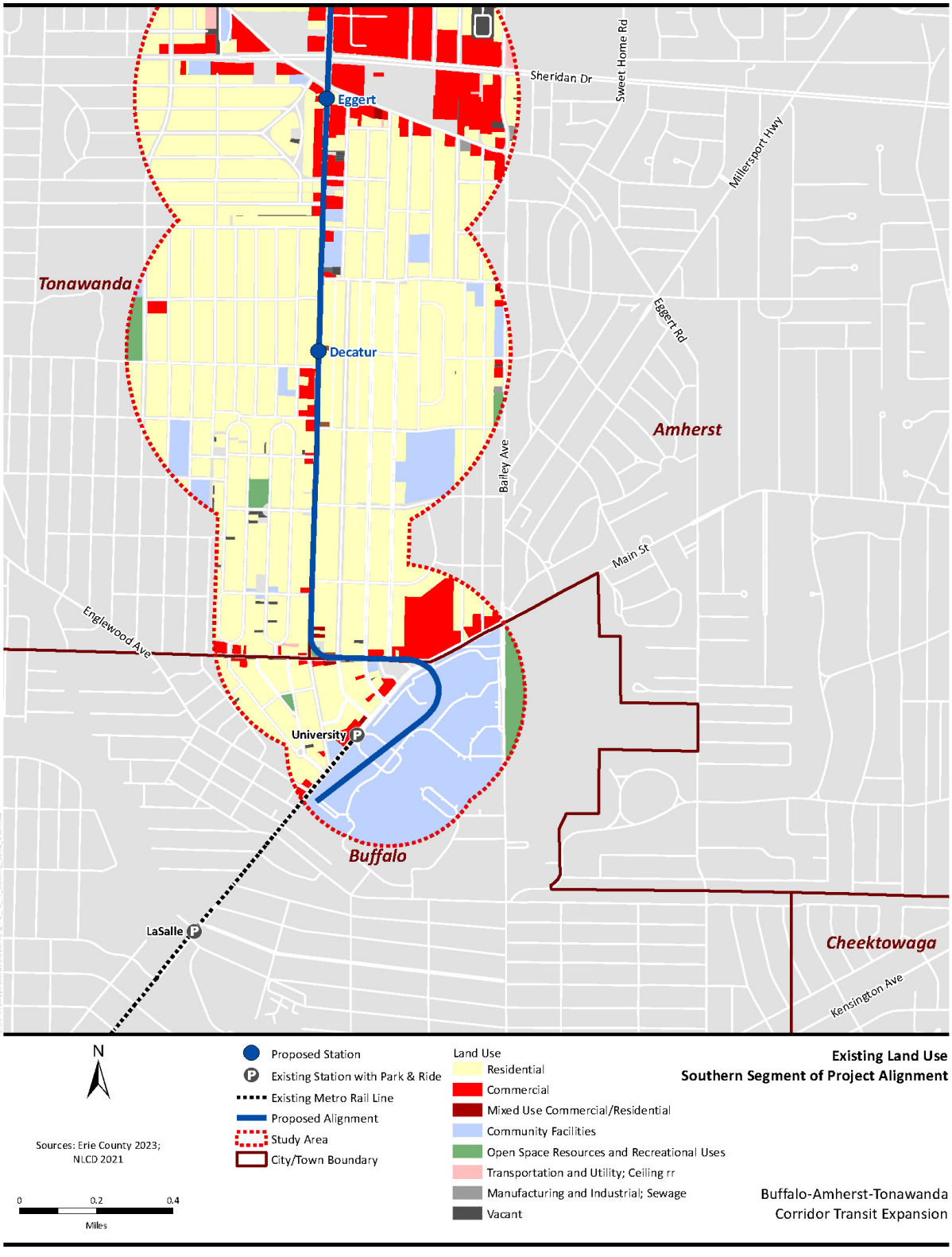


Figure D-2. Existing Land Uses – Southern Segment of Project Alignment



D.3.1.2 Middle Segment

North of Eggert Road, commercial uses line Niagara Falls Boulevard on both the east and west sides. Single-family neighborhoods are located one block to the west of these commercial lots in Tonawanda (Figure D-3). To the east, multifamily residential uses are predominantly located in the Town of Amherst. Commercial uses are predominantly located along Eggert Road and Sheridan Drive which intersect Niagara Falls Boulevard.

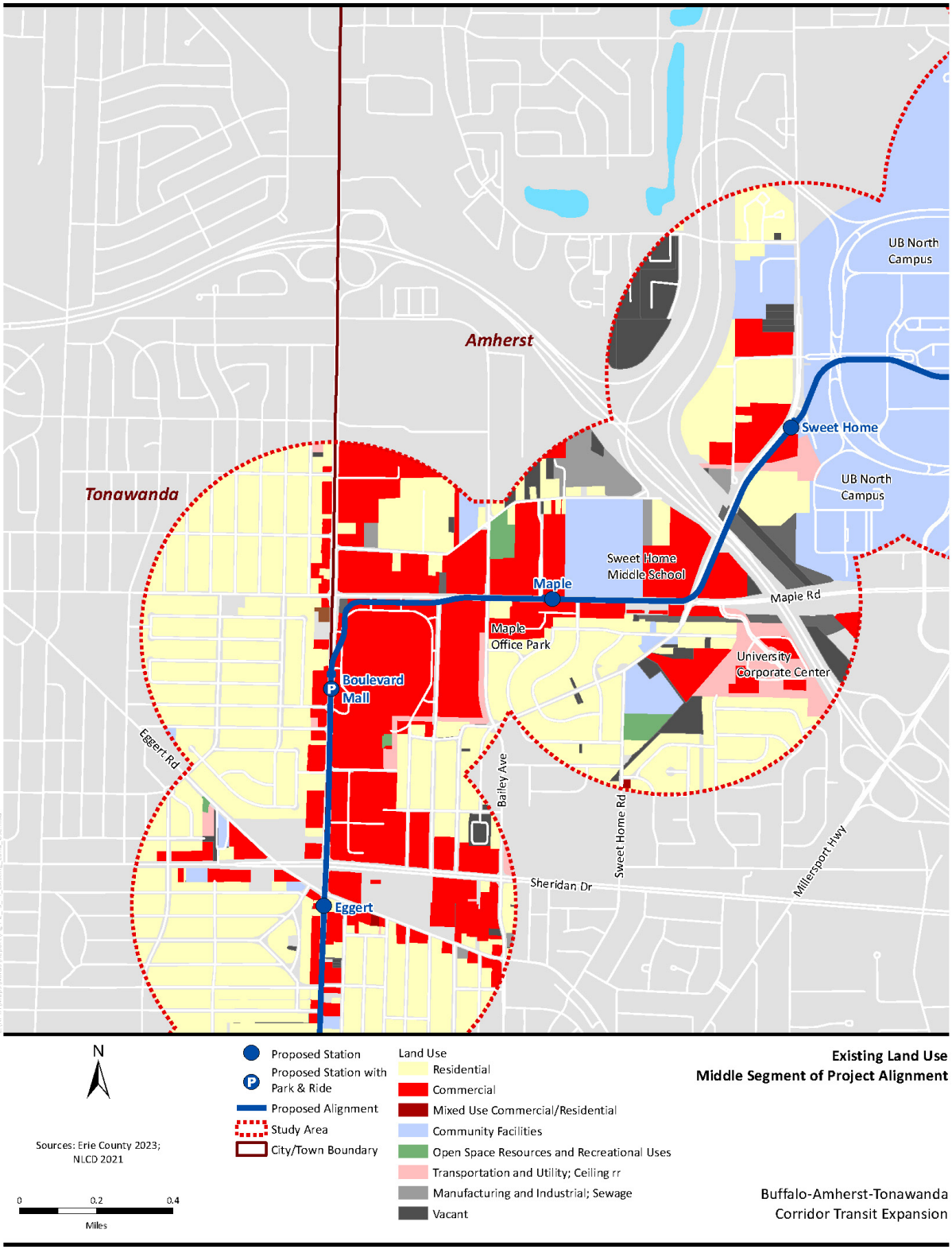
Commercial uses become more prevalent as the Project Corridor travels into the proposed Boulevard Mall Station area. The Boulevard Mall, constructed in the 1960s, historically anchored the retail character of this portion of the Project study area, especially within the Town of Amherst. After years of decline, the interior of the mall closed in April 2024. The Town is working with a developer to redevelop the area. The proposed redevelopment would create at least residential units through a mix of affordable, market rate, student and senior housing, and create new jobs and opportunity through the addition of restaurants, retail and open space. Governor Kathy Hochul awarded $31 million to the Town of Amherst for infrastructure work for the transformational Boulevard Mall redevelopment project.

Commercial uses along Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road in Amherst contain larger big-box stores and supermarkets. The commercial area is a regional commercial destination. Parking surrounds many of the commercial establishments, constructed to meet existing zoning requirements, most of which could be considered an obstacle to pedestrian mobility or not "walkable."

The Project Corridor continues east and north-east along Maple Road with similar land uses which are predominately commercial on both sides of the roadway. Located one block south of Maple Road are single-family homes. The proposed Maple Station is near Sweet Home Middle School as well as other adjacent commercial uses which include two large grocery stores. The Maple Office Park and Maple Village Office Park sit on the south side of Maple Road and a larger office park (University Corporate Center) lies just southeast of the intersection of Maple Road and Sweet Home Road.

Moving north-east along Sweet Home Road, the Project Corridor crosses under I-290. A mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses exist along Sweet Home Road. Sweet Home Road is less densely developed than Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road but still contains commercial, office, academic, and multifamily residential uses. The major development on Sweet Home Road is a mixed-use plaza, which includes a hotel, restaurants, offices, and commercial retail. Attached two-story townhouses, used for student housing, are just south of Rensch Road along Sweet Home Road before the Project Corridor turns into the UB North Campus. The proposed Sweet Home Station is adjacent to the UB North Campus directly serving the student housing described above.

Figure D-3. Existing Land Use – Middle Segment of Project Alignment

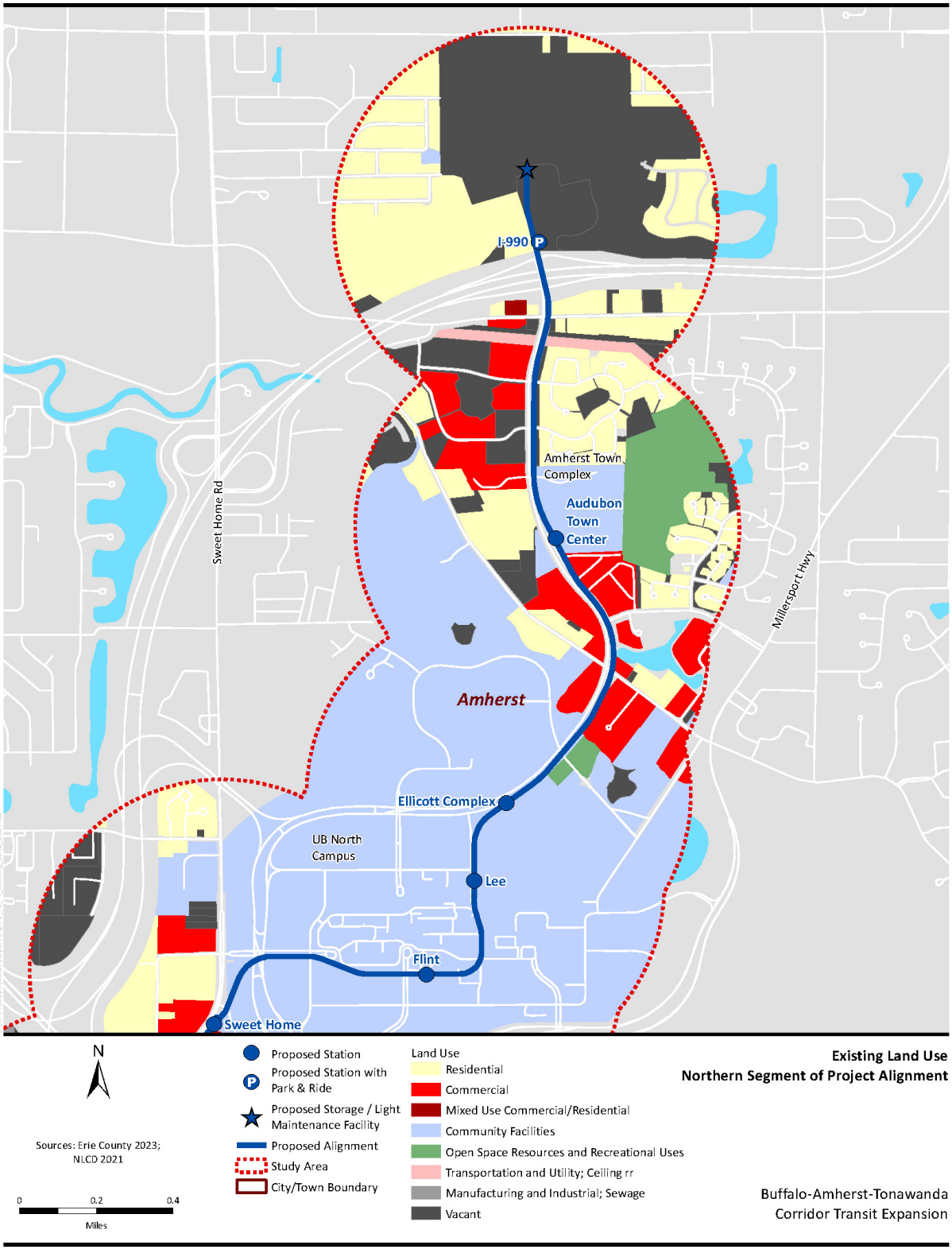


D.3.1.3 Northern Segment

Near Rensch Road, the study area includes UB North Campus, a community facility and regional economic catalyst (Figure D-4) that consists of educational, student housing, and recreational uses. The UB North Campus is a major contributor to the character of the study area's northern segment due to its focus on campus activities and student/facility population. The campus was designed and built in the 1960s and 1970s as a part of a master-planned community. The campus hosts most of the undergraduate programs and student population within the university. While the land use of North Campus is shown in Figure D-4 as large community facility, the campus contains a variety of uses such as residential units that support the student population. Three stations are proposed for the UB North Campus: Flint Station (near Park Hall and other academic uses around the Flint Loop), Lee Station (near the University bookstore), and Ellicott Complex Station (near student residence Greiner Hall and academic and retail uses in the Ellicott Complex).

The portion of the study area north of UB North Campus is part of the same master-planned community, consisting of campus-style office parks and residential uses. Office and commercial land uses line both sides of John James Audubon Parkway, with residential neighborhoods further from the roadway. The area is suburban in character with separated uses, large lots, large setbacks, and off-street parking. Continuing north, Audubon Town Center Station would be located adjacent to the Amherst Town Complex, which consists of a police station and court, library, senior center, and park. Farther north, residential uses exist on the east side of John James Audubon Parkway with office uses on the west side. North of I-990 is a multi-phase development project called Muir Woods. The first phase, located to the west, includes recently constructed student housing. The proposed I-990 Station would be located to the west, along with a park & ride facility and light maintenance/storage facility.

Figure D-4. Existing Land Use – Northern Segment of Project Alignment



D.3.2 Zoning

Figure D-5 presents the municipal zoning districts for the study area based on the zoning codes for the City of Buffalo and the Towns of Amherst and Tonawanda.

In Buffalo, the area around University Station is zoned Educational Campus (D-E). The D-E zone addresses educational campuses and multiple-building sites centered around a series of interconnected open spaces and one or more focal points that provide orientation and identity. In addition, the C-M Metro Rail (C-M) Zone addresses designated areas within close walking distance of Metro Rail stations in the City of Buffalo and is intended to facilitate an elevated level of urban intensity and transit orientation. The C-M Zone, which applies to the existing University Station, is an overlay zone, so both the standards of the C-M Zone and underlying zones apply.

In Amherst and Tonawanda, zoning concentrates residential uses along the southern segment of the Project alignment near the proposed Decatur Station. Zoning near the proposed Eggert Station and continuing north along Niagara Falls Boulevard and Maple Road consists of commercial and mixed-use zoning types, with adjacent residential zones.

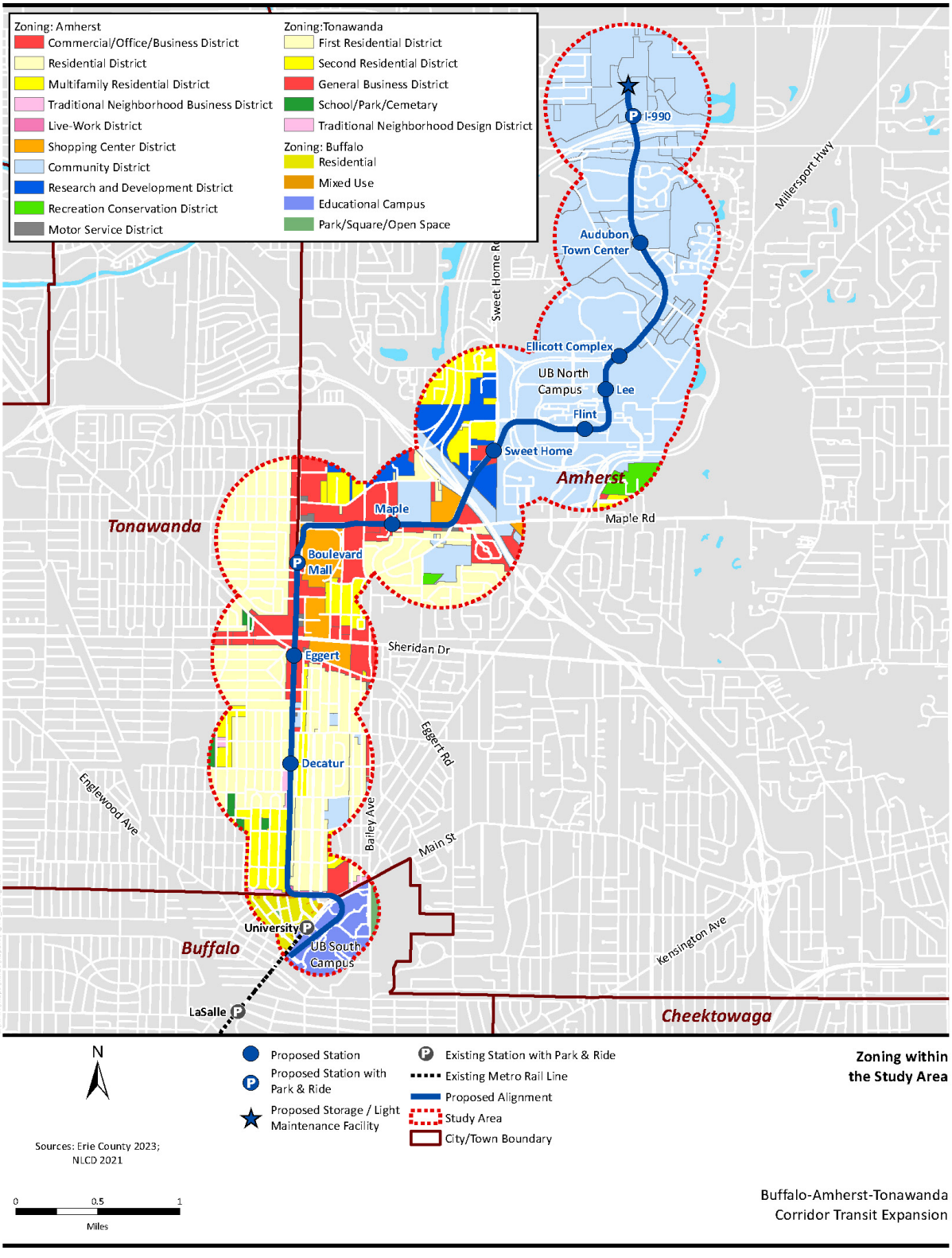
Farther north, mixed-use and residential districts surround the proposed Sweet Home Station, and the remainder of the corridor is zoned New Community District with varying sub-districts under the Town of Amherst's zoning code. The New Community District (NCD) zoning permits flexible land use and site design regulations using performance criteria, which allows multi-use neighborhoods to be developed on relatively large tracts and incorporates residential types and nonresidential uses and services into an area. New Community District zoning sub-district classifications within the Study Area include:

- State University of New York University at Buffalo (SUNY UB)
- Major Open Space (MOS)
- General Commercial (GC)
- Local Center (LC)
- Neighborhood District (ND)
- Suburban Agriculture (SA)

These sub-districts are use classifications within the NCD zone and are intended to best serve residents, employees, and visitors to the new community. Beyond these use classifications of the NCD-zone portion of the study area, there are no underlying zones (such as Residential).

There are some NCD districts (pre-1972) that land owners still currently have when they opted out of the rezoning process – these include Neighborhood Business District (NCD-B-2), General Business District (NCD-B-3), Suburban Agriculture (NCD-S-A), Third Residential (NCD-R-3), Fourth Residential (NCD-R-4) and Multiple Residence (NCD-R-5).

Figure D-5. Zoning within the Study Area



D.3.3 University at Buffalo's Planned Development

All three of the University at Buffalo's campuses (North Campus, South Campus, and Downtown Campus) have been targeted for major developments as part of the university's Facilities Master Plan. The plan supports transformational growth of the university's research capacity and student experience. The university's initiative on North Campus is centered around "activating the core". North Campus is the primary hub for undergraduate students, where most of the academic buildings, student life centers, and athletic facilities are located. The master plan seeks to create a denser, more active North Campus, which is primarily planned for the automobile. Planned projects for the North Campus include:

- A new recreation and wellness center, engaging Lee Road as a hub for student life activities
- A new engineering building, featuring an "engineering commons" that will house spaces for student clubs and start-ups
- Enhanced walkability achieved through roadway improvements, increased density at the campus core, and the "main street"-esque buildout of Lee Road

In comparison to North Campus, South Campus houses more graduate-level professional facilities, smaller classrooms, and less student housing. South Campus improvements are focused on reinvigorating the campus. The master plan seeks to create a more urban South Campus, focused on creating a more active campus within the city limits. Planned projects for the South Campus include:

- A new dining hall catering to the busy schedules of young professionals while also implementing a space for community-oriented programming
- An increase in student housing, through renovations to the existing Goodyear and Clement Halls and construction of townhouse style apartments for graduate students
- Construction of a new student union and multipurpose recreational fields to create year-round gathering spaces

The Downtown Campus is a hub for medical sciences. It is the newest of the three campuses, opening its doors in 2017. The master plan seeks to transform the Downtown Campus into a center for medical education and clinical practice while also supporting the development of the surrounding neighborhood. Planned projects for the Downtown campus include:

- Migrating all five of UB's health science programs to the Downtown Campus
- Streetscape and landscape improvements to the entire medical campus area
- Increase campus entrances facing Ellicott Street to improve pedestrian access and wayfinding

D.3.4 Planned Development

In the Town of Amherst, currently planned development includes the following projects (see Figure D-6; project numbers correspond to figure):

1. Costco at 4230 Ridge Lea Road
2. Apartments (220 units) at 2635-2655, 2675, and 2691 North Forest Road
3. Apartments (122 units) at 480 Dodge

The land uses proposed for these projects are similar to surrounding development and in accordance with existing zoning, including retail, restaurants, hotel, offices, residential (including student housing), and other commercial properties. In addition to these planned developments, the Town of Amherst has been working on a master plan for the Boulevard Mall site that would redevelop the site into a mixed-use town center. In 2023, the Town of Amherst initiated eminent domain proceedings to enable redevelopment of the Boulevard Mall.

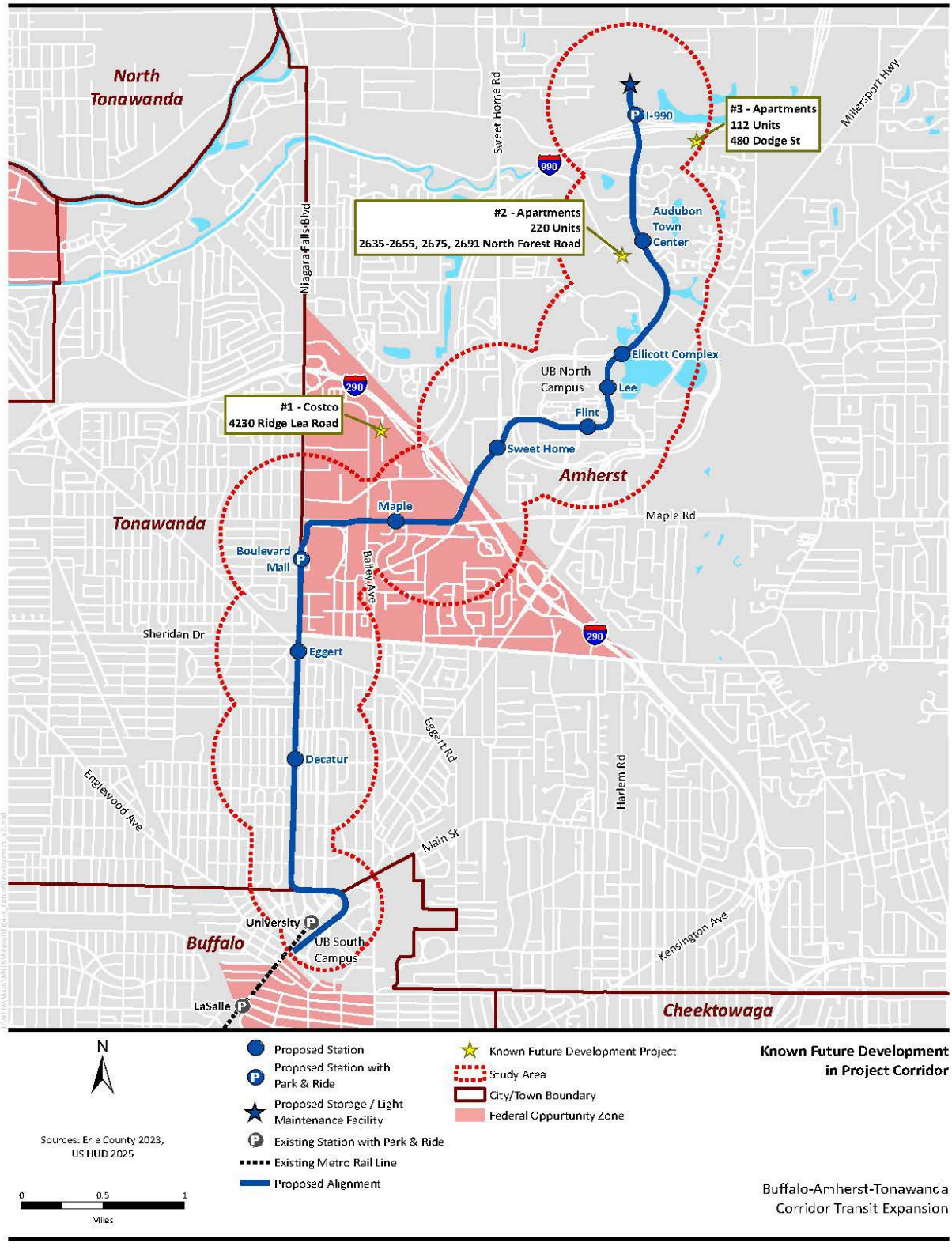
The Boulevard Mall is located within a Federal Opportunity Zone, the Amherst Boulevard Central District (see Figure D-6). The Opportunity Zone Program is a tax deferment investment program designed to spur community development in distressed areas by providing long-term tax benefits to investors. The goals of the Amherst Boulevard Central District are:

- Encourage mixed-use development and increased density
- Maximize economic investment and tax revenue
- Improve mobility and pedestrian access via public transit, bicycling, and walkability
- Invest in aged infrastructure systems
- Protect and enhance surrounding residential neighborhoods

The Boulevard Mall was also identified as a priority site for affordable housing in the September 2023 Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan Strategic Implementation Plan[25] , prepared by GBNRTC and NFTA. The Strategic Implementation Plan outlines a plan to produce 3,274 new units of affordable housing within ½ mile of existing and proposed Metro Rail stations by 2050. To meet this goal, the plan recommends the Boulevard Mall development dedicate 25 percent of the development to housing and produce 40 percent of total units as affordable.

[25] Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan Strategic Implementation Plan Final Report, September 2023, https://www.gbnrtc.org/todresources

Figure D-6 Planned Development in Project Corridor



D.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ALTERNATIVES

The following sections summarize the potential land use impacts of each alternative.

D.4.1 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.

D.4.2 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.

D.4.2.1 Land Use

The Build Alternatives would alter existing land uses through property acquisitions 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 detailed information on the number of displacements.

CORRIDOR IMPACTS

Metro would construct the LRT Build Alternative and the BRT Build Alternative primarily along existing transportation rights-of-way (See Appendix B, "Conceptual 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 D-2). See Section 4.1, "Property Acquisitions and Displacements," for more information.

Table D-2. Summary of Affected Properties

Alternative	Total Affected Properties	Full Acquisition of Property	Partial Acquisition of Property 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 Plaza which is documented as a temporary occupancy in Chapter 5, "Section 4(f) Evaluation."

Most direct, corridor-level, land use impacts would involve commercial 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." Because the existing transportation use has shaped land use patterns throughout the area, the Project is not expected to result in substantive changes in land use patterns or uses beyond what could be achieved through existing and ongoing planning and/or policies.

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 direct land use impacts would occur on parcels around the proposed stations or substations, resulting from the conversion of existing land uses needed to accommodate the stations, substations, and the two proposed park & 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.

Construction of the LRT Build Alternative and BRT Build Alternatives would result in displacements (See Section 4.1, "Property Acquisitions and Displacements"). The proposed

Project includes investments in sidewalks, 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 would support existing and future development in the station areas and would act as focal points for future growth. The following sections describe anticipated changes to land use within each station area (See Section 4.5, "Visual Quality," for renderings of the proposed stations).

Decatur Station

The proposed Decatur Station would be located on Niagara Falls Boulevard north of Decatur Road at the intersection of Yale Avenue. The station would have side platforms within the existing right-of-way of Niagara Falls Boulevard. A substation for the LRT Build Alternative would be located west of the station and would require property acquisition, including a full acquisition at the south corner of Decatur Road and Niagara Falls Boulevard and a partial acquisition of the parcel to the west. The station design would be compatible with the surrounding transportation right-of-way by using transparent or semi-transparent materials. Station design would also include design features that reflect the surrounding community character. The substation would be inconsistent with the adjacent residential land uses and would result in a potentially adverse impact. Design of the substation would either be incorporated within the station design or would include aesthetic treatments, architectural design, and massing that would be compatible with adjacent land uses.

Eggert Station

The proposed Eggert Station would be located on Niagara Falls Boulevard just south of Eggert Road. The station would have side platforms within the existing right-of-way of Niagara Falls Boulevard. A substation for the LRT Build Alternative would be located west of the station, along with a bus transfer. Full acquisition would be required on the east and west sides of Niagara Falls Boulevard to account for the station, substation, and bus transfer. The station design would be compatible with the surrounding transportation right-of-way by using transparent or semi-transparent materials. Station design would also include design features that reflect the surrounding community character. The substation would be inconsistent with the adjacent residential land uses and would result in a potentially adverse impact. Design of the substation would either be incorporated within the station design or would include aesthetic treatments to be compatible with existing surrounding commercial land use.

Boulevard Mall Station

The proposed Boulevard Mall Station would be located on Niagara Falls Boulevard north of Treadwell Road near the entrance of the Boulevard Mall parking lot. The station platform would have side platforms within the existing right-of-way of Niagara Falls Boulevard. The retail presence within the surrounding plazas and the Boulevard Mall dominates the land use surrounding this proposed station. A new Metro station would incentivize development of mixed uses on the property. The Town of Amherst approved revisions to its zoning that would allow for denser, mixed-use transit-oriented development at the site. The new transit-oriented mixed-

use center around the station would transform the mall property and infill vacant or underutilized properties. Redevelopment coordination between the Town of Amherst and Metro is ongoing. The future transit-oriented development, as well as surrounding residences, would benefit from the increased transit access. A proposed park & ride facility would be located near the proposed Boulevard Mall Station. The park & ride facility would benefit residents of the proposed Boulevard Mall development and surrounding neighborhoods by improving transit access to downtown employment centers and UB.

Maple Station

The proposed Maple Station would be located on Maple Road east of Bowmart Parkway, in front of the western entrance of Sweet Home Middle School. The station platform would have side platforms within the existing right-of-way of Maple Road, and the LRT Build Alternative and the BRT Build Alternative would institute no major land use changes. The surrounding office and retail would benefit from increased access to transit. Access to Sweet Home Middle School would be preserved to allow for the existing on-site flow of buses and student pickups/drop offs to continue. The increased access to transit that the LRT Build Alternative and the BRT Build Alternative would benefit neighborhoods and residences located on the streets parallel to Maple Road. The proposed station would be compatible with overall land use composition.

Sweet Home Station

The proposed Sweet Home Station would be primarily located within the street right-of-way. Partial property acquisition may be required for the parcel on the east side of Sweet Home Road on a property sited for a future hotel and owned by UB and Erie County. The increased transit access that the LRT Build Alternative and the BRT Build Alternative would provide would benefit the future hotel, the existing mixed-use plaza, multifamily apartments, shops, restaurants, and the office building.

UB North Campus Stations

The proposed Flint Station would be located on the UB North Campus between Park Hall and Jacobs A Lot (parking). The proposed Lee Station would be located on the UB North Campus between the bookstore parking lot and Lee Road. The proposed Ellicott Complex Station would be located on the UB North Campus between Lee Circle and the right-of-way of the northbound side of John James Audubon Parkway. The UB North Campus stations would not cause any major changes to land use on campus. The stations would benefit the student residential community that is on the fringe of the campus limits by increasing connectivity beyond the campus center.

Audubon Station

The proposed Audubon Station would be located on the east side of the existing northbound lane of John James Audubon Parkway. The center platform would be located on a grassy area in front of the Amherst Public Library and Town Complex. The proposed station would be compatible with overall land use composition and would benefit office commuters, users of the

Town Complex facilities (e.g., library, senior center, police, and court), as well as the surrounding residential neighborhoods via enhanced transit access.

I-990 Station

The proposed I-990 Station would be located north of the I-990 and terminus of John James Audubon Parkway on the Muir Woods site, a multi-phase development project. The first phase, located to the west, includes recently constructed student housing. Metro has been coordinating with the developer of the property to incorporate the proposed station, park & ride facility, and light maintenance/storage facility into future phases of the development. This coordination will be documented in a Memorandum of Understanding that will be included in the Final EIS. The proposed I-990 Station and park & ride facility would benefit residents of the recently constructed student housing and surrounding neighborhoods by improving transit access to downtown employment centers and UB. The station design would be compatible with the surrounding land use by using transparent or semi-transparent materials and inclusion of design features that reflect the surrounding community character.

In addition, the LRT Build Alternative and the BRT Build Alternative would include a light maintenance/storage facility to store vehicles (LRT or BRT) overnight and to perform light maintenance and cleaning at the end of line, north of the I-990 and John James Audubon Parkway interchange. The light maintenance/storage facility would be fully enclosed, with staff facilities to account for offices, restrooms, and lockers. The light maintenance/storage facility design would be compatible with the surrounding land use with materials that mimic surrounding community character.

D.5 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 and 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 city and town regulations and guidance that apply to land use (see Section 4.2.1). 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.
- Metro will consider incorporating substations into the proposed station design.