



# **Metro Rail Expansion Project**

Public Hearings

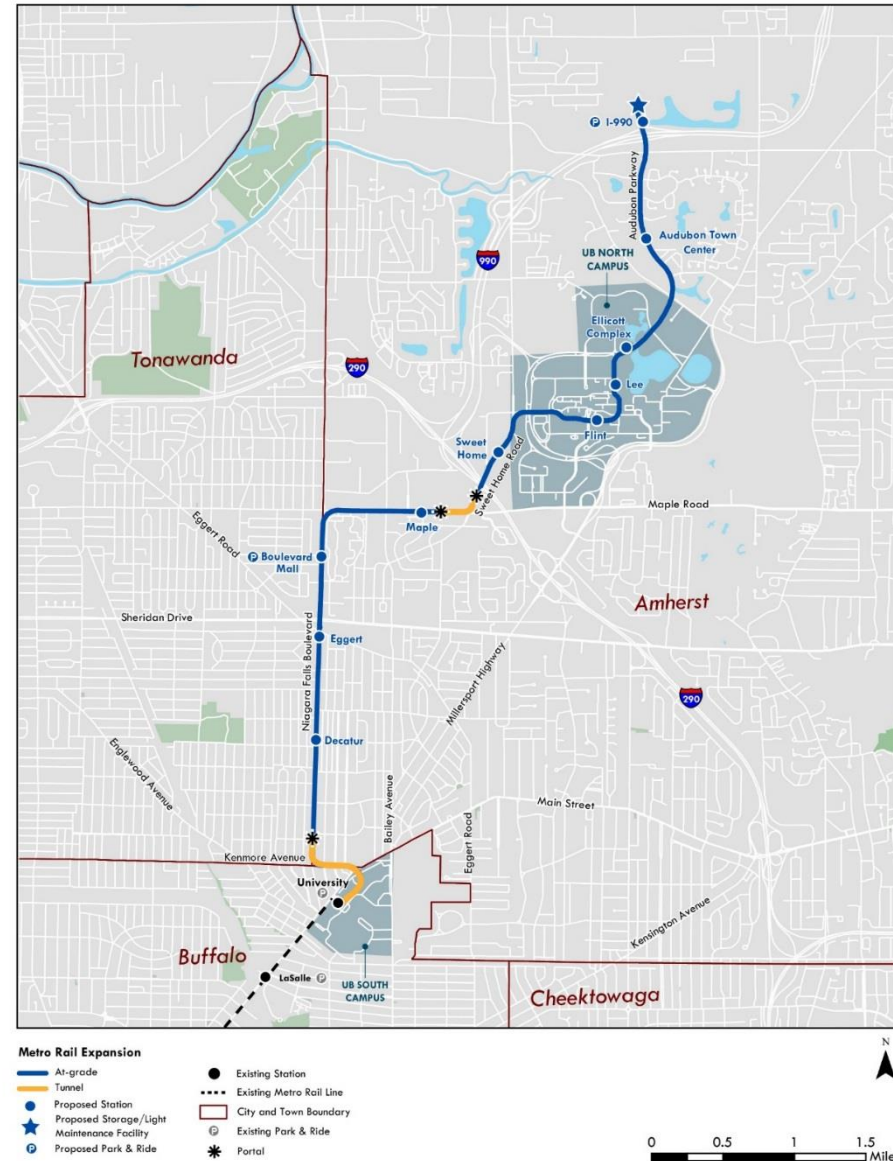
February 25, 2020 and

February 26, 2020

# Proposed Action

Alignment would begin at the existing Metro Rail terminus at University Station and travel along Kenmore Avenue, Niagara Falls Boulevard, Maple Road, and Sweet Home Road, through the UB North Campus to Audubon Parkway and I-990

- Ten stations
- Two park & ride facilities
- Overnight storage and light maintenance facility



# Purpose and Need

- The **purpose** of the Proposed Action is to provide a fast, reliable, safe, and convenient transit ride in the Metro Rail Expansion corridor, linking established and emerging activity centers along the existing Metro Rail line in Buffalo with existing and emerging activity centers in Amherst and Tonawanda.
- The **need** for improved transit service has three main components:



Serve increased  
demand



Provide high-quality  
service to key activity  
centers



Improve service for  
transit-dependent  
population

# Environmental Review

- An Environmental Impact Statement is being prepared in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)
- Niagara Frontier Metro System, Inc is the lead agency
- EIS will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to allow future federal funding

2018	2019			2020			
JANUARY	JANUARY / FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL - DECEMBER	WINTER	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
Establish Lead Agency	Scoping Comment Period Begins / Scoping Meeting	Scoping Comment Period Ends	Prepare DEIS	Release DEIS / Public Comment Period Begins	Public Hearing	DEIS Public Comment Period Ends	FEIS / Statement of Findings

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



## ACRONYMS

**DEIS** Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
**FEIS** Final Environmental Impact Statement

**NEPA** National Environmental Policy Act  
**SEQRA** New York State Environmental Quality Review Act



# Public Engagement

- 3 public meetings
- 5 Technical Advisory Committee meetings
- 11 pop-ups and community events
- 2 neighborhood meetings
- 4 stakeholder coordination meetings
- Project website with over 23,000 pageviews
- Station and Employer/Employee surveys
- Over 700 attendees participated in the various outreach meetings
- Over 700 comments received since kickoff meeting



# Environmental Analysis



Land Use and  
Community Character



Socioeconomic



Property  
Acquisitions



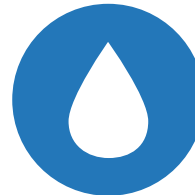
Environmental  
Justice



Visual  
Resources



Natural  
Resources



Water  
Resources



Transportation



Noise



Vibration



Air Quality



Construction

# Environmental Analysis

## Positive Impacts



Land Use and  
Community Character



Socioeconomic



Air Quality



Environmental  
Justice

# Environmental Analysis

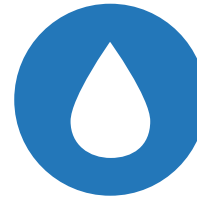
## Neutral or No Impact with Mitigation



Visual  
Resources



Natural  
Resources



Water  
Resources



Construction

# Environmental Analysis

## Requires Mitigation



Transportation



Property  
Acquisitions



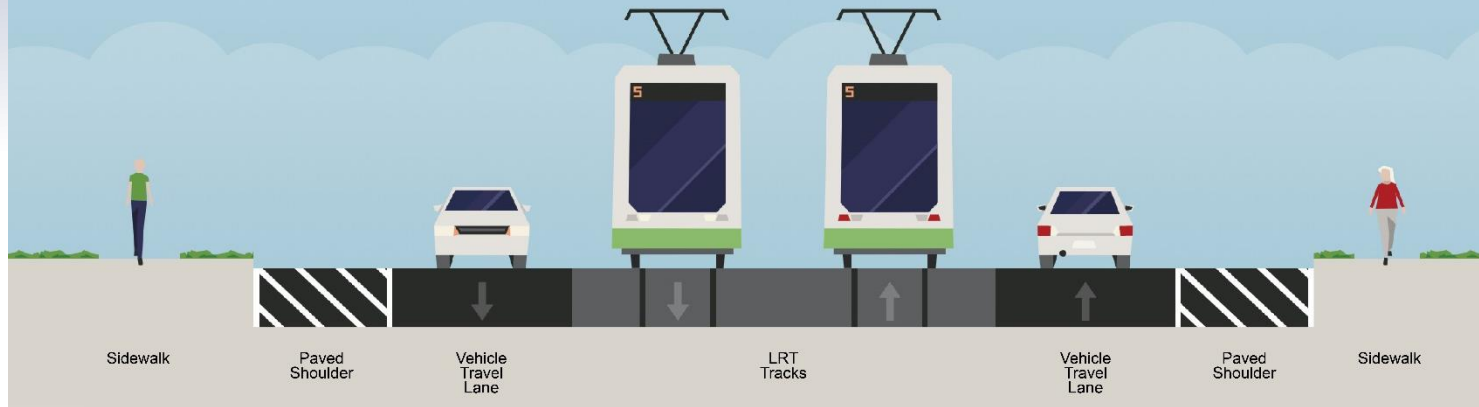
Noise



Vibration

# Multi-Modal Enhancements

## Niagara Falls Boulevard North of Ford Avenue

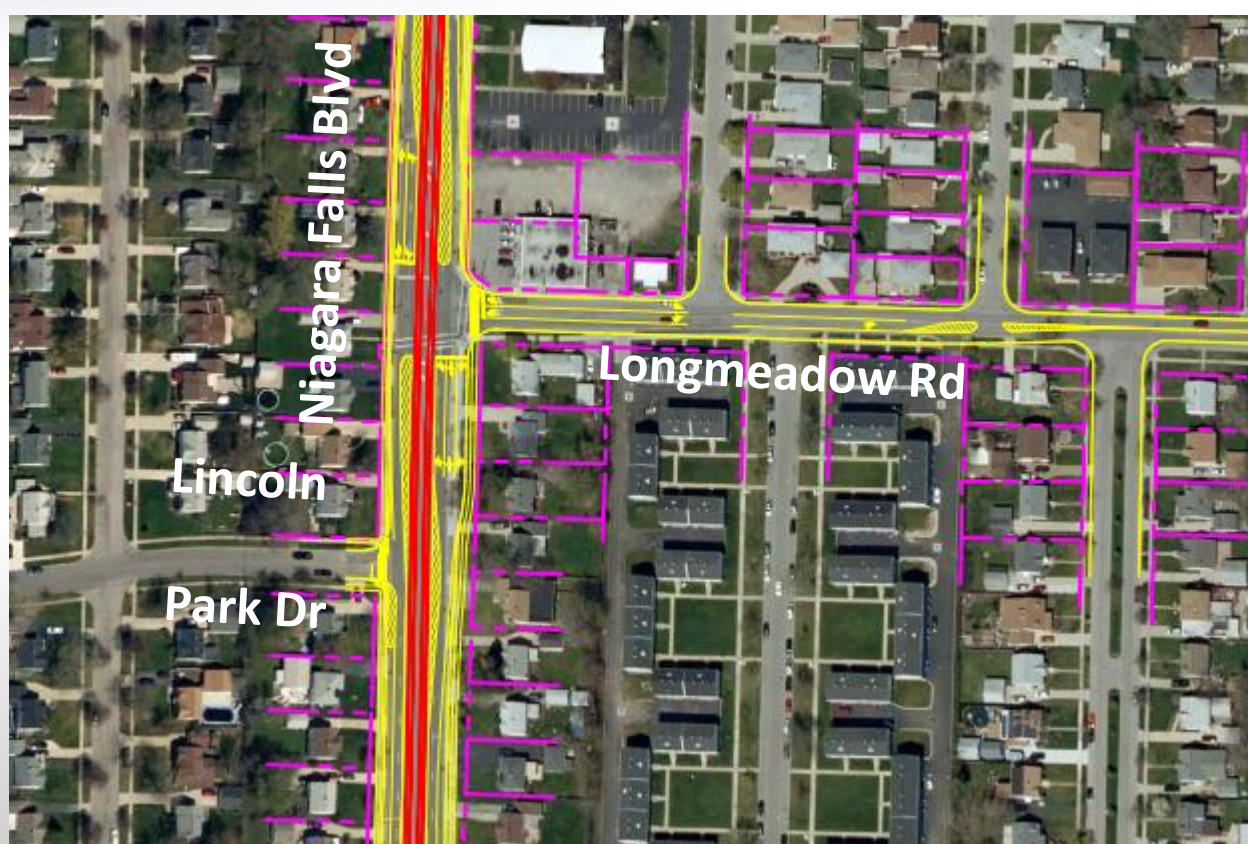


## Maple Road at Maple Station



# Transportation

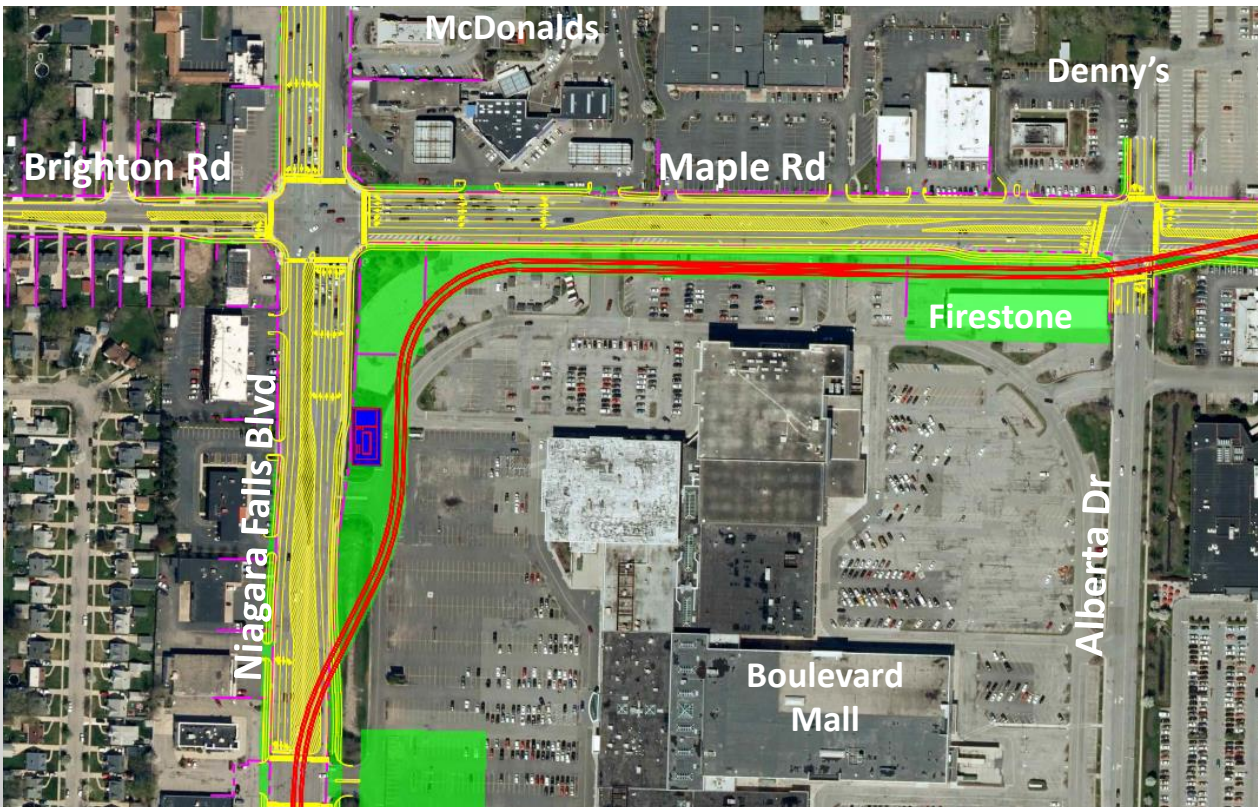
## Niagara Falls Blvd at Longmeadow Road



- Added dedicated right turn lane
- Reduced delay at intersection
- Reduced queuing of vehicles at intersection

# Transportation

## Niagara Falls Blvd at Maple Road



- Shifted alignment through the corner of Boulevard Mall to avoid interacting with the intersection
- Improved level of service
- Reduced delay at intersection
- Reduced queuing of vehicles at intersection

# Transportation

## Maple Road at Sweet Home Road



- Shifted alignment to operate as a grade separated intersection
- Improved level of service
- Reduced construction impacts
- Reduced maintenance for Metro Rail operations

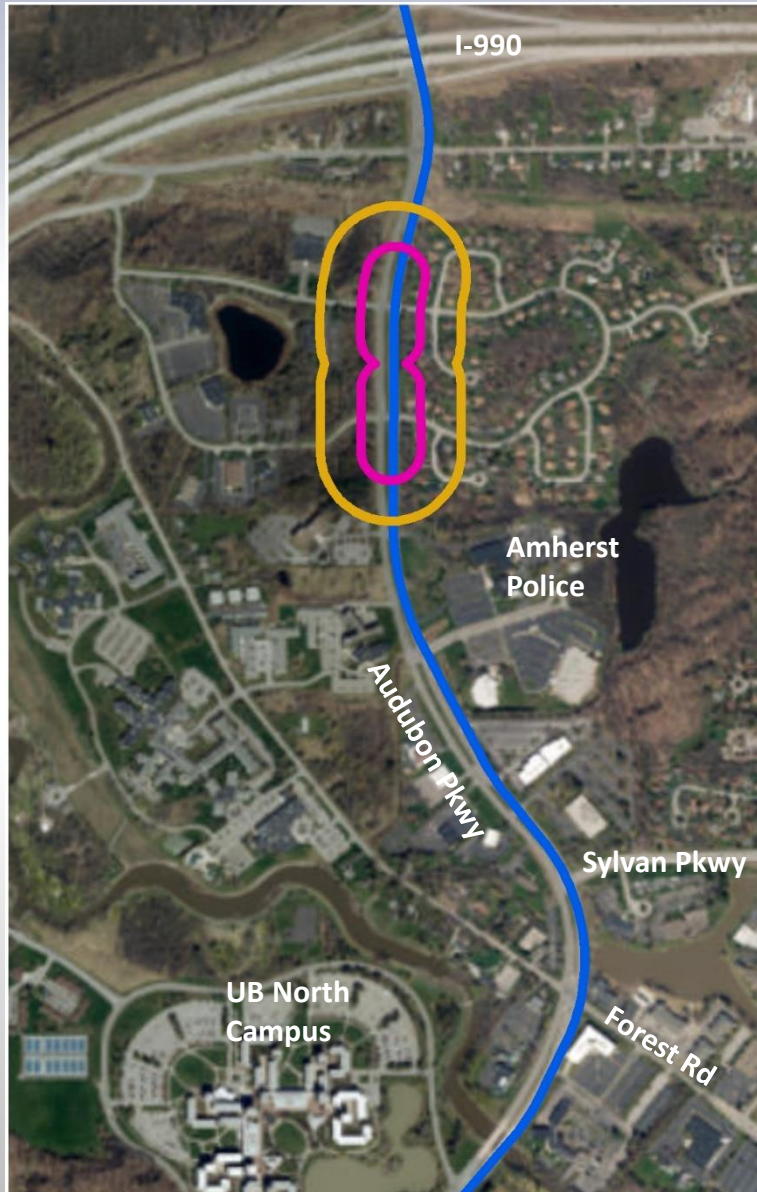


# Potential Property Acquisitions



Type	Potential Number of Parcels	Potential Acquisition	Property Use
Full	15	<p>275,875 square feet (6.3 acres)</p> <p>Parcels may be partial acquisitions based on further design and parking/zoning requirements</p>	<p>2 Residential</p> <p>10 Commercial</p> <p>1 Transportation/utility</p> <p>2 Vacant</p>
Partial	148	<p>443,398 square feet (10.2 acres)</p> <p>Average potential partial acquisition is between 2 and 5 feet of frontage property</p>	<p>69 Residential</p> <p>68 Commercial</p> <p>3 Mixed-Use</p> <p>2 Institutional</p> <p>2 Transportation/utility</p> <p>4 Vacant</p>

# Noise



## Corridor wide mitigation measures:

- Purchase new Metro Rail Vehicles
- Install Vehicle Skirts



## Audubon area additional mitigation measures:

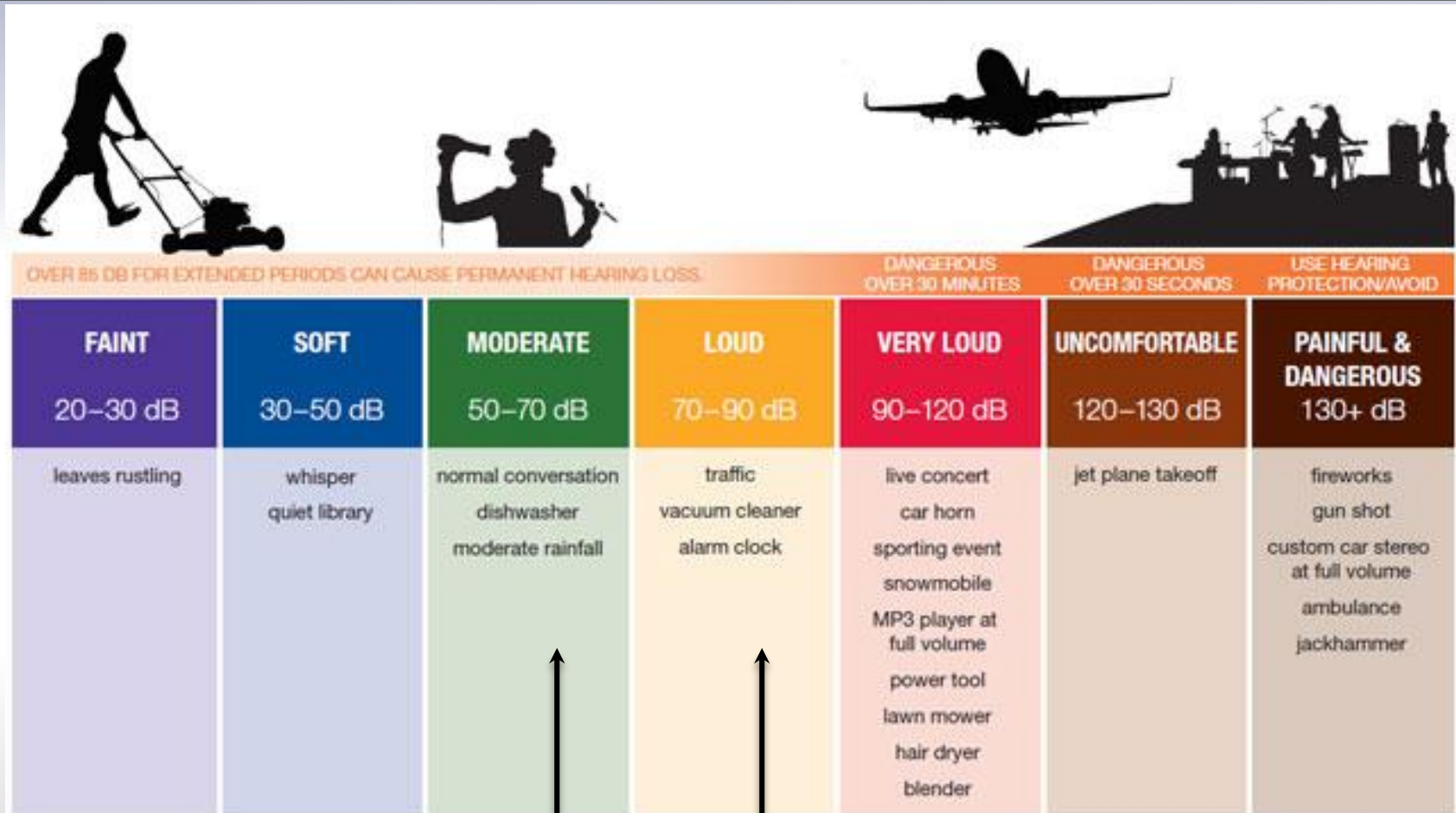
- Reduce operating speeds to 30mph
- Install gate and gate flashing signals (safety mechanism)
- Eliminate bells/whistles at at-grade crossings
- Install vegetation along Audubon Parkway

— Proposed Action Alignment

□ Boundary where LRT operations would be noticeable prior to mitigation measures

□ Boundary where LRT operations will be noticeable with mitigation measures

# Noise



Current Audubon Pkwy = 53dBA  
 Proposed Audubon Pkwy = 58dBA

Current Niagara Falls Blvd = 70dBA  
 Proposed Niagara Falls Blvd = 71dBA

# Vibration

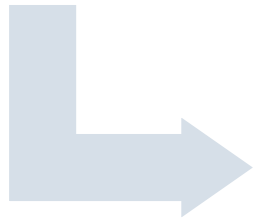
- Conducted NEPA vibration analysis on the Proposed Action
- Identified corridor wide mitigation measures:
  - Purchase new Metro Rail Vehicles
  - Resilient track ties and fasteners
  - Enhanced Maintenance Plan
- Further analysis will be conducted during Phase 2



# SEQRA Project Schedule



- Compile all public comments and develop responses that will be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement



Through March 24, 2020



- Address any comments/revisions from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to develop the Final Environmental Impact Statement



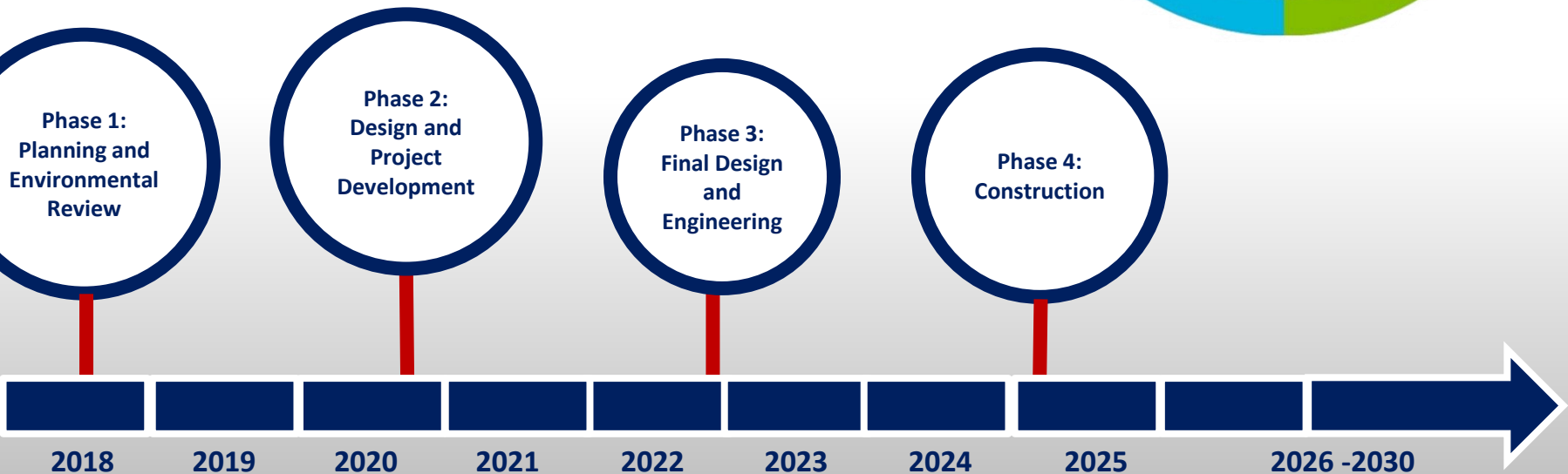
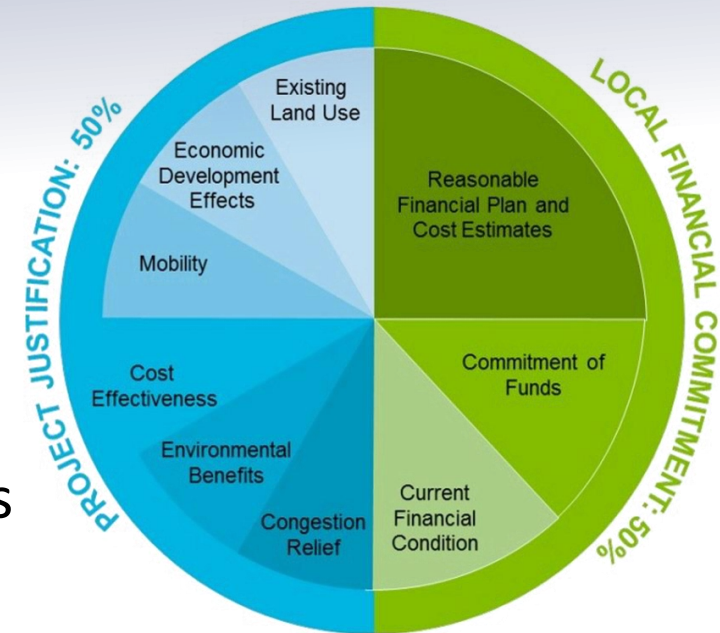
- Release Final Environmental Impact Statement and makes Statement of Findings (SOF)

Summer 2020

# Next Steps

## Phase 2 – Design and Project Development

- Project justification criteria
- Financial plan
  - 30% non-New Starts funding committed
- Approximately 30% design
  - Lock-in New Starts funding request
- Project management plans and sub-plans



# How You Can Comment



## **Comment during the Public Hearings:**

Record your comment on a comment card, or provide oral testimony



## **Submit comments online, by email or through the project website:**

[railx@nfta.com](mailto:railx@nfta.com)  
[www.nftametrorailexpansion.com](http://www.nftametrorailexpansion.com)



## **Mail comments to:**

Metro Rail Expansion Project  
Niagara Frontier  
Transportation Authority  
181 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY 14203

- Metro will consider all comments received on or by March 24, 2020
- Responses to substantive comments will be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, which will be posted on the project website (<https://www.nftametrorailexpansion.com>)