
NIAGARA FRONTIER TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY Monthly Board Meeting January 28, 2021

Transcript of Video Recording of Proceedings held at NIAGARA FRONTIER TRANSPORTATION

AUTHORITY, 181 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York,

stenographically transcribed by VALERIE A. ROSATI, Notary

Public.

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       MEMBERS IN THE BOARDROOM:
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        Sister Denise Roche (Chair)
        Commissioner Michael Hughes
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        Commissioner Adam Perry
        Kimberley Minkel (Executive Director)
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        David State (General Counsel)
        John Cox (Chief Financial Officer)
5
        William Vanecek (Director, Aviation)
        Tom George (Director, Public Transit)
6
        Darren Kempner (Manager, Government Affairs)
        Helen Tederous (Director, Public Affairs)
        Lara Seniw (Assistant to Executive Director)
        Robert Jones (Manager, Service Planning)
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        MEMBERS ON THE PHONE:
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        Commissioner LaVonne Ansari
        Commissioner Joan Aul
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        Commissioner Anthony Baynes
        Commissioner Rev. Mark Blue
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        Commissioner Margo Downey
        Commissioner Jennifer Persico
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        Commissioner Stephen Tucker
        Commissioner Philip Wilcox
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        Vicky-Marie Brunette (Deputy General Counsel)
        Steven Duquette (Chief Information Officer)
15
        Karen Novo (Director, Human Resources)
        John Schaefer (Director, Engineering)
16
        Hal Morse (Greater Buffalo Regional
          Transportation Counsel)
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        Mary Perla (Senior Counsel)
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                 So we are ready to start.
   MS. MINKEL:
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             Dave, if you could do a roll call.
   MR. STATE:
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                So we're going to do a roll call for the
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        quorum, and we need six for the quorum.
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            Commissioner Ansari?
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- 1 | COMMISSIONER ANSARI: Present.
- 2 MR. STATE: Commissioner Aul?
- 3 COMMISSIONER AUL: I'm here.
- 4 MR. STATE: Commissioner Baynes?
- 5 Again for Commissioner Baynes?
- 6 Commissioner Blue?
- 7 COMMISSIONER BLUE: Present.
- 8 MR. STATE: Commissioner Downey?
- 9 | COMMISSIONER DOWNEY: Present and accounted for.
- 10 MR. STATE: Commissioner Hicks?
- Commissioner Hughes?
- 12 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Present.
- 13 MR. STATE: Commissioner Perry?
- 14 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Present.
- 15 MR. STATE: Commissioner Persico?
- 16 Commissioner Tucker?
- 17 COMMISSIONER TUCKER: Present.
- 18 MR. STATE: Sister Denise?
- 19 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Present.
- 20 MR. STATE: And Commissioner Wilcox?
- 21 COMMISSIONER WILCOX: I'm here.
- 22 MR. STATE: Thank you. We do have a quorum.
- 23 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: We have a quorum. Okay. Thank

- you very much. And thank you all for being on the line.
- Now I will ask for a motion to approve the minutes of our last meeting, please.
- 5 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: So moved.
- 6 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Second.
- 7 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Any conversation about the
- 8 minutes?
- 9 If not, Dave would you please call roll.
- 10 MR. STATE: This is a unanimous consent motion, so
- 11 unless there's an objection, we can waive the
- 12 roll call vote.
- 13 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you.
- 14 MR. STATE: Hearing no objection, Sister, the item
- passes.
- 16 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: And we call upon Kim for our
- 17 update. A lot has happened since the last
- 18 meeting.
- 19 MS. MINKEL: Yes. Thank you, Sister. And Happy New
- 20 Year to everyone who's on the phone.
- 21 A couple of things for the board. The
- 22 quarterly reports were sent out last -- excuse
- 23 me. The committee reports were sent out last

week. Since we are still in a pandemic, we are not doing separate committee meetings, but the committee reports were sent out. The audit, governance and finance committee report, the aviation committee and surface. In those reports are quarterly reports that we bring to the board each year.

The first quarterly report that I wanted to highlight that's in the audit, governance and finance committee report that was sent out last week is the capital report which shows that we're about twelve percent under budget for capital projects. Now, some of this is timing, but some of this is related to the pandemic in that we've been trying to control our expenses as much as possible. We've been delaying purchases and some of those capital projects, so that's why we are twelve percent under budget.

I also wanted to highlight to the board that our injuries and illnesses are the lowest on record with the Authority. Proudly, we had a sixteen percent decrease in reportable injuries, eleven percent decrease in lost time and a

thirty-seven percent decrease in days away. So a special emphasis has been -- we've always had that on safety, but it's been increased during the pandemic. And thanks to all of our employees here. They really did an outstanding job trying to keep everyone, including themselves, safe.

On our self-insurance report that's in there, we also have our Workers' Comp. report.

And of note, our Workers' Comp. claims are down.

We only had sixty-seven Workers' Comp. claims year to date, which, again, is the lowest we've ever had here at the Authority. Keeping those claims down helps us to control our costs.

Our public affairs report in there highlights that we did an outreach and partnered with Feed More. We collected over four hundred and fifty pounds of food and funds and our police delivered over two thousand in toys to needy families in Niagara and Erie County.

On the budget front, we thank Governor Cuomo for his continued support and investment in public transit and airports in Western New York.

Last week the governor released his executive

budget which has fifty-five point four million towards State Transit and Operating Assistance for the NFTA. The board should know this is five point seven million less than what was in last year's enacted budget, and it's five point seven million less than what we have in our December budget of sixty-one point one million.

But, like all transit systems in the nation, we are challenged with an aging infrastructure, increased demand for fixed route and paratransit service that continues to stress our system, along with the stresses that we are experiencing as part of the pandemic. As is the case each year, we recognize that the governor's budget is simply the starting point of the budget process, so we look forward to working with the governor and members of both the Senate and the Assembly in finalizing a budget that helps address Western New York's needs.

And then, finally, I wanted to recognize a few of our officers. We have Detective Thomas

Dewey who will be honored virtually by ASIS

International. Normally they have a nice event.

Unfortunately, this year most of these events have been cancelled, so he will be featured on their website. I also wanted to mention that our canine team, Mike Bogulski and his dog Lyka, aided with the explosive detection at the inauguration last week. And we have our canine teams, Officer Chrissy Clifford and her dog Harvey and Officer Mario Capozzi and his dog Dok, who will be aiding at the Super Bowl in Tampa and representing Buffalo at the Super Bowl.

So that concludes my report.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you, Kim.

Any questions?

Thank you. We'll move along, then, to the corporate report. I'm going to ask John Cox please to take us through the financials.

MR. COX: Yes. Thank you, Sister.

Good afternoon, commissioners. On page six and seven in your packet is the month of December, and also on page eight and nine is year to date through December. I'll be giving a summary of those.

So for the month of December, 2020, which is

the end of the third quarter of our fiscal year, we had a negative variance to budget of one million fifty-one thousand dollars; and on a year-to-date basis, two million three hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

Total operating revenues and assistance were above budget by five hundred and eighteen thousand or two point five percent for December; and on a year-to-date basis, it was below budget by eight million eight hundred and ninety-nine thousand or four point nine percent.

Our revenue shortfalls are primarily due to Metro passenger fares. We had a negative variance to budget for December of one point nine million or sixty-one percent; and on a year-to-date basis, it was eighteen point three million or sixty-nine percent. We had decreased ridership and no public school revenue.

Now, the schools, there's a planned phased reopening on February 1st, and my understanding of that will be K through second grade and also the seniors so -- and there is also the -- you know, there's also the option to opt out. So we

may see some incremental increase in our revenues as far as Metro passenger fares, but I imagine that through the rest of this year and possibly into the next fiscal year, it will take a while for those to ramp up. It may not actually be until September or so that we see a significant increase in our Metro Passenger fares as it relates to public school -- Buffalo Public Schools.

On STOA, we had a two point seven -
twenty-eight point seven, excuse me, percent

reduction versus budget, and that's approximately

one point six million for December and thirteen

point two million on a year-to-date basis.

BNIA operating revenues were one point six million or twenty-nine point seven percent below budget in December, and seventeen million or thirty-three point one below budget on a year-to-date basis.

NFIA operating revenues were a hundred and sixty-seven thousand or seventy point five percent below budget for December, and one million sixteen thousand or forty-eight point

four percent below budget on a year-to-date basis.

Now, these revenue shortfalls have been offset by CARES Act funding from both FTA and FAA. And for the month of December, that was approximately five point six million; and on a year-to-date basis, that was forty-four point eight million that we used to offset those revenue shortfalls.

Our total operating expenses were below budget by one point three million or six point seven percent in December; and on a year-to-date basis, fifteen point seven million or nine point eight percent.

We had generally lower expenses across the board due to reductions in costs via delayed purchases, vendor discounts and various cost controls. The exception being, of course, any operationally critical or safety sensitive expenditures. And, again, we had continued favorable pricing for commodities such as diesel, gasoline, natural gas and electric. And with the one exception being -- just in the month of

December being insurance and injuries where we had to make an adjustment to reserves for higher claims losses, and that was in amount of approximately three hundred and sixty thousand dollars. But, on a year-to-date basis, we're still below budget overall for insurance and injuries.

And the CARES Act, you know, for both Metro and the two airports has been critical to the continued operations of all those business centers. Without it we would have recognized a six point seven million dollar negative variance to budget and a six point four million dollar deficit just in the month of December; and on a year-to-date basis, a forty-seven point one million dollar negative variance to budget and a thirty-nine point one million dollar deficit on a year-to-date basis.

And unless there are any questions, that concludes the consolidated financials for the month of December.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Extraordinary. Thank you.

Any questions?

If not, we accept the financials and thank you very, very much. I know you've all been working hard to keep us in budget as well as you can and to protect the NFTA at the same time.

And I'll ask Kim to do the resolutions, please.

MS. MINKEL: Yes. Six resolutions.

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So, commissioners, in the packet that was e-mailed to you on Monday from Lara, on page fifteen is the first corporate resolution. Staff is looking for an authorization for agreement with NYSDOT for capital project number K007460 in the amount of two million nine hundred and sixty-seven thousand sixty-two dollars. And this is grant funding under the MEP program that the state has. It's a competitive program that would be used to design and install customer communications throughout our system. This is to take an integrated approach to our PA system and our signage that will have a graphic user interface with kiosks in our system.

The second resolution on page sixteen is an authorization for agreement with Oliver Wyman for

actuarial services for Workers' Comp. Staff is recommending a seven-year agreement with Oliver Wyman. The estimated annual cost for the first year is fourteen thousand three hundred; year two, fourteen thousand six hundred and fifty dollars; and fifteen thousand in year three. The agreement can be renewed for four additional years at our discretion. That would escalate starting at fifteen thousand three hundred and fifty dollars in year four and end at sixteen thousand four hundred in the seventh year.

Staff did go out with an RFP. A number of proposals were received. Oliver Wyman was scored the highest based on their knowledge of New York State Workers' Comp. law, specifically the Workers' Comp. trends, the case law and New York case and reserve history. Empire State Development has excluded this procurement from MWBE requirements because there are no certified New York State providers of this service. And, similarly, we've excluded this procurement from SDVOB requirements because there's no certified providers of this service.

The third corporate resolution is on page Staff is recommending a settlement nineteen. agreement in the amount of three hundred and twenty-five thousand seven hundred and sixty dollars and sixty-five cents in the matter of Yvette Gumas versus the NFTA. This is related to an event that occurred back in April of 2011. One of our bus drivers unintentionally closed the door on the arm of the plaintiff. At that time she did go for medical treatment for the arm. She did not complain of any shoulder pain. However, six years later she did come under the care and have a right shoulder cuff procedure done to her shoulder. We did have her examined by an IME who did indicate that there was a causal relationship to the rotator cuff tear and the event.

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We tried various settlement negotiations before the trial, but to no avail, and the jury determined that we were negligent and that her injuries were causally related to the event. So the jury awarded the plaintiff a hundred and fifteen thousand for past pain and suffering and

future damages of a hundred and eighty-seven thousand five hundred. We did appeal, but unfortunately, the Fourth Department Appellate Division, we were not successful. The plaintiff is entitled to the statutory interest on the judgment of four percent per annum as part of this as well.

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The fourth corporate resolution is on page This is for a lease agreement with twenty-one. The Frag Father Corals at 485 Cayuga Road. They have been a tenant of this space for a couple of years. His current lease expires on January 31st, 2021. The lease would be for a one-year term that would expire next January of 2022, and he would have the option of an additional one The initial rental rate will be seven eighty-three per square foot or just under fifteen thousand two hundred dollars for the first year, and then it would be subject to a three-percent annual escalator after that.

The second lease agreement, but the fifth corporate resolution, is also with a coral company. This one is Glow Coral Reserves. They

were formerly known as Aquapros and has been a tenant since 2017 at the same facility. They are looking for additional space and, unfortunately, we could not accommodate that additional space at this facility; however, we have space for them at our 247 Cayuga facility. So they are asking for a three-month extension to their lease -- their current lease agreement that would take them to the end of April, and then they would move into a new space at 247 at a rate of eight twenty-two per square foot. The initial term of the lease will be for three years. That would start May 1st and then would expire at the end of April in 2024. They would have the option to renew for one additional two-year period with our approval. And the rent rate will carry a three percent escalator each year.

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The next lease agreement and the final corporate resolution on page twenty-three is with Richard Reinhart who is doing business as Mailmasters. He has been a tenant since 2010 at our 247 Cayuga Road facility. He's leasing six hundred and sixty-three square feet of light

industrial space. He is looking for a new two-year agreement that would start on February 1st and end at the end of January of 2023. The rent rate would be eight forty-nine per square foot or just over fifty-six hundred a year, and the initial rent rate would increase three percent each year thereafter.

And those are the corporate resolutions.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you very much, Kim.

I suggest we take these all as a group, unless anyone would like to take any one of these resolutions separately. Any comment on that?

Could I have a motion, please, to take these all as one through six as a group?

15 COMMISSIONER PERRY: So moved.

16 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: And a second?

17 | COMMISSIONER BLUE: Second the motion.

18 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you. Second from Reverend

19 Blue.

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Is there any discussion about any one of the resolutions?

Not hearing any, I suggest that we take them all, and if you want to vote yes, please do so

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       now.
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              We'll do a roll call, Sister.
   MR. STATE:
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    CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Yes. That's right.
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   MR. STATE: And prior to the vote, Commissioner
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       Hughes has advised he's recusing on item number
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       three.
            Roll call vote on corporate resolutions one
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       through six.
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            Commissioner Ansari?
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   COMMISSIONER ANSARI: Yes.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Aul?
   COMMISSIONER AUL: Yes.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Blue?
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   COMMISSIONER BLUE: Yes.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Hughes?
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   COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yes. Except for number three.
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       Abstain.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Perry?
   COMMISSIONER PERRY: Aye.
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   MR. STATE:
               Commissioner Tucker?
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   COMMISSIONER TUCKER: Yes.
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MR. STATE: Sister Denise?

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Yes.

- 1 MR. STATE: And Commissioner Wilcox?
- 2 COMMISSIONER WILCOX: Yes.
- 3 MR. STATE: Any other commissioners that have joined
- 4 since the quorum call?
- 5 | COMMISSIONER BAYNES: Anthony Baynes. And I say yes
- also.
- 7 MR. STATE: Commissioner Baynes voting yes.
- 8 | COMMISSIONER PERSICO: And good afternoon, everyone.
- 9 I had a little trouble dialing in. This is Jen
- 10 Persico and I vote yes as well.
- 11 | MR. STATE: Commissioner Persico votes yes.
- 12 Item passes.
- 13 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you very much. I
- 14 appreciate that.
- The aviation business group. Bill and Adam.
- 16 MS. MINKEL: We actually have a presentation --
- 17 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yes.
- 18 MS. MINKEL: -- at the end of the meeting --
- 19 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yes. Yes.
- 20 MS. MINKEL: -- and we can talk about it then.
- 21 | COMMISSIONER PERRY: So we're going to do that at the
- 22 end.
- 23 MS. MINKEL: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER PERRY. So for this meeting of the 2 aviation committee in our abridged, abbreviated 3 and adjusted format, I'm going to ask if Mr. Vanecek has any highlights that we should cover, 4 5 holding the presentation and the resolutions for 6 later. 7 MR. VANECEK: Yes. Just a couple points that I would So as you know, there's 8 like to make. 9 anticipated to be another round of funding for 10 relief, including airports. And right now the 11 current number on the FAA bill is no less than two hundred million for -- to be spread 12 13 amongst all of the -- two hundred -- I'm sorry. 14 Two hundred -- yeah. Two hundred million 15 (inaudible) for primary airports. So we'll get a 16 percentage of that. And the anticipation is that 17 that is going to go towards relief for 18 concessionaires at the airport. It can't be used

concessionaires at the airport, which will include things like car rental companies, food

equitable spread amongst all of our

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for anything else. So we'll be going through the

necessary calculations to make sure it's an

and beverage operations, advertisers, et cetera. Anybody that has a concession revenue at BNIA we'll be able to give them some relief, which I'm very happy for because in the first round it was very difficult for us to give them anything at all and so we're very fortunate to have that in play.

I'm not the bluebird of happiness on this one.

But, I just saw an article that talked about on

January 27th, TSA reported only screening four

hundred and sixty-eight thousand nine hundred and

thirty-three people through the checkpoint.

That's the lowest it's been for over a year. So,

you know, everybody is talking about a second

wave. I don't know if it's going to happen, I

don't know if it's going to impact travel, but

those are the types of numbers that don't bode

well going forward, so I just wanted to bring

that to your attention unfortunately.

And other than that, our construction project is going on well. It's continuing to evolve. You'll see a PowerPoint on this I think

on the screen here if we have it later on, so I'll talk a little bit more on that end.

And at Buffalo, our enplanement numbers are down even further than what the national average is. We closed the year at about eighty-five percent down from the year before. Again, we're getting hit very, very hard by the fact that the Canadian border is still not open. And, you know, of all the airports in the Unites States, we are the most harmed because we get about thirty percent of our traffic coming down. So until that changes, I don't think it's realistic to think we're going to see a pretty big jump up in enplanements before that goes on.

Those are just kind of the highlights that we have at the airport. If there's any questions, I'd be happy to address them.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: Any questions?

And, Bill, we're going to cover some international air travel --

21 MR. VANECEK: You bet.

22 COMMISSIONER PERRY: -- and more detail on the

construction project later. And thank you, Bill.

And are we going to take the resolutions now?

MS. MINKEL: Yes. Thank you.

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There are five aviation resolutions. The first one starts on page twenty-six of your packet. Staff is looking for an authorization to award a contract to McLaughlin Construction and And this is for the C and S Companies. rehabilitation and reconstruction of taxiway D at the Niagara Falls Airport. McLaughlin Construction had the low bid of four million nine hundred and eighty-six thousand six hundred and forty-nine dollars. And the design support and construction monitoring that would be awarded to C and S Companies will not exceed four hundred nineteen thousand six hundred and fourteen dollars.

The DBE goals for this project were seventeen percent, and McLaughlin Construction has identified seventeen point one percent DBE participation, meeting that goal; and C and S Engineers has proposed seventeen point two DBE participation, also exceeding that goal.

The next aviation resolution is on page twenty-nine. And staff is looking for authorization to extend an agreement with Truman Arnold Company, who is also known as TAC Air, they are the fixed-space operation at the Buffalo airport, for an additional ten-year term. By way of information, TAC Air acquired the existing agreement that we had previously with Prior Aviation. And as part of that agreement, there was language that provided TAC Air with the ability to extend the term of the FBO agreement for an additional ten-year period. That was -that needed to be mutually agreeable to both the NFTA and TAC.

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TAC is proposing three million dollars worth of renovations, restoration and improvements of the facility. Some of these include completing a campus to bring the terminal and the hangers into 2020, creating a welcoming and appropriate front door to Buffalo for the visiting business aviation community. The FBO terminal exterior will be modernized with a new covered portico in the parking lot, a covered entry ramp side, new

windows, cladding and architectural elements. On the interior it will be renovated with an emphasis on the addition of modern features and amenities for the passengers and pilots. It will include an observation area, a cantina, a new waiting area and pilot lounges.

The hangars will be extensively updated and modernized with new exterior materials and architectural features to project a modern look and feel with special emphasis on hangar four which is the hangar that's visible from Wehrle Drive. In addition, the hangar interiors will be updated and modernized with emphasis on value added features like an improved HVAC, insulation and updates to the counter space. There will be new fencing, directional signage and landscaping to round out these renovations.

So as part of this three million dollar investment, of course they want to be able to amortize that. Where previously their lease would have expired at the end of 2026, taking it out to the end of 2036 allows them to amortize that investment. As part of this, though, staff

commissioned a market rent analysis to look at the current rent rates, and staff is recommending increasing the rates based on that analysis. So previously, with the existing agreement they were paying a little over three quarters of a million a year. Now, as part of the new agreement, the new base rental rates will be over eight hundred fifty-one thousand a year. So significant new revenue to the Authority. In addition, these base rental rates will be adjusted annually as part of the CPI.

The third aviation resolution is on page thirty-one. Staff is looking for an approval of the tariff for the Niagara Falls International Airport. The landing fee rate and the terminal rental rate are not increasing. Staff is not recommending an increase based on what's going on with current operations; however, they are -- we are asking for a revised tariff schedule primarily to distinguish our commercial operations from general aviation operations so that we will have a tariff agreement that looks very similar, although differences in rates

compared to our Buffalo airport. So this will provide consistency between the two airports and this will also help address when flights are diverted to the Niagara Falls airport so that we can address those nonsignatory airlines.

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The fourth aviation resolution is on page thirty-four. And staff is recommending a license agreement with Western New York Rapid Testing to set up a testing center at the Buffalo airport. It would also allow in the future potentially for vaccinations should they ever be able to get approval and access to the vaccine. hundred square foot space would be located on the eastern side of the baggage claim area of the Buffalo terminal. The operation would consist of temporary installation of privacy walls. license fee would be eleven hundred dollars a It would be a month-to-month lease. They month. would be responsible for the insurance of the They will provide indemnification to operation. the NFTA for all claims and damages. And this site would be a nice service for the community and help at the same time generate some revenue

for the NFTA.

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Similarly, on page thirty-five -- I'm asking if you guys could mute your lines, please. Thank you.

Similarly, on page thirty-five staff is looking for an authorization for a license agreement with FEI Holdings. This is also for COVID testing and possible future vaccination if they ever receive approval and access to the This would be at a parking lot that's vaccine. located on Niagara Falls Boulevard in Wheatfield. It's down the road a bit and across the street from our Niagara Falls International terminal. This is the information that I sent to the board a couple of weeks ago. This is simply a ratification of that agreement. The license fee would be twenty-five hundred a month. They would install two tents for drive-through traffic for the testing and another tent for their employees. They would provide the necessary insurance and indemnification for this testing site.

And those are the resolutions.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you.

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I would ask that we take all of these
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       together, unless there is an objection to that.
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            Hearing none, I'm going to ask for a roll
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       call vote, please.
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            First we need a motion.
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    COMMISSIONER HUGHES: I'll make a motion to approve.
    CHAIR SISTER ROCHE:
                         Is there a motion?
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   COMMISSIONER HUGHES: So moved.
   COMMISSIONER BLUE: Reverend Blue. Also move.
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   CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: And a second?
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   COMMISSIONER AUL: Joan Aul.
                                  Second.
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   CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you. And now a roll call.
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   MR. STATE: Roll call vote on aviation items one
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       through five.
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            Commissioner Ansari?
    COMMISSIONER ANSARI: Yes.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Aul?
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   COMMISSIONER AUL: Yes.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Baynes?
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   COMMISSIONER BAYNES: I'm sorry.
                                      I just had a quick
       question on number four. How much are they going
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       to charge for the rapid test?
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   MS. MINKEL: We were told up to seventy-five dollars.
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We weren't given an exact amount, but up to
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       seventy-five dollars is what they're planning.
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    COMMISSIONER BAYNES: Did anybody put it out to bid?
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       Because there's several companies in town that
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       are sixty-five.
   MS. MINKEL: No, we did not. They approached us.
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       I'm sorry. Hold on. Let me just make certain
       I'm looking at the right one. Yes, that's true.
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       They approached us. At this point we have not
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       been approached by anyone else, but there is
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       space if someone else has interest. We certainly
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       can have discussions. But, Commissioner, no, we
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       did not put it out.
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    COMMISSIONER BAYNES: Okay. Well, I'm -- all right.
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       I'll vote yes, except on three -- or, four, I
16
       mean, I'll vote no.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Blue?
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   COMMISSIONER BLUE: Yes.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Hughes?
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   COMMISSIONER HUGHES:
                         Aye.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Perry?
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   COMMISSIONER PERRY: Aye.
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   MR. STATE: Commissioner Persico?
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- 1 | COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Aye.
- 2 MR. STATE: Commissioner Tucker?
- 3 COMMISSIONER TUCKER: Yes.
- 4 MR. STATE: Sister Denise?
- 5 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Aye.
- 6 MR. STATE: And Commissioner Wilcox?
- 7 COMMISSIONER WILCOX: Yes.
- 8 MR. STATE: Items carry.
- 9 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you very much.
- 10 And we'll move now to the surface
- 11 transportation business group report, and I ask
- 12 Commissioner Hughes to lead us through that,
- 13 please.
- 14 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Thank you, Sister. Much like
- the aviation committee, we were not meeting this
- 16 month. I will turn it over to Tom George to give
- a brief financial business update.
- 18 Do you have a presentation too or --
- 19 MR. GEORGE: Yeah. I can go through some highlights
- 20 right now and then we've got a couple
- 21 presentations at the end. So if we want to talk
- 22 about our initiatives report, there's a couple
- 23 items on there. Corridor development, we will

have a presentation on that later in the meeting.

I want to talk a little bit about battery electric bus deployments. We are in the final processes of clearing our selection for our battery electric bus, and we do anticipate bringing that to the board next month for selection of that firm to provide us with battery electric buses as we've asked for final and best offers from the firms that have proposed. And we're also lined up with NYPA to move forward with the electrification of the Cold Spring bus garage. We anticipate bringing both of those to the board next month.

Amherst-Buffalo light rail extension. There is also a brief presentation on that later this afternoon. And I also wanted to just brief the board on the fare collection system upgrade. We have our -- most of our barriers -- not our barriers, but our turnstiles in place in the stations, we've got a couple vending machines half deployed and we've got a number of fare boxes on our buses that have been deployed and we're in final testing. We're working through

the mobile apps and the software.

We're in the final approach -- if I were in Bill's business group, we're in the final approach to completing this and our goal is to be able to complete it this summer and have it onboarded and operational for the fall rollout with our academic partners, both the colleges and universities as well as the Buffalo Board of Education. So it looks like we're in a good position to do that at this point in time and I'll have more updates as we come further into the spring. But, that's good news on that report as everyone who has been with us for a while understands how patient we've been and how long we've been working on that.

I did want to just touch briefly on ridership if I could. Some of the specifics we've provided you. Year-to-date ridership on bus is fifty percent of where it was last year through the fiscal year to date. Rail is at thirty-five percent. An interesting trend, October through December, though, we're down. We talked about the second wave. It's been

impacting us as well on bus. Although we're fifty percent year to date, we're forty-four percent October through December. And on rail, less so. We're thirty-five percent year to date and thirty-two percent October through December. And, likewise, forty-six percent in the month of January from the year before for paratransit. So we're seeing across the boards continued erosion and the second wave that's hitting us has had that same residual impact on the ridership as well here.

And then I did want to shine a little positive light. If you look at our system miles between service interruptions, our bus garages have been doing a fantastic job with the maintenance of our vehicles. We're up across the board with all of that. The silver lining of the COVID, we have many more spare vehicles. As the board is aware, we generally run about a hundred and ten bus -- school specials on a daily basis. As John Cox had referenced, we're moving forward into February 1st providing the school with service. That equals about fourteen specials.

So you're at about ten to fifteen percent of what we normally do, which means that we have buses that we aren't necessarily utilizing, which allows our mechanical staff, instead of -- if you spend time in the garage, the focus of the garage, whether it's operations or maintenance, is service on the road. It's a great team effort. It's much like any other team, but the focus of service, getting the service on the This gives us space so that we're able to road. take those buses -- normally, you'd bring it in, you've got to get it right back out. Now we've got a little bit of time, we can spend a little time with that vehicle and really go through and troubleshoot it and put them into better condition than they would normally be.

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And I wanted to specifically call out our
Babcock garage. Normally when I call people out,
it's not a good thing, but today is it a good
thing. So Babcock garage, we have the oldest
fleet. A hundred and fifty-two months is the
average fleet age. And you're pretty good with
math, so I won't go through how many years that

is. But, we've seen across the board increases in their miles between service interruptions.

They've been doing a great job out there. I went and spent some time with them recently to congratulate them, but I wanted to share that with the board as well.

And then last but not least, as I always do, I'd like to talk about our citizens boards. We had no meetings last month in December for either the accessibility advisory committee or the citizens advisory committee, but I'm pleased to say that today at two p.m. we have our accessibility advisory committee meeting, and this evening at five-thirty we have our citizens advisory committee meeting. So I will be reporting the results of those at our next meeting. And those, of course, are virtual.

So if there's any questions, I'd be glad to answer them.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Any questions for Tom?

21 MR. GEORGE: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: There are six resolutions.

Kim, do you want to walk us through them?

MS. MINKEL: Yes. Thank you.

Starting on page thirty-eight is the first one. Staff is looking for an agreement with WSP. This is for design services for our Erie Canal Harbor station. It's in the amount of two hundred and ninety thousand three hundred and eighty-six dollars. This is part of returning traffic to Main Street. The city has been going through, making improvements. Certainly the stations are part of what needs to be improved. The stations are original, sometime in the early '80s, so this would be for them to provide new design and construction bids to rehabilitate those two stations.

We did go out with an RFP. WSP scored the highest. The MBE, WBE and SDVOB goals were ten, twelve and seven percent, respectively. They identified their MBE participation at eight point eight percent and their WBE participation at twenty-seven percent and their SDVOB participation of eleven point four percent.

The next resolution on page forty-one.

Staff is looking for an agreement with Safe Fleet

for surveillance system upgrade on our railcars in the amount of a hundred and ninety thousand eight hundred twenty-eight dollars. The existing system is obsolete. It's reached the end of its useful life. We are experiencing issues with being able to retrieve some of the recordings and it has inadequate recording storage space. So this will upgrade the existing system.

Additionally, it will provide for forward facing cameras, which is a recommendation by FTA, DOT and APTA.

This is considered a sole source procurement because it will utilize the current cameras and the current infrastructure that exists within the railcars, all the various wiring. So because of that, it is considered a sole source. And because it's a sole source, Empire State has deemed sole source procurements exempt from MWBE requirements.

The third resolution within surface is an agreement with Tetra Tech. This is for the environmental compliance review services as part of our light rail extension program. It's in the

amount of two hundred and sixteen thousand seven hundred and sixty-five dollars. FTA indicated last year that they would support the project under the NEPA process and they would serve as the federal lead agency for the review, but they have strongly recommended the use of a third-party contractor to assist them in their review of the NEPA process, so they've asked us to bring one onboard. This consultant will provide on-call services to FTA and at their discretion and according with FTA's direction. Tetra Tech has had prior experience working with FTA.

Staff did go out with an RFP, received three proposals and scored Tetra Tech the highest. We established MBE, WBE and SDVOB goals for eight percent, nine percent and zero percent. Tetra Tech has identified their MBE participation as zero, their WBE participation at nine percent. They did receive a waiver from ESD for their MBE requirements because there are no certified providers of this service. Similarly, we have excluded the procurement from SDVOB goals because

there are no certified suppliers of this service.

The fourth resolution on page forty-six is an authorization for an addendum with Erie Community College in reference to our CRAM Pass program. This is only for the spring semester. They had approached us since they had suspended collecting transportation fees from their students. Like many organizations they have gone to distance learning or remote learning, so they've asked that the CRAM Pass fee be suspended for the spring semester only and it would be resumed following that.

In exchange, however, they wanted to get into the corporate pass program that we have for many organizations. And they're looking for a sixty-five dollar per pass per month per student pass. Under the previous CRAM Pass program, they paid fifty-one fifty per student per semester. They are anticipating thirteen hundred in-person students with approximately four hundred and fifty of them needing the pass. And this would be, again, just for the spring semester.

The fifth resolution on page forty-seven is

an authorization for agreement, and this is with WBA Research. This agreement is in the amount of two hundred and six thousand five hundred and ninety-four dollars. And this is for GBNRTC to use WBE -- or, WBA -- too many acronyms here -for onboard transit survey on our behalf. been a number of years since the last onboard So GBNRTC would be transit survey had been done. conducting this, which will provide a comprehensive origin/destination study regarding fixed route travel patterns and demographic characteristics of our patrons within our area. They did go out with an RFP. WBA scored the highest as part of that RFP.

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And then the final resolution is an agreement with Stantec Consulting Services. This is also with GBNRTC. And this is in an amount not to exceed eight hundred and fifty-one thousand seven hundred and twenty-five dollars for their consulting agreement. By way of information for new board members, we serve as the host agency of GBNRTC so their procurements come to this board for review and approval as a

host agency.

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So this Stantec Consulting Service agreement would be for them to develop a multi-modal transportation plan within Erie and Niagara County to look at specifically the Route 198 expressway and prepare recommendations based on their assessment and outreach with various community and stakeholder involvement. GBNRTC with our procurement department did go out with an RFP. Nine proposals were received. They were evaluated and Stantec did score the highest. Because this is paid for with federal funding, there are DBE goals. And a twelve point eight five percent DBE goal was established and Stantec has committed to exceeding this goal by proposing fifteen percent DBE participation.

And those are the surface resolutions.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you. I suggest we take all of these resolutions as a group, one through six, unless there's an objection.

Hearing none, I ask for a motion, please, to accept these resolutions.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: I'll make a motion.

- 1 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you, Mike.
- 2 And is there a second?
- 3 | COMMISSIONER WILCOX: Second. Commissioner Wilcox.
- 4 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you.
- 5 And I will ask for a roll call vote of
- 6 resolutions one through six on the surface
- 7 transportation.
- 8 MR. STATE: Roll call vote. And as part of the vote,
- 9 Commissioner Perry has advised that he will be
- 10 abstaining on item number four.
- 11 | Roll call. Commissioner Ansari?
- 12 COMMISSIONER ANSARI: Yes.
- 13 MR. STATE: Commissioner Aul?
- 14 COMMISSIONER AUL: Yes.
- 15 MR. STATE: Commissioner Baynes?
- 16 COMMISSIONER BAYNES: Yes
- 17 MR. STATE: Commissioner Blue?
- 18 | COMMISSIONER BLUE: Yes.
- 19 MR. STATE: Commissioner Hughes?
- 20 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Aye.
- 21 MR. STATE: Commissioner Perry?
- 22 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Aye, subject to the notation.
- 23 MR. STATE: Commissioner Persico?

- 1 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Aye.
- 2 MR. STATE: Commissioner Tucker?
- 3 COMMISSIONER TUCKER: Yes.
- 4 MR. STATE: Sister Denise?
- 5 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Yes.
- 6 MR. STATE: And Commissioner Wilcox?
- 7 COMMISSIONER WILCOX: Yes.
- 8 MR. STATE: All items pass.
- 9 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you very much.
- 10 Is there a general counsel report?
- 11 MR. STATE: Nothing for the group today, Sister.
- 12 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you.
- 13 And there's nothing for executive session?
- 14 MS. MINKEL: That's correct. Staff does have a
- presentation, though, to talk about various
- 16 items.
- 17 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Good.
- 18 MS. MINKEL: So starting, commissioners, on page
- 19 fifty-three of your report that you received on
- 20 Monday from Lara is a PowerPoint presentation
- 21 that I will ask Darren Kempner to lead us off to
- 22 talk a little bit about the federal COVID-19
- relief and give an update on the DL and W

1 project.

Darren?

MR. KEMPNER: Thanks, Kim.

So on December 27th, 2020, the Coronavirus
Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations
Act was signed into law, also known as CRRSAA.
The act contained a number or provisions, but
important to the NFTA, fourteen billion for
public transit agency operational aid due to
COVID revenue shortfalls. That's the same
language that we saw in the CARES Act that we are
all so familiar with from last year.

The allocations have been announced under that appropriation, and NFTA and Metro have been allocated forty-three point two million dollars to support operations going forward. The bill also contained two billion in economic relief to airports, so -- and, also, the rent relief provisions that Bill had mentioned earlier are contained within that appropriation. So the allocations have not yet been announced specifically for that program, but we expect to receive about seven point six million for the

aviation system in Western New York.

And I just had one other note on that bill, maybe two. There was also a provision for air carrier support as there was in the CARES Act.

And overall, this also included the 2021 federal fiscal year budget appropriations, so we've been receiving our allocations under the general federal fiscal year budget which I included in my report this month.

So if you want to call this coronavirus version three point o, four point o, I'm not sure what, but the Biden administration is calling it their American Rescue Plan. There are a number of provisions but no legislative language yet, so I don't know exactly what the hardest hit public transit agencies means to us, but there is a provision in the plan for twenty billion for public transit agencies across the United States. Particularly of note, there's no direct fiscal support for airports and aviation in this bill.

And in my report this month, I included an example letter that -- I'm sorry. Not an example letter. A letter that ACI sent to leaders in

Sue Ann Simonin Court Reporting

Congress asking for significant financial support for airports in this legislation as well as some economic impacts -- negative economic impacts that coronavirus has had on airports. Kim also sent a letter to our federal delegation, and we're scheduling follow-up calls on that letter, specifically for airports but also to support the appropriation for public transit going forward.

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Just a couple other items of note in that proposal. Three hundred and fifty billion for state, local and territorial governments which is certainly related to the state of operations that we see. A hundred and thirty billion to support schools for safe reopening, obviously of interest Twenty billion for national vaccination to us. program. Fourteen hundred dollar per person And then a number of provisions really, checks. the paid sick, family and medical leave, that would either expire with the last bill or have additional items there including funding for state and local governments to implement that leave.

Moving on to another subject that we've been

working on for a number of months now, DL and W station development planning. As you know, Savarino Companies is the developer that we have contracted with. They have contracted with Project for Public Spaces to do a development planning study, and I've listed the scope and schedule of that project here on the slide. The scope is to develop a program and plan to develop this space as well as manage the public spaces within the terminal. And their approach to that is to gather a lot of public input, key stakeholder input, as well as do site analysis and benchmark analysis of other areas around the country that have done similar projects.

So the key stakeholder interviews started this last week -- or, week or so ago, and they'll continue for the next couple weeks. There will also be focus groups with a number -- a larger number of community stakeholders, a public survey, a website and a number of pieces of analysis. So they'll include all that in a complete interim report by April. And then after that point, they'll continue the community

engagement and analysis with a final report by
August and a presentation to the NFTA of that
work.

That concludes my presentation. Thank you.

- MS. MINKEL: Thanks. Is there any questions for Darren on either the DL and W or the CARES funding?
- 8 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Just on the CARES funding, has
 9 the payment been timely? Have you guys had any
 10 cash flow problems with it?
 - MR. COX: No. It's been very timely, yes. It's -you know, once it's in place -- that's usually
 the, you know, the challenge. But, once you get
 it into place, you can draw it down -- you know,
 within like forty-eight to seventy-two hours you
 get it after you request it. Just like is
 typical with most federal funds.
- 18 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Good to hear.

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- MR. KEMPNER: Just to be clear, the CRRSAA funding,
 we haven't executed that piece yet, but the CARES
 funding --
- MR. COX: Right. The new one is not in place yet, it hasn't been executed. But, the current CARES

Act, yes, we've drawn all -- actually drawn all that down so -- at least as it relates to Metro.

- MS. MINKEL: Great. Tom, do you want to give us an update on the rail expansion project?
- MR. GEORGE: Yes. So as you recently approved in the last session, the 139(j) consultant, I want to provide an update on where we are with the rail expansion. So as you recall, the state environmental quality review draft environmental impact statement that we had issued last winter, we went through public process and held public hearings and received comments on that.

Concurrently with that, in April of 2020, we received a letter from the Federal Transit

Administration indicating they would take the lead agency status as far as the federal environmental screening process was concerned.

And we were nearing completion of the state environmental screening process. So one of the things that they asked us to do was to include BRT as an alternative. We had done that previously with our (inaudible) analysis. They wanted to bring that back in and look at it.

They also asked us to hire a consultant to work on their behalf to streamline and help execute the review of the environmental documentation.

It's called Section 139(j). That's the consultant that you had approved earlier today.

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So we've been moving forward working with In the interim, we did publish our responses to the SEQR draft environmental impact Those have been published. statement. Those are on our website. So short of wrapping up and developing the final environmental impact statement, we've completed our state process and we have that documentation in place. we're transitioning to developing a combined SEQR/NEPA document which would meet the federal requirements. Keep in mind the federal requirements are all necessary in order for us to receive federal funding for this project and enter into project development. So it's a key milestone and we have to move forward with it in order to get that funding in place. And part of moving forward with it was to secure that consultant which we now have in place and we'll

now be able to move forward in earnest on the NEPA process with the FTA.

So as we talked about, we hired Tetra Tech through that consultant selection process to expedite. And basically what they're going to do is act as FTA staff. Right? Because FTA has a lot of staffing and shortage of personnel resources within their Region 2 office and this allows them to have additional resources available to help us move through the process. We're going to put them under contract now in February that we have them and start Tetra Tech and NFTA meetings as late -- as early as late February, early March.

And then we move into the process. So we need FTA to issue a notice of intent to move forward with the environmental process. We're talking with them now. We're working through schedule issues with them right now. We have to conduct scoping, although we conducted scoping in the SEQR process, so we have to once again negotiate what scoping is considered with the NEPA process, and then essentially get to a point

where we issue another draft environmental impact statement in compliance with the federal or the NEPA requirements there, and then hold public hearings again, very similar to what we had done in the past.

Issue of final environmental impact statement. It's our goal to receive a record of decision from the federal government. We're trying to do that in as timely a fashion as possible. There's going to be some challenges involved and we're hoping to be back in front of the board in the March time frame to give you an idea of what that schedule looks like and what the process looks like. So we'll be advancing that.

So the other part that we have to then move forward with is the project development itself. So we're going to be working on those concurrently. Right? So we've got the environmental -- we've got phase one, environmental planning and review in here, and then we move into phase two which is the preliminary design. In order to move into

project development, in order to get yourself in a line for federal funding, you have to go into project development and get the project approved. Part of the project development is up to thirty percent design effort. As you may be aware or remember, we did receive a six million dollar commitment from the State of New York to move us into the preliminary design phase. We will be studying that in earnest.

We anticipate bringing our consultant -we've done the consultant selection for phase
two. We did that. That's the same consultant
that's doing the environmental review. But, what
we did not do is approve the scope and cost for
this portion of the design effort. So we'll be
coming back to the board with the same consultant
we've already selected to get approval of the
board of that expenditure of monies to move into
project development and the design efforts that
are associated with that.

So under project development, we've got a couple of things we're working to complete.

Project justification criteria. They're included

on the wheel to the right. Such things as economic development effects, mobility, existing land use. Commitment of funds is also very important in this effort. So we're also working with our local delegation to start to talk about the commitment of local funds in order to complete the project development and get ready for funding.

We also have to develop our financial plan, and this is where we have to commit -- have the commitment of thirty percent of the New Starts funding which is the non-federal portion of that funding, so it could be state or local. We have to get that in place. And we have to get approximately thirty percent of the design done to start in the New Starts funding request. And as part of this, we're also doing project management.

But, long story short, we're working concurrently on the NEPA process to get environmental clearance and moving into project development with preliminary designs at the same time, with the target of getting this project

ready for federal funding application and to get federal funding in place. The schedules are still a little cloudy at this point in time due to some of the federal requirements on the NEPA process. We will be looking to move into project development as quickly as possible because once we enter into project development, the funds that we expend count as the local match towards that. So when we start spending the six million dollars on the preliminary design and environmental, those will count towards our local development. So we'll be moving into that.

And, also, there's two other pieces in here. Once the feds issue the notice of intent as well as when we go into project development, there's very defined timelines that are associated with that that puts the federal government and us on the clock to move those forward.

So a lot more to come, but I wanted to give an update on the project. I know it's a little bit complicated and a little bit confusing at times, but I'm available to answer any questions either now or any other time as necessary. So if

there's any questions. 1 2 MS. MINKEL: Thank you. Adam, has a question. 3 COMMISSIONER PERRY: So slide number seven, if we can 4 look at that. So the, so the FTA is going to be 5 the lead agency and they're going to require an 6 alternative evaluation of bus rapid transit. 7 that right? 8 MR. GEORGE: That is absolutely correct. 9 COMMISSIONER PERRY: So if they're the lead agency 10 and they require that evaluation, does that mean 11 that they can say, well, we've looked at this and 12 BRT is a much better alternative? 13 MR. GEORGE: They've assured us that it is still the 14 NFTA's decision. It's a locally preferred 15 alternative, it is a local decision. Their main 16 focus is to make sure that the due diligence is 17 done. And we will be talking with them as to the 18 level of BRT analysis that's required. In other 19 words, can we excuse it early in the process or 20 will we have to go all the way through the public 21 hearing. 22 COMMISSIONER PERRY: That kind of sounds like what 23 the French would call a fait accompli. In other

words, something you do, doesn't really matter, but you just do it to say you did it. Is that the way the federal government works or is that -- so I was just curious about that. the reason I ask this is because I double-checked, I was wrong. I asked before. I said Uber was first created in 2008. I don't think I actually asked that. But, actually, it was just a little less than eleven years ago in 2009. Before March, 2009 nobody knew what ride sharing was or ride (inaudible). It just didn't exist. we're talking about a completion of the system about that same period of time in the future, the exponential rise of data usage automation and transportation, so we're talking about completing a system to handle conditions we have now and we don't know what those conditions would be.

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But the other question is, the two factors that seem to be -- that I thought were stated as primary, primary requirements for the system to work financially were, A, the disappearance of the Blue Line and the Stampede or any competing activity by the university system with those

services. But, B would be we don't have now a way to predict at project completion whether there will be some other thing besides Uber which would provide a substitute service which would provide the same challenge as the Blue Line and the Stampede. Right? Like we can't predict that.

MR. GEORGE: We can't predict it, but I think that there's a strong sense in the transportation community, the planning community, that public transit will serve as the backbone of any transportation component, especially along primary corridors and urbanized areas. Most of what we're seeing is -- a couple things. Is that the first mile/last mile is really critical and that's really going to assist public transportation, and that's where a lot of -- whether it's microtransit or whether it's ride sharing, those pieces are really falling into place in that area.

Obviously, when we start talking the time frames we have on this other thing, there is some crystal ball involved in it, but planning

certainly takes a long time. There's also been a lot of documentation about how ride sharing and taxi sharing and those types of services are leading to increased congestion and not creating relief in those areas. So once again we go back to where is transit's niche, where does it belong, and the belief really in the planning community and a lot of the forecasters -- and I won't say futurists -- is that it belongs on heavy corridors, it belongs in heavily urbanized areas and it needs to be there to serve communities.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yes.

MR. GEORGE: So we feel we're in a strong position with this project and the public transit as well.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: And when you say it's the sense of the transportation community, I take that to be like a sixth sense, kind like ESP about it.

And when you couple that with the concept of crystal ball and what's going on, I even feel that the concept is more concrete.

But the other thing is then there's these two other things that just -- that I -- that's

not like contained in there that made me ponder.

One is with BRT, everybody -- when I was thinking about BRT ten years ago, I was not thinking about electric BRT. But, now it's like we are -- we have a tidal wave of policy and manufacturing and everything else saying that buses -- electric buses are going to be the wave of the future and there's all of this additional funding, so, you know, if we're thinking about BRT especially in these kind of particular static lines, it would just seem to me that that's going to be a big factor, and it just seems to me that that would change some of the assumptions that we've been talking about over the last five years of this.

But the other thing is, so we're primarily providing this line, a major component of its purpose is to service the Amherst campus and provide that transportation through this activity. Is that --

MR. GEORGE: That's correct.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: So do we really know in the fog
of war of the pandemic what the need for student

transportation to a fixed fortification facility in Amherst is from here? And the only reason I say that is just something to throw on the table without getting into dollars or details, a lot of law firms, one I know in particular, but I know several, while their offices were complete ghost towns, ten percent occupancy for almost a year now, generated about the same revenue. Some more; some a little less. But there was no devastation without anybody in the building.

We've now -- we're now going to be going into the completion of a third semester with complete remote learning.

So the only thing that I'm talking about is for these analyses, I would really like to know, especially when the fog of war clears, like we need to spend a lot of time saying, you know, is everybody going to come out of their bunker and go back to school and is that sustainable, or are they not going to go back to school in the way they did? So I just want to, I just want to know if we're doing that and does this really challenge the assumption for the whole project

- that's not going to have its first trip until
 2 2030, ten years from now. So those are just some
 3 of my thoughts about --
- MR. GEORGE: 4 They're great thoughts. And I think 5 that that's what, that's what the entire transit 6 community is wrestling with and the entire transportation planning committee is wrestling with, what does the future look like. 8 I think 9 that there's going to be some happy medium in between. 10
- 11 MS. MINKEL: Yes. And I have a couple things --
- 12 | COMMISSIONER PERRY: Can I just say one more thing?
- 13 MS. MINKEL: Sure.
- 14 COMMISSIONER PERRY: I'm sorry. And then I promise
- I'll be quiet. So we've got the sixth sense, the
- crystal ball and we're wrestling with a medium.
- This is what I call scientific analysis. I'm
- 18 just kidding. I'm done.
- 19 MR. GEORGE: Of course you are.
- 20 MS. MINKEL: So I did want to talk a little bit about
- 21 science and where this is going. With a new
- 22 emphasis by the new administration with President
- Biden on climate change and trying to get more

vehicles, all vehicles off the road and a greater emphasis on transit. So the flip side, will more people be working remotely? Maybe. But, also, car ownership may go down, right, as part of new initiatives by President Biden as we look at climate change. The comparison of BRT versus light -- LRT. Capacity issues don't exist with BRT that you have with LRT. But, you also have to consider issues related to the weather that we have here in Western New York, whereas rail, you can get through the snow, BRT may be less likely.

And then you have to -- when we talk about climate change, you have to think about more than just the end of the pipe emission. You have to think about it from cradle to grave. As you're manufacturing those batteries, as you're manufacturing those vehicles, the life use of that vehicle versus the life use of LRT is significantly different. So that's why we do the analysis. And it shakes out maybe a little bit different than what you would initially think intuitively, but that's why FTA wants us to do that analysis.

But, you're absolutely right, Adam. Worlds change. We need to continue this, though, to be ready to go. President Biden has indicated funding for infrastructure down the road, in addition to climate change, so if and when those become available, we want to be able to grab that for our region and be ready to go.

MR. GEORGE: I would just like to share one other thing. Not that I'm a college student, but I have a couple in my household. And the environment that college is in right now, they'd rather not just be there. They went to college for an experience and it's not there and they cannot wait for some sense of normalcy to return to get back to campus life. So I think there's hope there from our youth to get back to some sort of whatever that new normal is, being less than this remote learning that we're experiencing.

If there's no other -- I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yes, sir. If there's no other --

MR. GEORGE: If there's no other questions --

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COMMISSIONER PERRY: So what if, what if somebody
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       runs and is elected in 2024 and they have a
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       policy that says that all cars can either run on
       coal or fracked gas? Not that anybody would say
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       that we're going to have, you know, clean coal to
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       run things, but what if that happens? So what if
       that happens?
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   MS. MINKEL: That's why we want to advance this as
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       quickly as possible.
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    COMMISSIONER PERRY: Lock them in.
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   MR. GEORGE:
                 I don't think the transportation
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       community is pondering that right now.
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            If there's no other questions --
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   CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Well, one of the good things is
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       that we continue to make the decisions as years
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       go by.
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    COMMISSIONER PERRY:
                         Yes.
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    CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: And even to just put it off if
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       we have to. If, you know, COVID comes again or
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       there's another pandemic or colleges and
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       universities close, it can always be reconsidered
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       to a certain point, so we'll know more.
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   MR. GEORGE: And your point is very well made.
                                                     This
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is a journey. We've been on this journey for a while and we're making progress, we're getting down the road, but there's still things we have to discover on the journey as we work our way through it.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: Don't make me do the Planet of the Apes analogy.

MR. GEORGE: Okay. I won't.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: I almost can't help myself. You take off in a spaceship and when you come back a few years later from the original planned trip, it's like the place has totally changed. So much for long journeys and completion times.

MR. GEORGE: And I'm confident we'll have this conversation again and it will take different forms as we move forward. But, this is the process we're on and I think we're starting to make some progress, albeit it some challenges with the FTA environment.

If there is no other questions, I think this is a great segue to introduce Rob Jones, our manager of planning. And Rob is going to talk about the Bailey Avenue corridor improvements.

Rob?

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2 MR. JONES: Yes. Thank you. Good afternoon, 3 I couldn't ask for a better commissioners. transition from that discussion into another 4 5 improvement. Starting from transit, specifically 6 looking toward BRT. So we were in front of you about eighteen months ago pre-pandemic talking 8 that we were going to kick this study off 9 overall, working with our project partners including GBNRTC, our local metropolitan planning 10 11 organization who co-funded the study along with ourselves. And we worked with the City of 12 13 Buffalo, both from the Department of Public Works 14 and from the Office of Strategic Planning, so 15 they were represented kind of on both sides 16 Really look at what improvements we can 17 make along that corridor overall in a 18 comprehensive way. That's why we had the city as 19 partners and a regional planning organization as 20 well as ourselves. But, our really big focus 21 related to the study was looking at improvements 22 to transit, all the way up to potentially the 23 operation of bus rapid transit along that

corridor.

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I know we have some newer commissioners on the line as well. So when you think about bus rapid transit or BRT, really consider it as a better, more efficient form of bus with amenities that are more similar to light rail. So the City of Buffalo's focus was really more on streetscapes, the amount of economic activity that can be generated, doing some improvements on the roadway conditions which are poor in some corridors. And really for all of the project partners, I want to highlight that safety and mobility was really the key focus. Safety was the priority of everything we were trying to do with this study from our front, from the city's front and from the NPO's front because there have been some incidents along that corridor and improving safety should be part of any improvement plan moving forward obviously.

So in general, the conditions -- we were doing the segment of Bailey that's in the city from South Park Avenue all the way up to Main Street, which is the longest continuous corridor

along the street in the City of Buffalo, about seven and a half miles. It's a major north/south connector. You have a lot of great cross traffic including the crosses of the 33 and the 190, so it's really a big transportation corridor for South Buffalo and for the East Side into the north part of the community and passing in through Amherst.

We have five routes that operate some portion on Bailey, but primarily the nineteen Bailey route, which is a very productive route. It has the sixth highest ridership in our overall system, which I'll get into in a minute. I mentioned pedestrian safety before. Sidewalks are in pretty poor conditions in a lot of segments of this roadway. And there aren't really great crossings. The crosswalks are in poor condition, some areas don't have crosswalks, there's a lack of pedestrian signals.

But, on a positive, we do have a lot of shelters in this corridor. Twenty of our about two hundred and seventy shelters are in that corridor, so about eight percent of our overall

shelters in the region are in that corridor, and that points to a lot of transfer activity, a lot of general ridership along that corridor as well. So there are some amenities already in place along the corridor.

I mentioned earlier it's very heavily utilized, not only by our pedestrians and our customers, but also on vehicular traffic, and there can be very congested areas along that corridor, specifically around the intersection of Kensington up through to UB South can get very congested.

Speeding is a bigger problem towards the south portion, particularly south of Clinton, near Dingens Street, Seneca Street. We actually had the city go out and use Miovision cameras and test what the speeds were in that section, and the average speed in that section through the South Park valley was actually forty-three miles per hour. So if you're familiar with the city, the speed limit is thirty, so considerably faster, almost highway speeds in that southern section. And the last thing is the lack of

bicycle infrastructure in that corridor as well.

That's both from a bike parking and from a bike usage standpoint.

So what about us, what about transit in that corridor. I mentioned that was a strong corridor for us. The numbers depicted are from pre-pandemic from fall of 2019 because those were the most recent numbers when we completed the study. But, we had about forty-three hundred weekday bus riders along that corridor which is pretty high, as I mentioned, sixth in our system. Saturdays, about seventeen hundred; and on Sundays, about eleven hundred. So really consistent. Weekend ridership obviously slightly lower than weekday ridership overall.

The other thing we did was we got on buses and talked to people. So some of my staff members got on and interviewed people on the bus and did some surveying on the bus. The majority of people are walking to stops, they're very frequent riders. Eighty-six percent are using the system four to five days a week. And the most common request as usual was increased bus

frequency, even though in peak periods we had ten-minute headways pre-pandemic.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Is that forty-three hundred unique riders one way or is that half and it could be there and back?

MR. JONES: Yes, it could be half and then there and back. So it's actually boarding, so it's not the actual --

9 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay.

MR. JONES: -- (inaudible) people. So a lot of

people who are making a northbound trip then make

a return southbound trip.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Thank you.

MR. JONES: Correct. And I should mention that the nineteen Bailey was our second best performing route during the pandemic compared to its pre-pandemic ridership. So even during the height of the pandemic, April, May, June, when ridership first started to decrease, we had about eighty percent of ridership on the Bailey corridor, so a lot of dependency in that corridor from our riders.

So now jumping to kind of the meat of the

presentation in terms of the alternatives. So I really have three operational alternatives as well as business as usual. I'll get into some of the infrastructure implementation as well which can exist kind of separately from the operational alternatives as it's more of a menu of options as opposed to a kind of complete alternative.

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So business as usual is basically just what we're doing today. Kind of our baseline out there. We wouldn't really change much. buses are operating along this corridor of mixed traffic without prioritization at intersections much like the majority of our region, and we did really add new shelters or replace shelters when they were damaged, when they were up for useful life or we got a request from the community, and that would be it. You would treat it like any We would do periodic kind of other route. evaluations and that would kind of be all we did. So that's really just the baseline condition to compare all of the alternatives to at this point.

So let me talk about the infrastructure enhancements. And I kind of broke these out into

two different categories. The first kind of applies to alternatives A and B, whereas the second would apply to alternative C in conjunction with what was already done for alternatives A and B.

So these transit supportive alternatives we looked at, one of them is queue jump lanes. So this is where a bus vehicle is allowed to pull out into the green light prior to all of the other traffic, generally about three seconds before so the bus is also running ahead of the other traffic. This increases efficiency and speed obviously along the corridor.

Another is transit signal priority. The board has heard about TSP for quite some time through the Niagara Street project, so I won't get into what that is. But, that would be holding the light as opposed to tripping the light when you're going down the street so that you could also gain efficiency by moving through the intersection.

We would do some modest improvement to stop infrastructure. This would really be more

benches, more shelters along that corridor, but just basically what you see out there today, similar design, similar branding, et cetera.

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But then, excitingly, you know, there's some smart cities infrastructure out there that's emerging for transit (inaudible). This includes better transit signal coordination and potentially some Miovision to do kind of a realtime changing of those signals. So a lot of traffic signal coordination is based on peak periods versus off-peak periods, or sometimes just one-time signal timing throughout the day. If you've ever been out at two in the morning and you're sitting at a light for ninety seconds, that's why. It's not dynamically changing; it's just keeping the timing that they had all along. Whereas Miovision can do detection. So in that situation, if you're the only car on the road and you're approaching the light, it will make that light green to kind of adjust the flow of traffic as it's changing in real conditions. So that way if there's an accident on a secondary route and the traffic is moving toward a different route,

it can dynamically change all of that without any human input into it.

So those are all kind of options along there for our operational alternatives. But queue jump lanes and transit signal priority are kind of the most prevalent ones that we'd be looking to modify there.

Now, for bus rapid transit supportive alternatives, these are kind of a higher level kind of infrastructure enhancement we'd have there. So the first one there is bus lanes. We don't have any bus lanes for our vehicles in our region and we'd be looking to add bus lanes along certain portions of Bailey. Not the whole corridor itself, but where the curb lengths and curb distances lend themselves to be able to do that.

The second thing we could do from a bus rapid transit perspective is to have at-stop fare collection off vehicle. So this would be very similar to the rail system where you can buy a ticket at a TVM to get on the rail right there. You can have a similar system with smaller TVMs

that look more about the size of an ATM that you would see out anywhere where you can purchase tickets. This helps with dwell times. As the bus is approaching, the individual already has their fare and they can hop on without having that interaction at the fare box necessarily.

And lastly would be a more robust improvement of stop infrastructure. Think of larger, more pronounced shelters looking more reminiscent of our aboveground fare -- I'm sorry. Aboveground light rail station, similar to maybe a town plaza that was redone to be a little bit more compact, but definitely noticeable as a transit station.

So jumping into the alternatives. The first alternative is just enhanced local transit. So this would be the lowest level of cost for the agency. We would do a similar service to what we have but try to find ways to make that service quicker. So under these conditions, maybe about a thirty-six-minute travel time for the whole length of the route whereas right now we're at a forty-minute travel time. And that four-minute

difference may not seem like a lot, but it's really a ten-percent savings. And considering that the average person doesn't go from end to end, it can be considerable to save four or five minutes along your trip.

If we look at moving some of the stops around to have little bit better spacing, probably around two tenths of a mile, so about five stops per mile there to make it as efficient as possible. And we do a little bit of improvement of infrastructure at stops, but not a considerable amount.

Alternative B is to take alternative A and add some limited stop service to that corridor. So about sixteen months ago or maybe even a little bit longer than that, I was up here talking about the airport corridor on Genesee, and we had introduced limited stop service on Genesee. And before the pandemic, we were seeing really great ridership bumps from that as we were only stopping at major cross streets where there were transfer points, et cetera, we were able to really reduce travel time. So, now, instead of a

forty-minute trip or a thirty-six-minute trip, the limited stop service would have a twenty-eight-minute trip time from end to end. So when you start combining the service levels with the transit signal priority and the queue jump lanes, you really start to gain efficiency and prioritization for the buses which is very important.

How we operationalize this is very similar to how we would do the airport corridor on the twenty-four Genesee right now, where we have one underlying local bus and then a limited stop vehicle, et cetera, kind of back and forth throughout the day. So individuals who have maybe a mobility impairment, the elderly, individuals who can't walk as far, they'll still have that underlying service to be able to go between stops. But you really do kind of have an even balance there. So say you'd have fifty trips local and fifty trips limited throughout the day. So this would reduce travel time but also gain efficiency because that travel time being lower, we'd have a similar number of

vehicles out there and not really increase the cost from the operational aspects.

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And then, finally, alternative C is really the bus rapid transit and enhanced local option. So the bus rapid transit option here for alternative C, we're doing, we're doing more. Right? So this is where we would have a bus lane, we would greatly increase travel times --Decrease travel times down to I'm sorry. twenty-four minutes for bus rapid transit service end to end. That's a forty-percent savings over what we have right now. That's obviously assuming that we have from that menu of infrastructure enhancements, many of those things in place including queue jump, bus lanes, et cetera.

This may involve a dedicated fleet of bus rapid transit vehicles. Usually these are somewhat separate design, maybe a unique branding to that fleet so individuals understood that, yes, this is the bus rapid transit route, it's not the local express -- I'm sorry. The local service (inaudible). But it has the potential as

you move into the future to have those be zero emission vehicles, battery electric bus vehicles, maybe CNG vehicles. It can be an alternative fuel vehicle depending on what that technology is like at that time. A good example is CMAX in Columbus has a really nice branding for their vehicles. They're a little bit different style so they're very noticeable, much like a light rail vehicle is very noticeable comparatively.

And really importantly too I mentioned before that we'd still have some underlying service to that community, but we would change that mix to be kind of two bus rapid transit vehicles for every one underlying local vehicle because of the frequency enhancements you would get in terms of efficiency.

So those are kind of the three alternatives that we outlayed from an operational perspective with kind of that menu of infrastructure options.

Additionally, I wanted to really briefly discuss mobility hubs. When the GBNRTC came out with their moving forward 2050 plan, mobility hubs were a large component of that plan. And

really there's a big scale of these. It could be anywhere from a BRT station or a light rail station having a lot of mix of potential car share, potential bike share, electric vehicle charging, et cetera, or it could be all the way down to the smaller scale of an individual bus stop having, you know, bike parking and those types of things.

So through the study, we asked the consultants -- so our consultants on this were Bergmann and WSP together -- to start looking at where those locations of the BRT stations might be and how mobility hubs might fit in. So in some locations we have a higher level of treatment; other locations, we have a lower level of treatment.

So what do we do with all this information? We spent eighteen months on this study, working with the city and the NPO. So really there are kind of three things. One, surface planning has already been working on adding limited stop service to route nineteen in the future. We're targeting the fall of 2021 to be able to

implement that service. If all goes well, maybe even summer of 2021. That's something we can do right now. We already have limited stop service within our kind of tool kit and that's something that we can put out there as kind of an introduction to moving toward BRT.

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We're also working with the city to identify some pilot programs before we spend the money on infrastructure -- or, they spend money on infrastructure. This includes some temporary restriping in the Heights area between Winspear and Kensington, as well as potential rubber curb extension pilot in that same area near Minnesota Avenue to test how in-lane boarding might work and how traffic would respond to in-lane boarding. So we've had discussions. We're not really far down the line with them on how that actually looks, but we're hopeful that we will be able to get something out there fairly soon.

And, lastly, I'll be passing it off to

Darren saying, find me money so we can do a

really full-fledged BRT study. So we've

identified that we think that BRT is the best

option in that corridor. This was a joint study to help build consensus and get all those partners around a table and start talking about the concept, and now I think the kind of next step if we really want to move down that path of BRT is to do an NFTA-led study for BRT. This is not news to Darren. He's heard this for a couple years. That we lead and we can bring those individuals together and start really advancing that community conversation around how we would do it, add time frames, more costing information.

So that's where we're at, and I'd be happy to answer any questions related to it.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Questions anyone?

Thank you. Adam has a question.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: So is the way that you think about this that you're adding BRT to really better service those really resilient routes or is it that you're saying that BRT could really be -- can really advance the economic activity and, you know, increase mobility, really improve those areas or is it a combination of both?

What's the mindset?

MR. JONES: So it's definitely both. So the reason we chose Bailey for the study came from a conversation Tom and I had years ago about where we might prioritize BRT service. And Bailey made a lot of sense from a roadway configuration standpoint, the fact that it connects to a light rail both existing and potential future extension. It goes through a lot of unique communities. So you're starting at Bailey Green and you're going all the way south. We have strong ridership in that corridor that would only grow. So those were all kind of factors and what we saw as being positives.

The other big thing is that all of our radial streets here, Seneca, South Park, William, Clinton, all kind of in a row, all touch Bailey and those are your major transfer points. So increasing the travel time along Bailey decreases —— I'm sorry. Decreasing the travel time along Bailey decreases the overall travel time for a lot of individuals who are using other routes as well because those connection times are lower and it really enhances both that bus network and also

the rail. So individuals getting to the rail 1 2 faster also assists them. So there's going to be 3 a lot of ancillary benefits there. We worked with the city a little bit. They focused a lot 4 5 more on streetscape improvements along with kind 6 of those community nodes that we looked at during the report. Those identified those areas as 8 potential economic generators as well. 9 kind of looked at all of those, but the identification of the corridor itself was from 10 11 kind of all of those points on how to enhance the 12 system overall.

- COMMISSIONER PERRY: Excellent.
- 14 MR. GEORGE: Much less than light rail, but you do
- 15 see BRT having an economic development impact.
- 16 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Great.
- 17 MR. GEORGE: So that's positive as well.
- 18 | COMMISSIONER PERRY: Excellent. Thank you. Thank
- 19 you.

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- 20 MS. MINKEL: Great. Thank you, Rob.
- And then if we can have Bill Vanecek give us
- an update on European service for aviation.
- 23 MR. VANECEK: Thank you. I just wanted to -- I was

talking with Adam Perry and we wanted to give a little bit of an overview of what's happening now in the airline industry, not just domestically but also worldwide, with our primary focus really on kind of discount carriers in Europe that, you know, historically serve North America, and I just kind of want to walk through a little bit of it.

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But I will say upfront with respect to the domestic carriers in the United States, I have a bad feeling in my heart that I think is going to say that we're going to see less business travel going forward given how people have become used to working from home, doing business via Zoom and the other capabilities that they have. And so, you know, those are the prime tickets. They pay the highest price typically for those flights. So I'm a little bit concerned about that. also with, you know, delay obviously in the, you know, the Boeing line -- the Boeing Max line that are out there, I don't know when we'll be able to get back to full capacity if ever, quite frankly. I think it's going to be a while before we can

get over that hurdle.

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But I wanted to talk a little bit about what's happening and what has happened on the NFTA side in developing air service for this community. And we've talked to an awful lot of airlines over the years. Some we knew were far-fetched and we probably wouldn't get. you know, we continued to reach out to a number of different types of carriers and we were Obviously, when you look back at successful. airlines like Independence Air, which probably nobody ever remembers, but they were a startup. We were one of the first airlines -- one of the first airports to get them. They were based out of D.C. and they were flying, you know, smaller jets. But, we had them. Obviously we got JetBlue, we got Southwest to come here. Those were our big gets back in the day. And so we've seen -- Shuttle America is another one that was out there that was offering for a while. there was a number of airlines that come and go, but, you know, we really looked for the long-sustained partnerships with our airlines,

which we, you know, still have a majority of those.

But, one of the areas that we've always wanted to into and try to tap into is long-haul service over to Europe. Now, the length of our runway doesn't lend itself to flying to the long destinations in Europe, but it is -- they are capable now of flying to places like Ireland and, if you will, you know, western Europe, if you will. We can get to some of those destinations.

So I wanted to give a quick update here. A couple of the airlines that we've talked to along the way. Ryanair was one of the first ones we talked to. At the time we were talking with them they were doing really just short hops in Europe and they were, and they were exploring doing service to the United States. So we had a number of conversations with them and it looked pretty encouraging, but then ultimately it fell apart with their model so we weren't able to reel them in.

Norwegian Airline. We're going to talk a bit about them a little bit more at length here.

So Norwegian Air -- and, again, it's kind of a low-cost carrier that was looking to serve the And they were actually -- we had United States. talked to them over a number of years. When they first announced in 2015, we got together with representatives from Norwegian Air, we brought them to Western New York, we had meetings with local leaders and business leaders here and then put together a package to go along with the tourism groups. And ultimately they decided that they were going to fly out of Stewart Airport, which was part of the Port Authority airports downstate. That was one of their routes and they did fly there for a while.

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And then instead of choosing Buffalo, they decided to use Hamilton Airport, which I think was a really bad, bad move on their behalf. And so they did fly there for a short period of time. So they, they started flying in Hamilton starting in the spring of 2019, and they pretty much pulled the plug very, very quickly with that, with that capability, because of, again, the Max groundings, not being able to fly nonstop from

Hamilton -- they could have from Buffalo, but not from Hamilton. And they had to make a stop up in I think Halifax somewhere along the way and then before they would go over the ocean, so it really, it really did not work well for them.

And so by the end of, like I said, summer of 2019, they ended the Hamilton service.

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Their expansion plans were determined ultimately to be too robust and ultimately decided to start focusing on profitably versus growth. The United States and Canada was looked at as a way that they could kind of grow their network. They ultimately had to retract that. And, you know, when the worldwide COVID shutdowns happened in New York just -- and in Scandinavia, it really kind of put everything into a tumble. The carrier got about three hundred fifty-four million in loan quarantees from the Norwegian government, but they ran through that pretty quickly, and the second (inaudible) was turned down. They did file for bankruptcy and in January of 2021 they announced that they're not doing any long-haul service whatsoever.

will only fly short-haul routes, focusing on the Nordic routes and Europe. So the airline is trying to reduce its debt to around two point three billion, but it's highly unlikely they will be consider flying back to the United States.

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So other carriers, there's a lot of them here on this slide. I know it looks very, very busy. And, again, we have talked to a number of these carriers, but the low-cost carriers just can't compete on the long-haul market with the legacy carriers that we have both in the United States, as well as the more major ones like British Airways, for example, out of Great Britain. So, you know, a couple of points here. We had face-to-face meetings with WOW Air, Thomas These are all over in Europe. And who else did we talk to on here ? We talked to -- we had talked -- XL France we actually had a conversation with as well, and unfortunately Thomas Cook were basically vacation (inaudible). destination type operations. You would book not just a flight, but you'd book your vacation along with them. WOW Air, again, kind of a similar

type of a -- more of a (inaudible) if you want to put it that way.

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So the other European carriers are -- right now the top four surviving European low-cost carriers are Ryanair. They're still there, but they're only doing short-haul. They did not pursue with any great interest going further than just basically western Europe and those locations. EasyJet, same thing, short haul. Jet2, again, mostly short haul. They're not offering any long-haul services. Short-haul And none of these low-cost carriers have only. viable transatlantic prospects from either Buffalo or NFIA. However, we have still maintained contact with Aer Lingus. We were -before all this happened, looked like it was going to be, you know, a pretty good outcome for us, and then all of a sudden the plug has been pulled so we are in a holding pattern with respect to Aer Lingus and we will continue to reach out when the time becomes more appropriate to have further conversations with them.

And so that is it on the European market, if

you will, and the potential for service into really anywhere in the United States from some of those lower cost carriers. You still have the legacy carriers flying. Major carriers are still flying in and out of here probably at lesser frequencies than they had before. So that's just kind of an overview of what's happening in the world of Europe, primarily western Europe, and activity from Buffalo.

If not, I'd like to go into -- we've got another progress presentation for our baggage claim expansion project. Even though I call it the terminal enhancement project. I don't know how it became to be baggage claim expansion

because we're doing much, much more than that.

So if there's any questions on that?

But, nonetheless, so this was as of the 28th of January, so it's very recent. The construction progress here. Again, our gate nine is now fully in place, fully in service. This was the brand-new jet bridge that was put in and so we're very excited to have that capacity back.

This is a look at the new loading docks for

the Delaware North. We're relocating all of their space for deliveries east obviously, because we've expanded out east, so it's a much better operation here. Up above you see is -- where those little like -- they almost look like straws up on top, those are actually lights. And those are the lights that are going to be in the meet and greet area. And it's wonderful to watch when you're coming in at night or early in the morning when it's dark out there, it's really a really nice view coming into the airport, so we're happy that that's coming together.

They have now enclosed the -- they have the new bag belt on number one, so we've expanded the building out. We now have the doors that are keeping us nice and warm and cozy down in the baggage claim area for all the airlines and they're very happy about that.

This is the -- what will be the east end exiting concourse, which go right through our administrative offices today. And it's going from the terminal out towards Genesee Street.

These are unmonitored exiting lanes --

automated exiting lanes. It's made by a company called Dormakaba. And the way they work is that as you walk into the exit, the door closes behind you and then you've got a barrier in front of you. Once those doors behind you close, that barrier opens up and you move forward, they close behind you, and then they keep that process It's really kind of a three-step process for you to get out. The benefit of it is that it also has backflow tracking, so if somebody tries to go through backwards into the terminal, alarms will go off and we will be able to make sure we're not letting anybody that has not been screened get through the terminal. The nice thing about this is we don't have to pay extra money to have an exiting quard at the exits here. We'll have the same type of the technology on the west side as well for those folks that are exiting on the west side.

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So this is a look at our -- it's a little -- wasn't quite cleaned up yet, but this is going to be our new conference room up at BNIA, the main one. The beauty of this one is it's expandable,

both sides. You can see the nice, decorative tiling they have in the back. They'll have the screens up on the side that will be able to sit a lot of people or a smaller group if necessary.

This is a look at our new office space. We expect to be moving into this space here -- we have cubicles and offices. So we expect to move into this space by mid February. So we'll be out of our old offices starting in mid February and we'll be completely relocated here to our new offices.

Again, this is just a look at one of the baggage claim area offices that are now -- I'm sorry. This is the barber shop next to our offices here. And so this is where Hamdi will be giving his haircuts to those folks that aren't getting inside past security. He'll be doing this on the public side over here. It's going to be a great space for him.

This is a look at the -- again, the meet and greet area. And you can see the straws -- they look like straws, but are actually the lights coming in. And you'll see -- around here

somewhere, right, Helen?

Anyway -- but anyway, so this is as you're walking out here, the escalators are right here to go down to the baggage claim area.

So you can see as we're going down here, they have now installed -- you can't quite see it here, but they've got the hickory roof up above the escalator. It looks fantastic. It's going to be a very great welcoming enhancement for our visitors.

So here you'll see that roof again, it's in, and it's outstanding. I mean, they've done a fantastic job with the finishes.

Of course that was our first baggage belt which is up and complete. The second one is in process. They're finished the terrazzo now.

They should have the next bag belt I think is going to be complete between kind of June, July, August timeframe. So at that point we'll have both of our exits open and operating for our customers to come down to the baggage claim area. And then the last two carousels will bring us out to probably the end of the year or just after,

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and then the project will be complete. So it's
1
2
       coming along nicely and it's moving along at a
3
       very good pace and we're just thrilled.
       getting great feedback from everybody that sees
4
5
       what we're doing at the airport.
6
            So any questions I can answer about the
7
       project or anything else?
    CHAIR SISTER ROCHE:
8
                        It looks lovely.
9
   MR. VANECEK: It's going to be great.
10
            Yes, sir?
11
    COMMISSIONER PERRY:
                         So it looks like for the
12
       completion of the baggage carousels three and
13
       four, like we could have that in just about a
14
       year?
15
   MR. VANECEK:
                  Yes.
                        Exactly.
16
   COMMISSIONER PERRY:
                         Amazing.
                                   Wow.
17
   MR. VANECEK: So the kind of end date they have
18
       targeted is kind of April, if you will, of 2022,
19
       just for all the wrap-up. But generally
20
       speaking, by the end of the year, all four will
21
       be in process and everything will be built out.
22
       So we're very thrilled (inaudible).
23
    COMMISSIONER PERRY: Very nice.
```

MR. VANECEK: It's coming to fruition.

And then this is the same thing. It's another picture of the build-out that's currently happening. You can see back on number two about half of the equipment is in. That should be done within -- again, by June. And then we'll open up those two. Those will be the only two that we'll have running until the other two belts come on line.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: Very nice.

MR. VANECEK: And up here, Kim's favorite, solar panels. Good for the environment. Yay. So we are going to be able to generate some of the -- and this is the west side, so you can see where the escalators are now in, in place. There is no stairwell because you don't need it because it's only downward flow. And this is where you'll come out and go through, again, those Dormakaba technology to get into the terminal.

And that is the update on the terminal enhancement project. Any questions or thoughts?

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: We're ready for the planes to get filled up again.

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1
            Wonderful. Thank you very much, Bill.
2
            Could I have a motion, please, for
3
       adjournment?
4
   COMMISSIONER PERRY: So moved.
5
   CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you. Second, please?
6
   COMMISSIONER AUL: Joan Aul. Second.
   CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you, Joan. And I'm sure
8
       everyone is favor. Thank you, all.
9
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1	STATE OF NEW YORK)
2	ss:
3	COUNTY OF NIAGARA)
4	
5	I, Valerie A. Rosati, a Notary Public in and
6	for the State of New York, County of Niagara, DO
7	HEREBY CERTIFY that the above transcript of a
8	video recording was taken down by me in a
9	verbatim manner by means of Machine Shorthand,
10	and that the transcript was then reduced into
11	writing under my direction.
12	I further CERTIFY that the above-described
13	transcript constitutes a true and accurate and
14	complete transcript of the video recording.
15	
16	
17	VALERIE A. ROSATI,
18	Notary Public.
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	

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