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## NIAGARA FRONTIER TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Committee Meeting

September 23, 2021

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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 Adam Perry
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        Commissioner Jennifer Persico
        Kimberley Minkel (Executive Director)
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        David State (General Counsel)
        John Cox (Chief Financial Officer)
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        William Vanecek (Director, Aviation)
        Tom George (Director, Public Transit)
6
        Helen Tederous (Director, Public Affairs)
        John Schaefer (Director, Engineering)
7
        Karen Novo (Director, Human Resources)
        Darren Kempner (Manager, Government Affairs)
8
        Robert Jones (Manager, Service Planning)
        Susan Ohol (Admin. Assistant to Director of
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          Public Transit)
        Christopher Ruminski (Manager, Financial
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          Planning & Analysis)
        Patrick Dalton (Director, Internal Audit &
          Corporate Compliance)
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        MEMBERS ON THE PHONE:
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        Commissioner Joan Aul
        Commissioner Anthony Baynes
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        Commissioner Rev. Mark Blue
        Commissioner Margo Downey
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        Commissioner Michael Hughes
        Commissioner Philip Wilcox
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        Steven Duquette (Chief Information Officer)
        Mark Pereira (Procurement Manager)
        George Gast (Chief, TAPD)
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        Mary Perla (Senior Counsel)
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        Steve Davies (Project for Public Spaces)
        Sam Savarino (Savarino Companies)
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    CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Welcome all. We're sorry for
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        the brief setback we had today because we have a
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very full day of meetings and lots of exciting and interesting ideas to discuss. We're going to begin now with the combined committee meetings, and we're going start with Patrick Dalton who will give us an update on the audit status and the corporate compliance update.

AR. DALTON: Good morning, commissioners. I'd like to go over the audit status report for the month of September. Just a highlight. I'm going to highlight some of the important audits that we're doing. We have a lot of construction projects going on, and we're going to be auditing a lot of the cost plus fixed fee engineering type contracts. So you'll see five audits that we're working on that are construction monitoring services as well as design support services.

The primary purpose of those five audits will be auditing the labor on the overhead costs charged to the NFTA on these projects. So we'll be looking at payroll registers and any final audited overhead rates from their CPA group and then we'll make the audit and testing thereof.

So we're in various stages of completion, so once

we get those wrapped up, you'll be seeing those audit reports in your e-mail.

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On the bottom of the first page, there's an audit called ALD Development Corporation. the build-out of the club at the BNIA. promised -- we didn't focus on the revenues because we all know what happened with COVID. What we did focus in on is on the promise of investing one point six million dollars into the build-out of that facility. So what we did is we audited the costs associated with that to make sure that they are applicable to the BNIA and as well as in accordance with the contract terms. They've got about one point three million dollars completed now and they have about three hundred thousand yet to be done. They have until the end of the (inaudible) year to complete that That was a good audit to do. build-out. They are in compliance with the terms of the agreement. You'll be seeing that audit report shortly. As well as on the revenue side, we do get in a minimum annual guarantee of about a hundred and forty thousand dollars a year and

they are current, so it's a good audit.

And on the second page the report, I just want to highlight one audit on DAL Global Services. They provide ground services at the BNIA. And I'm fairly focused on Delta Airlines as well as the other commercial carriers. We have five percent of the gross revenues from that contract, so we will be focusing on what revenues that have been reported to ensure that all the revenues are reported to the NFTA so we get our five percent.

And, finally, on the very last page of the report, we have the corporate compliance item.

That's a big report that we do. It's called the NTD report. It's the National Transit Database report. It's a federal requirement. We provide them a lot of financial and operating data, and that serves as a basis for our formula funding on the federal level. That's how they calculate our formula funding on a federal level for Metro. So that's a very important report that's due at the end of October. So that is ongoing as we gather that information so we can input it into the

1 federal database.

And that wraps up the audit status report.

In the meantime, we are still working on our internal control testing over financial reporting in the background while we do these other audits as well. So that is the audit status report for the month of September. If there's any questions, I'd be happy to answer.

9 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Any questions for Patrick?

10 MR. DALTON: Thank you.

11 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you very much, Patrick.

And now for the financial performance, and I'm going to ask Chris Ruminski to take us through.

MR. RUMINSKI: Good morning, commissioners. The financial performance for August and year to date through August. For the month of August, we had an overall positive favorable budget variance of two point nine million dollars. This is the result of higher than budgeted operating revenues, and that had a favorable variance of one point three million dollars. And that's related to Metro passenger fares being almost

three hundred thousand dollars favorable to budget and BNIA concessions and commissions revenue was eight hundred and eighty thousand dollars favorable to budget, and that's as enplanements at the Buffalo airport were sixty-five percent higher than our forecasts for the month.

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Also, we had higher than budgeted operating assistance which led to a favorable variance of one point two million dollars. Three hundred and fifteen thousand of that favorable variance is STOA, and eight hundred and sixty-five thousand is the mortgage and sales tax revenue higher than we had anticipated for the month. We also had a favorable budget variance on operating expenses. This includes a one point two million dollar favorable personnel variance, two hundred and forty-six thousand dollar favorable variance for maintenance and repairs and it's offset a little bit by insurance and injuries being unfavorable by two hundred and ninety thousand dollars.

Are there any questions relating to the August performance?

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: No questions.

MR. RUMINSKI: Year to date is a continuing trend of a positive performance. We had -- overall for the year through August, we have a favorable variance of fourteen million dollars. Operating revenues are four point six million dollars favorable to budget, again, due to higher concessions and commissions revenue at the BNIA as enplanement numbers have recovered much sooner than we had anticipated. Also, operating assistance is favorable to budget due to higher than anticipated mortgage and sales tax revenue and STOA revenue. And, also, operating expenses Authority-wide have been favorable to budget.

Breaking that down to the business center analysis. Our overall favorable variance is primarily related to BNIA and Metro. BNIA is three point three million dollars favorable overall, again, due to anticipated enplanements being -- or, lower than what they actually were, so we have a favorable budget due to that. So concessions and commission revenue is favorable. And also operating expenses have been favorable

to budget by two percent for the BNIA for the year to date.

And Metro is ten point two million dollars favorable to budget for the year due to positive variances in fare revenue, STOA, again, mortgage and sales tax revenue, as well as operating expenses being nine percent below budget for the year.

Are there any questions on the year-to-date performance or the business center analysis?

Finally, the cash management report. Total cash at the end of August was two hundred ten million dollars. That's forty-nine million dollars favorable to budget. This is primarily due to COVID relief funds that we have received but we have not recognized into revenue yet. We were able to apply for them and receive them, but they're not recognized as budget revenue yet. And, also, again, higher BNIA concessions, commissions, STOA, mortgage and sales tax revenue are leading to the favorable variance in our cash condition.

Are there any questions relating to the cash

management report for the month of August?

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: We did very well. Thank you very much.

MR. RUMINSKI: It's been better than we had anticipated. We set up the budget, you know, to be conservative because we didn't know what was going to happen, and it's definitely exceeded our expectations. And you never know when that's going to slide the other way, so keep our fingers crossed that it keeps going positive for the rest of the year.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: That's good news. Thank you.

Human resources. Karen Novo.

MS. NOVO: Thank you and good morning. So I just want to touch on -- in human resources right now, the biggest challenges and things that we're going through right now is jobs. Vacancies, jobs, hiring. So I just want to touch base on our slide one here, Authority openings. As you see, our biggest concern right now is mechanics. We have fifty-six mechanic open positions. We have operators of twenty-three. That number may seem low, but when you project over the next

couple years, we're looking at about forty employees that are eligible to retire. So operators are always going to be a concern.

We've hired about twenty-five over this past year. Things are -- of operators, and about seven mechanics. Things are starting to pick up a little, but I don't want to be -- I'm trying to be optimistic, but as you see, everywhere everyone is looking for help, no matter if it's from restaurants to transit to wherever.

So the trades is very, very concerning right now. Thanks to Commissioner Tucker as well.

We've been working with Northland Training

Center, we've been working with Alfred, we've

been working with BOCES, we've been working with

the high schools now. We're trying to do

everything we can to bring people in. We're

going back to previous candidates who have

applied over the last couple years. So we're

doing different things.

So what are we doing? We're looking at, we're looking at testing, we're looking at how we evaluate when they're coming in for testing.

We're seeing how we can work through that, help employees get through the testing process. We're looking at referral programs for two things, retention for employees and for new hires coming in. So I know there's a lot of signing bonuses out there. We are looking at that as well. But, referral bonuses we thought we'd start with first to help with the retention as well. So that's in the mix right now, and we're hoping to start that in the next week or so.

Other things that we're doing. We started a QR code. We have that on all of our applications. As you see now, they've got the QR code, which is another thing that we started. It's like a business card. We're handing out business cards, a QR code. So just hit it with your phone and the applications come up. And every one of my staff has one of these -- has a bunch of these with them at all times.

These are the additional recruitment initiatives that we're doing on slide two. We're back with The Buffalo News. We're advertising with The Buffalo News. As I mentioned, the

1 continued evaluation of applicant testing that 2 we're doing. The employee referral program. 3 We're even going to look for part-time help. We're looking -- under the -- pursuant to the 4 5 CBA, we do have restrictions and guidelines that 6 we have to follow, but we're looking to see if 7 anyone is looking for holidays and weekends, make We have a few internal candidates 8 extra money. 9 that are now interested, employees that have been 10 operators or have their CDL and they want to work 11 extra time because their time now is Monday through Friday. 12 13 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Is that going to generate an 14 overtime cost? 15 MS. NOVO: For part-time? COMMISSIONER PERRY: Well, you're saying that you're 16 going to ask people if they want to pick up extra 17 shifts. 18 19 MS. NOVO: Yes, it would. Because they would be 20 working on top of their hours working now, yes. It would be including overtime for them. 21 22 COMMISSIONER PERRY: So occasionally when you have 23 more activity and a greater need and maybe a

- 1 staff shortage, you have to have people work 2 overtime.
- 3 MS. NOVO: Yes.
- 4 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Okay.
- 5 MS. MINKEL: That's right. But, you know, as Chris 6 had reported, our personnel expense is nine 7 percent below budget, so I think there's capacity 8 there.
- COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yes. Just to me it seems, you 9 10 know, in any business, if you have a delicatessen 11 or a transportation authority, when you have high 12 demand and staffing issues, sometimes you incur 13 overtime.
- 14 MS. NOVO: Right.

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- 15 COMMISSIONER PERRY: Just a normal thing.
- 16 MS. NOVO: Right. And with the part-time, too, we 17 are evaluating too. We're trying to see how 18 much -- how many applicants are interested. We're trying to generate information on that 19 20 first, because this is -- it's a little 21 challenging on the maintenance and operations as 22

far as getting the part-time workers in, because

sometimes part-time you're looking at, oh, can I

just work a couple days during the week, where, of course, we have the union and all that, so we're just getting some information on that.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: Thank you.

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MS. NOVO: So these are some of the things that we're doing. And because of the challenge that we've been having, of course with the COVID last year, we had a lot of virtual fairs, I'll call them, where now we're starting to get back into, you know, going to the Buffalo Urban Center, we're going to Veterans One-Stop, we're going to BOCES. We're going out there, we're generating as many fairs as we can get to. We're doing our own fairs as well. So we're trying every initiative we can to get out there and talk to people. we're on the phone every day, we have staff on the phone every day trying to recruit as many as we can.

So what are our challenges? Our challenges are -- it's in the news every day. Right? So the school buses is a big -- the schools right now is all over the news and that's a big topic right now. The skilled workers, that's an area

that's been challenges for the last few years. Trades. We've been looking at that. We were looking at possibly talking to the union -- well, we've been talking with the union, I'm sorry, about apprenticeship programs, bringing them in, mentoring. We're working very closely with Tom's team trying to find ways to -- how do we get employees in? Maybe we start them as, you know, internships and then move them into mechanic positions for the trade area. We're trying all different ways, thinking of different initiatives to move forward, and hopefully at some point our numbers won't be so high.

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But right now everywhere you go is just -all the transit authorities are having the same
issues, the schools are having the same issues.
Even you look at all the, you know, car
dealerships around the area, they're all help
wanted, help wanted. So we're facing the same
challenges as everybody else. So I just wanted
to update the board where we are, what our
initiatives are, what we have been doing and, you
know, anything that we can do to try, we're going

to do it. Anything that comes to us, we will make every effort to see if we can hopefully make -- you know, get some more candidates onboard.

So that's my report. Any questions?

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you, Karen.

And government affairs. Anything happening with the government?

MR. KEMPNER: Let's see. Thank you, Sister. So on August 10th of this year, the U.S. Senate passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which is a one point two trillion, five-year investment in roads, bridges, transit, airports, the things that we care about, as well as, as well as many other programs.

So the Act serves as a reauthorization for the transportation programs at the federal level for the next five years. It includes a new program for aviation, which is not usually in these types of packages. But, it also -- it does not include the member designated projects that I've talked to you about before that the House had included.

So I just want to review briefly public transit, aviation and some specific programs. So for public transit, the Act would increase the formula programs by thirty percent in the next federal fiscal year which starts in October. And that would, that would result in approximately a seven million dollar increase in federal funding programs to NFTA Metro in the next fiscal year. And then after that, the next four years of the Bill is about a two-percent increase annually in those programs.

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For aviation, the Act creates a new airport investment program with twenty-five billion dollars over five years across the country. And those -- that program is a little bit broader than the traditional airport infrastructure It's kind of passenger facility charge program. eligible, which is broader and good for us. The only thing that it excludes is debt service. And there's also a new program for the airport -- for airport terminals, a new competitive grant program at the national level funded at one billion annually.

So you may recall Senator Schumer released estimates for this program a few, a few weeks back. It would result in approximately forty-five million dollars to the NFTA over the five years or about nine million dollars annually for Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

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On the next slide, just a couple more So the Act would double the capital investment grant program. This is the program that funds light rail, bus rapid transit expansions throughout the country. It would provide an additional two billion dollars annually for state of good repair and lower no emissions bus grants, one billion annually for a new national infrastructure project program. would increase by about fifty percent the RAISE grants, formerly TIGER and BUILD programs, create a new program for Safe Streets to reduce automobile crashes, fatalities, especially for cyclists and pedestrians, and then also a hundred million annually for the Reconnecting Communities This was much talked about for highways program. that run through (inaudible) divide communities.

So all that said, this -- you may have heard, this is to be taken up by the House next Monday the 27th is the deadline that was agreed to. The picture on this is still unclear on timing. The Senate did pass it bipartisan, sixty-nine votes and thirty opposed, so there is certainly a bipartisan push behind this. with the budget reconciliation or soft infrastructure bill, the picture is still cloudy how this exactly proceeds in the near future. Without it, our transit programs are not reauthorized, so it certainly is a critical, a critical piece, but we'll probably know a little bit more next week, as usual. So if there aren't any questions, that concludes my report. CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Any questions for Darren? Okay. I'm going to call upon Joan Aul now who is going to give us a little update on the property committee and introduce the new section. Joan?

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Good morning everyone. So we're excited for this

COMMISSIONER AUL: I'm here. Thank you, Sister.

presentation to the board this morning on the latest update as we move forward with the DL and W terminal project. I can tell you before I hand it over to Darren that earlier this summer, from the board, Sister Denise, LaVonne, Phil and I, along with Kim and Darren and the team, met with Steve Davies and Sam Savarino to go over actually kind of a broader presentation than you're seeing today, which walked us through in detail the efforts to date on this project and then resulted in actually a pared-down version of that meeting in presentation for all of the board today through this committee structure.

So I think we would all agree we're starting to hear more and more on the DL and W project in the press, the media, and we want to make sure as we move forward today that we all share the same vision. And Sam and Steve have done a great job of getting us to this point, and it's really exciting to see this start to come to fruition. We certainly have a ways ahead of us, but I think hopefully we'll all be onboard and excited about the direction that this project is taking.

So thanks for your attention to this. There is a lot of information here that you can certainly read at your leisure after the presentation today. Clearly we'll be talking about this project for months and months to come, but it's exciting to see this start to develop into a true vision.

So with that, Darren, I will hand it over to you to introduce Steve and the Project for Public Spaces, and Sam as well.

MR. KEMPNER: Thanks, Joan. So I'll introduce Steve, who is going to go through the presentation, and then I'm going to ask Sam to jump in after.

Steve Davies is co-founder of Project for Public Spaces. He has worked on projects across the world to invigorate -- reinvigorate public spaces, create great public spaces. He's also knowledgeable about the region as he spent some time at the Chautauqua Institution over the summer.

And you may all know Sam Savarino, our partner on the DL and W development project. He is a resident of the cobblestone district and

also has many projects in the district as well as the surrounding area and region as a developer.

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So, Steve, can you go through a year-plus of work in about ten minutes?

MR. DAVIES: Yes. I'll give it a shot here, Darren. Thanks very much. I'm also excited to present the results of our six-month community visiting process which leads to a programming and design management framework to transform the DL and  ${\tt W}$ terminal into a vital destination for Buffalo. We worked with -- very closely with Sam Savarino and Savarino Companies, who as you know was selected to have exclusive development rights for the vacant space on the ground and second levels of the former train shed, building on NFTA's fifty million dollar investment into the new rail station. We'd also like to acknowledge the active participation of the NFTA staff. The DL and W terminal was considered an innovative design.

Next slide, please. The DL and W was considered an innovative design and engineering feat when it opened in 1917 because it was an

unusual two-level design, operable windows, steam ventilation shafts and abundant skylights.

Next. Though the skylights have been covered and the windows partially filled in to protect the building.

Please go back to the previous slide. The second level is still remarkably intact architecturally. The large outdoor deck is shown in the lower right. It's almost an acre in size. The slide at the left shows the penetration recently cut in the second floor, and you could see a view of the new station platform below from what will be a main entrance at that level.

Go back -- two slides forward, please. Next slide, please. While the DL and W terminal has been largely closed to public access, the area around the DL and W terminal has been transformed with new attractions, developments and other investments -- yes, stay on the map -- especially Canalside and the cobblestone district. We can certainly build on the momentum of these improvements.

Placemaking. I'll be talking a little bit

1 about placemaking. Placemaking is a collaborative process of people coming together 3 to imagine and create great public spaces. 4 diagram at right summarizes some of the key 5 attributes of what makes a great place. 6 Successful places have a variety of uses and 7 activities, they're safe, comfortable, attractive, are accessible and linked to their 8 9 surroundings and are social places that attract a diverse range of people in a community. 10

Next slide, please.

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- MR. KEMPNER: Steve, can you see the picture of Canalside?
- MR. DAVIES: Yeah. There's a little bit of a delay on the process here.

Our placemaking process a decade ago helped to launch the transformation of Canalside shown here.

And the next slide should show a summary of our community engagement process. We conducted over twenty stakeholder interviews, hosted six focus groups with forty-five registered participants representing a diverse range of

backgrounds and organizations and received over nine hundred responses to our online survey.

Community engagement will continue as the project further develops as we'll discuss.

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From our placemaking process, we learned that the success of the DL and W terminal is dependent on its ability to be accessible, flexible, inclusive and multi-generational. The terminal needs to leave room for changing uses and activities in order to keep things interesting for visitors and create low barriers for new and evolving uses and activities. programming of the terminal should act to intentionally attract diverse audiences, bridging differences and building cultural awareness and understanding. Uses and activities happening simultaneously for diverse groups will be important to building a strong community destination.

Other opportunities include integrating the rich railroad history and architectural heritage of the space, acting as a welcoming center for a growing number of attractions and trails that

exist in the area and providing a space that incubates and supports new and emerging artists and businesses to collaborate, create and sell.

Finally, the waterfront is also an important asset of the space, and stakeholders emphasize the need to make sure that visitors have both physical and visual access to it.

So we'll begin with the -- like the first aspect of the -- within the placemaking, access and linkages. The DL and W terminal is already a transportation hub in an area well served for people on foot, biking, taking public transit, boating and driving. We learned from our process that access really needs to be addressed, letting people know the space is there and how to get to it as well as designing it so that people with disabilities can easily use the space. NFTA's planned investments already will do much to meet this goal.

So we prepared this diagram to summarize how access will be improved to the second level of the terminal. Main entrances to the second level will be from Canalside, South Park Avenue, and

the new station platform. Those are the black dots. The area around the terminal needs to become more pedestrian oriented. Those are the dotted lines. And bicycles, shown in green lines, should connect to the terminal but be diverted away from the narrow riverfront promenade.

So one of the key aspects of these access improvements are the wide and expanded riverfront promenade that will connect the KeyBank Arena and Canalside, as shown in this rendering done by NFTA of the station looking from the Canalside area. And then as we move to South Park Avenue, as you know, a new entrance is being planned on that street as well which could also have a bridge to the KeyBank Arena. And this site, this location will serve people driving to the terminal and parking in one of the abundant lots along South Park Avenue.

So the next part of the placemaking diagram we'll talk about are uses and activities. And we also learned from our process what uses and activities are most likely to attract people to

the terminal. So we've prepared -- you know, based on the online survey, we were able to prepare a word cloud that showed the food and beverage markets and various forms of arts, culture and entertainment will be top attractors.

The development of the DL and W terminal will take place in phases. Following the completion of planned capital improvements that will be necessary to, you know, get actual physical access to the second floor to make the space usable for anything really. So the first phase is the initial activation. Years one and two will include lighter, quicker, cheaper placemaking and programming strategies that begin the process of returning the space to productive public use.

The second phase is scaling up the destination which will refine and expand upon the placemaking and programming strategies that prove to be successful in phase one and support emerging tenants and uses, and, finally, achieving the vision in about year five will signify the maturation of the DL and W terminal

as a dynamic, mixed-use transit-oriented development.

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So based on our process, we also prepared another diagram that shows the great mix of uses that we anticipate on the second floor. The food and beverage is a very important use. shown in light blue, with adjacent public areas for gathering in orange. The green areas sort of to the right represent indoor and outdoor flexible event spaces. Stage areas shown in those little black boxes can be located indoor and outdoor in good weather. The shared workspace for the arts is shown in purple next to a welcome center at the heart of the terminal. And the shared-use commercial kitchen shown in red will be centrally located as well. going to talk about each of these specific uses now that you've seen the overall concept for the layout.

The first use I'll talk about is food and beverage. Food and beverage can evolve from some pop-up vending, very easy to do kinds of food events like shown in the upper left, to a mix of

bars, beer garden, cafes and permanent restaurants, like the Mercato Metropolitano in London shown at right. But it's important to note that the food and beverage is not just -- it's not just for eating. There should be other activities as well. Food and beverage should be intermingled with spaces to lounge, play games and socialize with friends and family, places for kids to play, that kind of thing.

So we've begun to prepare some renderings of what the space might look like. And the first rendering shows --

Next slide, please. The first rendering gives a flavor for, you know, what the space might look like with the restored skylights and windows, and how that itself transforms the space.

The next slide again shows food kiosks green -- next slide, please. The skylight space will be animated with food kiosks, greenery, seating and other amenities.

Next, please. Yes. Please hold that. You see the food kiosk on the right and the various

other amenities.

The next space I'll talk about is the flexible event space that will be used to host performances, cultural festivals and private events. This slide shows similar uses for another project we worked on in the Flint Farmers Market. We've seen weddings and banquets and all kinds of activities here.

So a couple renderings of this space. It's really designed to be very flexible for almost any use and afford the opportunity to extend indoors and outdoors.

And the next rendering shows the outdoor terrace adjacent to this space in more detail.

It's also flexible and, you know, provides expansive views of the Buffalo River.

So one of the important uses of this space as well will be markets and concerts. These markets can be -- have temporary stalls so that they can be removed when other events are taking place. In the upper right is a concert that's already happening in the cobblestone area.

And the next zone of the second floor will

be the shared work space for the arts. The vision for this is to gather Buffalo's painters, musicians, poets, dancers and creators into one big dynamic community at the DL and W terminal.

The welcome center will include an information desk, education and historical exhibits about the terminal as well as the waterfront and railroad.

A commercial kitchen will serve emerging food and beverage vendors that are using the various food and beverage attractions on the second floor. It can also be used for cooking classes and public events.

Next is the bicycle rental and repair.

Bicycle rentals and uses will enhance the role of the terminal as a form of trail head for the entire state system, the Empire State Line, the Shoreline and all of these bicycle attractions that already exist in the area.

And the indoor and outdoor public spaces, finally, will integrate moveable tables and chairs, lounge seating, art, greenery, wayfinding, and other amenities that will be an

attraction in themselves.

So the next slide shows a rendering of the expansive deck with the concert stage that will have green space that is flexible for other activities as well.

Moving on. Many design principles and features are important to create a comfortable, social and well-loved public space. The first of these is the exterior of the terminal. The terminal today is fenced off and very uninviting. A dynamic exterior with greenery, banners, art displays and uses that can be seen from the street will make the exterior of the building far more inviting. And a rendering that has been prepared shows how opening up the facade and putting a terrace overlooking Canalside can externalize the energy of the interior spaces, just being able to see all the activity happening up there.

Temporary and permanent art should be integrated throughout the interior and exterior of the terminal. The lighting should be -- the terminal should be a beacon of light at night

further animating its exterior. Greenery located to still enable use of the large deck space. Greenery --

Let's go to the next slide on greenery.

Greenery located to still enable the use of the large deck space will make the exterior cooler in summer and more attractive.

Seating. Comfortable places to sit outside and inside will encourage social gathering and support food entrepreneurs. Here we go. Here's the seating. All different kinds of seating we envision for this space.

Signage and wayfinding. Iconic, large-scale signage is important to identify the DL and W terminal, as are smaller scale directional maps and wayfinding for visitors. And, finally, it should be flexible to have things going on year-round as it does already at Canalside.

The next slide. There's the year-round.

Let's move -- next slide -- to management and operations. The management and operations of the DL and W terminal will be critical to its success. The development and operation of the

DL and W terminal can be undertaken in a range of management forms, but the future of the management structure should really be a public/private partnership as shown in the diagram.

Next slide. The management structure should maintain public ownership of the facility while drawing on private sector skills for operations and management. It is also recommended that a nonprofit organization support the revitalization either in support roles such as fundraising and/or to operate specific components of the project, raising funds independently to support its work.

So that concludes kind of an overview of, you know, the findings of our work so far. The next steps in the placemaking process are sort of outlined on this slide. Community engagement is an ongoing part of the management operation of the terminal and it's really -- it's not been completed in this space by any stretch of the imagination. It should continue during the next phase of the placemaking process, where we want

to keep key stakeholders and partners engaged, do detailed planning and design for each key zone described in this presentation, developing the business plans and finding tenants and users for each, developing and refining the financial proforma and management plan, creating an innovative public arts plan to infuse the arts into the project, and, finally, developing initial activations and a calendar for programming.

So, in closing, Jane Jacobs, a famed writer and observer of cities, once wrote, cities have the capability of providing something for everybody only because and only when they are created by everybody. I believe we have set the stage for this kind of development in the DL and W terminal and look forward to your questions.

MR. KEMPNER: Thank you, Steve. And thank you everyone for your patience and perseverance on the delayed slide advancement. I promise you I think the rest of the presentations are in the room.

So, Sam, could you -- Sam Savarino, if

you're on, could you speak briefly for a minute or two on the next steps in partnership with the NFTA on the project.

MR. SAVARINO: Sure. Be happy to, Darren. I want to add, you know, the next step for us to go forward specifically would be to identify and scope out and budget out the improvements that need to be made to the structure itself, which were contemplated in our original proposal to the NFTA and probably would be described more in the nature of landlord improvements as separate and distinct from tenant improvements or leasehold improvements which would be our responsibility with our funding.

There's an awful lot of work that still has to be done over there, and that would include a lot of structural work that needs to be done on the building itself; the concrete decks, the upper deck, filling in the areas between the rail -- between the passenger platforms; providing truck access and a means to get rid of refuse in the facility; relocating the current NFTA Metro operation center which is up on the

second floor right now; and providing access and egress to the space. There is some access and egress contemplated with improvements that are going to happen to get the station activated, but it's certainly not sufficient for the public use that would have to happen over there.

How does that get funded? Well, we've had discussions with Darren and some NFTA staff about working together to identify sources of funding for that. And I won't go into a lot of detail on it. That's your province, not mine, but I would say that our discussions have given us reason for hope with regard to that and that there may be some avenues available to us that involve tax credits and other programs and that a public/private partnership might be available to us.

At the same time, as things come into focus, we're fine-tuning our modeling. At the end of all this, it's very good to identify what the perfect mix is, what the best use for that facility is, what will get people there, what benefits the community and what's good

transit-oriented development. It's another thing entirely to make sure that you're developing sufficient revenues so that it's successful, self-supporting and it generates enough revenue to repay the investment in there, and that's what we do as business people looking at that too and events management. So those are the next steps that we're engaging in and we're already starting on that right now.

MR. KEMPNER: Thanks, Sam.

MR. SAVARINO: While I mention that, when you're talking about improvements to the premises, one of the things that, you know, became evident to us, maybe we should have known this, but that bush train shed, which is really what that structure is, which was separate and distinct from its design, who designed it and how it was added on to the historic terminal station that was there, was designed to be a great public space from the skylights above to the glass on the side, even the ventilation systems, and made to be on a more human scale than other train stations had been designed to do. And part of

what we want to do here is to bring that great public space back to its original look, its original form. That's a large component of what we're doing, and it will be a very impressive public space.

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MS. MINKEL: Great. Thank you, Sam. Thank you, Excellent presentation. Thank you for being such great partners. We are very excited about this project and opening the space back up to the public and giving them access to what has been shuttered for decades. But hearing from the community, seeing the vision laid out is incredibly exciting for all of us here. a necessary first step. We needed to identify what, we're working on identifying how and how much, and getting the funding to support this going forward will be a critical step for the future development. I think the timing is perfect. As Darren had presented earlier, the opportunity for infrastructure funding, this is certainly a project that would be ideal for that future funding. So we're excited, we're optimistic. I'll ask the board if they have any

questions for you and your team. CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Are there any questions? COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Hi, this is Jen Persico. everybody on the phone. You guys did a great presentation and it's very exciting. This is more directed towards us. Do we have a time frame of figuring out when we might know how much funding we will have access to? MR. KEMPNER: Right. So as work continues on the station project, we've really ramped up the designing and aiming the private sector development piece and how we do that. think, you know, we're targeting within the next year or so to kind of lock that down and make that happen as the station project continues its construction, which is currently targeted for the end of 2023, '24. So we want to time the improvements upstairs to the opening of the station project as best as possible, but with, with a lot of question marks exactly how that's You know, there's some work to do there. COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Got it. Thank you. CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Any other questions?

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Well, thank you very much. It certainly is exciting. It will transform that part of the waterfront area and probably feed in well with the Sabres too. It's great.

Is there any more for the property committee update? If not, we're going to go to another group that has been working very hard these past months. Surface transportation committee. And I call on Rob Jones.

- MR. GEORGE: So before Rob gets started and before we get into our normal discussion of our metrics and some of our reporting, we have three discussion items this morning. Unfortunately, the first one is probably not as exciting as what you just saw, but Rob will go through a few of the first two discussion items with you this morning, and then I'll take -- I'll step back in and talk about the third one. So with that, we'll start with our Title Six program update. Thanks, Rob.
- MR. JONES: Yeah. Thanks. Good morning,

  commissioners. It's certainly hard to go after

  such a great visual presentation and talk about

  federal compliance, but I'll do my best to make

it as exciting as possible. So first thing to talk about here is our Title Six program update. If you've been on the board for a while, you've heard me talk about this before. For new members, our Title Six is essentially a federal regulation that states that any program or agency that receives federal funding for programming cannot discriminate on the grounds of race, color or national origin or be excluded from participation thereof.

So how does that impact us at Metro? Well, the first thing we need to do as part of our Title Six program update every three years is ensure that the quality of our public transit is very evenly spread or it's nondiscriminatory, that we're promoting full participation in all of our committees and our public outreach. We're ensuring there's meaningful access to LEP, or limited English proficiency programs. That's mostly done through our EEO department. We're also required to document all this compliance every three years. So the two hundred and sixty-eight page Title Six documentation is very

thorough, it's very detailed because it's really three years' worth of compliance that we're submitting to the federal government as part of this program.

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It's incredibly important to the Authority as a whole because noncompliance means that federal funding can be either conditioned or withheld, which is definitely something that we don't want.

So what is this process? We submitted our 2018 plan in October of 2018. It's good for three years, so it's valid through November of 2021. Our submission date for our current compliance is October as there's obviously a delay sometimes in the review process on the other side. The documentation of that compliance is always kind of an ongoing thing, so things that have happened in the past year like our bus network improvements and fare changes, there's a Title Six program associated with that which was presented back in July. That's wrapped up into the triennial Title Six as part of the overall submission as well.

So in terms of the program requirements, so you don't have to read through the whole two hundred and sixty-eight pages, we've provided a summary sheet in there of kind of what's changed and what hasn't. A lot of it is very formulaic. So the first one is kind of this notice that is in all of our rooms, all of our facilities and on our website and vehicles, to document compliance That also allows us to establish a there. complaint procedure for any complaints that may come through EEO and HR. It includes our public participation plan which this board did update in late 2018, since the last submission. So that is included the new public participation plan and documentation. The new public participation plan was designed to be a little bit more inclusive, more readable for the public, a little bit more focused on equity as well for our (inaudible).

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So the LEP program which is chapter four of the document is very critical. We are a region that is changing in terms of the languages that are spoken, and we need to provide access to individuals who may not have full English proficiency. We do that mostly through our language line and services, using Google Translate on the website and other means. So Spanish is still the -- clearly the highest identifiable language for English spoken at home -- or, language spoken at home that is not English, I should say. We also need to identify that our non-elected committee membership is representative of our community. Here that includes our CAC committee which is self-reporting as forty-three percent minority populations.

Additionally, we need to do subrecipient monitoring. Because a lot of the programs, like (inaudible) of Freedom, have kind of waned off, we used to have forty-three subrecipients, it was a lot of effort to manage those, now we have one, which is great. It's really easy to make sure that United Way is compliant with all of these standards as opposed to forty-four different entities that were receiving those funds for the last submission.

And siting new facilities also needs to be

tracked. We did not site any new facilities, so a project like DL and W, which is an enhancement to an existing facility, doesn't have to be part of that requirement because it's already something that we own (inaudible).

So going back to kind of what service planning's role is in all of this. We're really here to talk about the system-wide standards and policies. Our service guidelines were adopted by the board just last March. The previous version before that was about nine years old. So that's included as part of this submission. We really focused on the equity analysis and ensuring that it's understandable to the public, readable, and really fits within the dynamics of our community today.

The second one there is ridership and travel patterns. So we conducted our onboard survey also in the March and April timeframe. That will be presented to you next month, the full results of that survey, but obviously our demographics are changing, especially COVID has changed not only the ridership, but the individuals who are

riding, how often, where they're riding, what times they're riding. All that information is wrapped up into this document as well. And evaluating service and fare changes. We recently went to the board in July relating to our service and fare changes. That's also included in this triennial as a stand-alone fare equity analysis. So we have to make sure there are no disproportionate burdens or impacts.

And really near and dear to my heart is on the data side and monitoring. We monitor constantly. We have two data analysts in the service planning department who look at our ridership, track where that data is coming from, ensure the quality of that data that is reported to the NTD that Pat talked about earlier. And what we really need to do through the Title Six is look at if the dispersion of our services and our funding is done so in an equitable manner.

And one way to do this is looking at minority routes and non-minority routes, which is defined by the FTA. So a minority route is a route that serves about a third of that overall

service length or mileage within a minority community. If you look at this table really quickly, you'll see that our service span, our frequency and our on-time performance is all actually higher or better in our minority routes than our non-minority routes, showing that we're actually providing better service to the minority communities than the overall region as a whole, which is very positive for us.

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So what are we asking the board for today? So at the board meeting you will be asked to approve the program update, ensure that we are It will be submitted with help from compliant. the grants department, hopefully, by October 1st of this year, so that it gets in the system, it can be reviewed by the federal Civil Rights officer. If there is anything that they have questions on, they'll get back to us and we'll have that feedback as well. So we'll continue to monitor and document all of the compliance related things within Title Six, and any changes to that will be brought before the board as necessary, any modifications to the triennial

plan, and then we'll update it again in three years. So expect me to be back here about, you know, September of 2024 talking about Title Six compliance again.

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So unless there are any questions, I'll pause there. Questions on Title Six? Great.

So the more exciting part of the presentation is the second presentation here, looking at our bus network improvements and fare changes. So as part of our 2021 annual plan, I personally have been in front of the board numerous times to kind of talk about our efforts So we're here again to update you on the effort once more. So just to rehash, the goal of our overall plan is really to adapt to changing needs and ridership patterns within our community. It's also to address funding, operational and staffing challenges that we have. And Karen and Chris did a good job of kind of talking about those and framing those for part of this presentation as well. And also to modify our fares to kind of align with community agency priorities as our previous fare efforts were kind of outdated in some of the things that we were trying to do with our community.

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So we had a three-phase kind of community And that first phase which took engagement. place in May and June was really to get kind of a sense of what the priorities of our community We talked to about six hundred people. were out in the public for the first time in quite a long time. You can see customer service and service planning staff in this photo went to numerous locations, we put it online and we said, well, what does our community want? Do we want more service at night, on weekends, during the day? Where are you trying to go that we don't serve? We're trying to get all that input side stuff.

The second round which was in June and July of 2021 was service planning taking that information and creating some alternatives based on our data side stream and the input we heard from the community and saying, okay, well, here are some options. What do you like; what don't you like? And through that process we used our

interactive mapping online, we went out and talked to people again in the public face to face, through masks, but still face to face, and we did some inreach as well with our operators, supervision, to get input from them as they're our frontline, kind of eyes on the street.

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Round three really kicked off at the July board meeting with our presentation of kind of our service plan. So we got all that feedback on the alternatives that we were presenting and we created a plan. We said, okay, we're going to pick this option for this route, we're going to assign kind of these variables to it for our service and we're going to put it back out to the community and say, okay, what do you think about these options? So that kind of kicked off that effort, kicked off a forty-five-day public comment window for that. We had three public hearings during that process. One was a virtual public hearing which was conducted in this room, and we had two in-person public hearings as well, one in Niagara Falls at our Portage Road transit facility and one in this building on the first

floor.

We also did additional outreach, not part of kind of the public hearing part, but at Thruway Mall, University Station, downtown Niagara Falls. We participated in the Niagara Falls Housing Authority community outreach day as well, just getting more feedback, out there interacting with the public, answering questions, listening to people's concerns and trying to adapt to those as well.

So overall public hearings were attended by seventy-six individuals. We had thirty-three speakers there and had a hundred and nine total comments. This includes letters, e-mails, any comments that were left on our dynamic mapping website, in addition to the previous two rounds. The most frequent comments there were still the suburban job neighborhood access. There was a lot of support for the introduction of a new route, the 77, between Buffalo and Niagara Falls for faster service between those two communities. There were some concerns over the removal of Baynes-Richmond route, Route 7, and the desire

for increased service spans and better frequencies overall, which is something that we typically hear when we talk to the public.

went and heard from the public. Well, what are we doing in response to those questions and concerns? So the first is to look at frequencies on the 3 and the 20. With removing the 7, Baynes-Richmond, those are the routes that are parallel to the 7 route. What we really heard from people was, yes, I can walk to the 3, I can walk to the 20, but it's always crowded when I get there, so I prefer to take the 7, even if the 3 and the 20 are still convenient for me. So we're going to address that through better frequencies which was also a concern of the public.

We heard from people about the 14 and 16, which were extended to the Buffalo Niagara

Medical Campus for certain trips. That was a positive, they liked that addition, but right now it only operates Monday through Friday, so on the weekends, individuals who may work different

shifts or if they live in the Fruit Belt
neighborhood don't have access to these services
so we're going to add those into the plan
overall.

Additionally, we heard a lot about some of the shopping areas near the Niagara Falls

Outlets, particularly the Walmart near Military

Road. We currently go into that facility right

now. We weren't showing that in the plan. We

modified the plan to show us going right directly

in front of that Walmart as we do today to make

sure people still have access.

The other major consideration obviously with any fixed route change is the impact on the paratransit community, so we're addressing that by maintaining the current service area for one year after the implementation of any of these fixed route changes. So as opposed to being an overnight change that's very difficult for people to say, hey, come Monday you don't have service, we're kind of going to have a one-year process from the end of that implementation so people have time to get used to it, find other options,

think about where they need to go and where they might go with the new paratransit network, and the grandfathering in policy will still be discussed with our accessibility advisory committee in the near future.

Regarding the fare changes which were also part of our public hearings, there was overwhelming positive remarks for those. I think there's a lot of excitement around the thirty-one-day fare capping so we're recommending moving that forward. There's also positive feelings around the enhanced express surcharge and the addition of a premium fare. So I think all of those three components that we are adding to our fare policy were seen as positives from the community and our recommendation is to move those forward.

And, lastly, regarding Title Six. I mentioned that for all of these changes, whether they're fare modifications or bus network improvements, they have to go through their own individual Title Six which was presented to the board in July. But none of these modifications

that we're making to that plan change anything about that Title Six so we don't need to resubmit that. So we made the changes -- minor changes within the document that we added to the triennial, so they weren't major enough to have any impact on what was previously seen by the board, and they are included in the triennial Title Six as well.

So what are our next steps? Well, we're here today to seek approval to move forward with these changes because there's still a lot of work to be done on the planning side as well. Once we have approval of those changes, we'll move to finalize kind of our schedules and service based parameters. We'll put it into all of our data systems and we'll start operationalizing that.

We'll proceed with fare policy changes with our development team to say, yes, include these in the fare policy (inaudible) and move forward.

Continuing to engage the public is really important. Our timeline which is shown below starts in the winter of 2021. That's early December. That's only about ten weeks away. Sad

to say, but winter is coming. And when communicating changes to the public, there's a lot of effort has to be done between service planning, public affairs and communications, kind of using our website, rider alerts, new timetables, going out into the public and telling people what is changing. There's also information that needs to change at physical bus stops where we need some of the maintenance crew and those individuals to go out and actually put things on signs to tell people there are changes, to take down signs that may no longer be served, and also doing this targeted in-person outreach. If we have a phased plan like we're -- we're planning Niagara Falls changes, we do a lot of in-person outreach directly around those changes, makes it a little bit easier for our communications efforts to be able to focus on one area as opposed to the entire region where things may slip through the cracks.

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So that's kind of where we are. And I'll pause there for any potential questions relating to this effort. It's been a very long road to

get here with a lot of public outreach and a lot of input from the board and internal staff. I think it was a great process and we're really going to provide something to our community that will be better functioning than what is on the street today.

MS. MINKEL: Are there any questions from the board on the phone?

Is the phone still working?

Adam, you had a question? No?

11 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you, Rob.

12 MR. GEORGE: Thanks, Rob.

Our third discussion item this morning is
Erie Canal Harbor Station. So Cars on Main
Street has been addressing the facilities on the
mall where we operate our rail system. As part
of an earlier project, the Fountain Plaza Station
was reconstructed as part of that. And the
funding allocation that we received from the
state, we received a hundred million dollars to
upgrade our rail system, of that money we
allocated money towards the Erie Canal Harbor
Station. The area there at the Erie Canal Harbor

Station -- this is a photo over here now -- is being completed with the Cars on Main Street. So the entire infrastructure in the area adjacent to the station is currently under construction. It is scheduled for completion in December of this year. At that point in time, it will be opened back up to the public.

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Our goal was to continue that construction process so it will be seamless to the public and reconstruct the station immediately after the construction of the adjacent areas were completed. A couple principles that we wanted to move forward with this were transparency, lighting, security, obviously modernization, but we also wanted to create placemaking with our So what we're not doing -- the original design of the light rail system, for those of you who are familiar with it, created different architectural elements in different places for each one of the stations, whether they were on the surface or the underground station. wanted to maintain that approach, so we wanted each station to have its own identity. We also

wanted to try to reflect the neighborhood that station is in. And then, lastly, but probably most important from my perspective, create shelter for our customers who are waiting for the station.

So with that in mind, this is -- let me go back. I just wanted to show everybody what's there today to refresh your memory for those of you who haven't been down there. This is a beautiful station. It was very unique at the time. Half of it was demolished on each side a while back to accommodate some changes that we had down there with operations. So we have this left. It's very maintenance heavy relative to corrosion, and you can see it's just a unique thing, but a little bit dated.

So what we're proposing and what I wanted input from the board today on is this design right here. So this is a daytime rendering of the design that we're proposing to move forward in this area. You can see it's very light, it's very transparent, but also it's created in this back area back here, which you really can't

point, but this area is all enclosed with glass, so we do have the shelter for the folks. This is on the outbound platform. The inbound platform doesn't have as much shelter because the inbound platform at this point in time is identified as a station where most people are not waiting for departure. It's an arrival station primarily. But, it has the potential to put the closure in later if we do extend the line down.

This has been vetted with our citizens advisory committee. We did receive input from them. We're talking it to our accessibility advisory committee in the very near future next week to get input on accessibility issues.

I do want to remind the board one thing that's very important. We did receive a grandfather from the Federal Transit

Administration relative to our stations and platforms. If we were to build a brand-new station, we would have to put a high-level boarding platform for the entire level of four cars. So that would create a high-level platform two hundred and seventy foot long on Main Street,

which is just not acceptable.

So these designs, even though this looks new, it utilizes the existing platform, the existing ramps, the existing stairs and the existing foundations. So basically what we're doing is we're peeling the top off, we're leaving all the access areas where people come and get on the train and we're putting a new top on it. So it is essentially a rehabilitation, although it's a very aggressive rehabilitation. But we are maintaining all of the existing accessibility options for the station to maintain within compliance of the federal requirements.

We were also able to provide a nighttime rendering of the station so you can see what it's like. There's going to be a lot of use of light. You can also see the use of the stone. The stone was brought in by our architectural team, once again so that when you get off of the train or you're in this area, you get the feel of the cobblestone area. You understand the context of the area that you're in.

So we wanted to create these renderings and

provide those to the board today and look to see if there's any feedback that you may have. They're also in your books, so if you don't want to provide us feedback today, certainly provide us whatever feedback you have. We're advancing the design as we speak, and we're anticipating moving into construction in the spring so once again we have that seamless approach to being able to not essentially turn the project over to the public and then close it again for station design. We wanted to keep the construction rolling and then we will have a major unveiling with all the improvements done for the Cars on Main Street project along with the station completion.

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The only other point I really wanted to make here today is this is -- you'll see by the title, Erie Canal Harbor Station. We have historically been requested a number of times to change the name of the station. So we have advanced it -- you can't really see it in the rendering. But, this is being advanced at this point in time as the Canalside Station to coincide with all of

the -- like I said, the familiarity with

Canalside and essentially the branding that's

gone on down there. And it's really referred to

as the Canalside area.

So we want to change the name when we roll out the new station from Erie Canal Harbor to Canalside. So if there's any comments or questions, I'd be pleased to try to answer them. And, again, the renderings are provided for you. We have detailed drawings at the level that the design is today, so we can provide you with more detail if there's any questions or any desire for more information.

14 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Great.

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15 MS. MINKEL: Are there any questions?

16 Great. Thank you.

17 MR. GEORGE: It's quite an improvement.

18 CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Yes, it is.

19 MR. GEORGE: If I could briefly go over my report.

So on our initiatives report, I had a couple of

21 items I wanted to go over with the board today.

22 We talked about service and system development on

the Amherst-Buffalo light rail extension. As we

talked to you earlier, the FTA has agreed to move in as the lead agency on the NEPA process. A notice of intent was issued this summer in August to indicate they're moving forward with the project. That triggered a public hearing -- or, excuse me. That triggered a public scoping meeting, which was held on September 15th. Two public scoping meetings.

So the public scoping process is now open, and we'll be receiving comments through the early part of October on the public scoping for that.

So we have had comments. We had participation in the public scoping meeting as well as we've received written comments and e-mails, et cetera. So that process is ongoing. We will close the public scoping in October and then we move forward into the environmental review of that project for development of the draft environmental impact statement. So the project is moving forward through the federal process and we're pleased about that.

A couple other things on the report. DL and W. We talked today a lot about the

DL and W development on the second floor. We're pleased to say that we're nearing completion of the phase one construction, which we anticipate being completed at the end of this year. later this week we will be having the bid opening for the phase two, which is the station design So that's the lower level, building off the station, all of the amenities as well as penetration to the upper level. The penetration is already in place, and we'll be building the staircases, the elevators, as well as the tower on South Park Avenue that you saw in the renderings. So those bids are being opened this week. We anticipate starting construction of that project in the spring as we get successful bidders, and we believe we will.

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I talked about Erie Canal Harbor Station.

And then the last thing is the fare collection project. We did talk about the fare capping and Rob referenced that in the meeting, so we believe we'll be moving forward with the fare capping.

That was really widely received as a positive.

We're still moving forward with that project. We

still have challenges with it, but we're anticipating as we get towards the end of this year, we'll be nearing completion of the project and be able to deliver that.

If there's any questions on the initiatives, I would be glad to try to answer those.

Okay. I won't go over any metrics today, but I did want to go through our CAC and AAC reports. We had a citizens advisory committee on July 22nd. We did talk about the bus networks improvements that were presented here today as part of our outreach. We did receive comments about Niagara County service being Lockport and Niagara Falls as well as the changes in Niagara Falls. We had some comments about eliminating the portion of the 32 that deviates to Buff State and the advantages and disadvantages of that.

We also talked at length about bus stop
balancing and we -- we're actually doing that in
earnest now on Routes 2, 4 and 22. It's been a
great experience for us. It's been challenging.
Interesting comments when we had our public
hearings relative to the service changes. I'm

comfortable in saying that over fifty percent of the comments we've heard relative to the service changes were not about service changes. They were about bus stop balancing. So the public is engaged in that, and that's only on three routes that we're moving forward at this point. We've also learned some lessons on that and we'll be improving our process as we move forward. But that is moving forward. And there was some comments that came back about bus stop IDs which we will address.

Erie Canal Harbor Station. We got comments from the board on that. And then we talked about some emerging agenda items, just some stuff about -- we read some stuff about street cars and some of our citizens advisory members were wondering where did that come from and are we keeping our elected officials informed on what we are actually doing, so we received a little bit of information on that. And then just talked again about masks and COVID and how we do operate in that environment. Our next meeting is tonight at five-thirty. Anyone who is willing -- or,

interested in participating, you're certainly all welcome.

And then lastly today, our accessibility advisory committee was held on August 26th, and we talked about the new fare system and working with the vendor on some of the issues relative to the fare boxes, the bus stop balancing again, and talked about some of the -- which stops should remain and consolidated and considerations for people with accessibility concerns.

We talked about the bus network improvements, and again about the paratransit service area and how that will be impacted and how we're going to be advancing that. And just as a note, Rob had mentioned in the presentation that we will be going to the AAC with a policy that we'll be bringing back to the board once we receive comments from them on how we will physically grandfather and advance the service for the paratransit community in the future. So we'll be developing that policy in conjunction with the AAC and then we'll bring that back to the board for your information.

And we also talked about the paratransit customer satisfaction survey. They're excited to hear information on that. And then just some suggestions that we received from them is about how we communicate, and we did ask the committee again to provide us with their suggestions on just our methods for communicating. And then we talked a little bit about bus stop elimination and how that impacts those folks as well as the impacts to the PAL service which as I said we'll be taking to that committee next week when we meet with them on September 30th, which is our next meeting at two-thirty.

So if there's any questions on those, I'd be glad to answer them; otherwise, that's the end of our report for today.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Pretty busy time, huh?

18 MR. GEORGE: Yes, it is. I think for everybody that

works in this organization, it's a very busy

time, and Metro is no different. Thank you all.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Thank you very much, Tom.

22 MR. GEORGE: Yep.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: And now we have the aviation

committee report from Bill.

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MR. VANECEK: Yes. Thank you and welcome everybody. A couple of quick things that I want to tie into that I heard earlier. I know, Karen, you've been having struggles trying to hire people at the airport. Different story when it comes to the firefighters. We actually had four hundred applicants that took the written test for three positions. One hundred and fifty passed the test and so now we're going to send them to their physical, and whoever tests out the best, we'll have three new firefighters very, very shortly. So a little bit different -- not a problem to have for us.

I also wanted to touch base. We did have a conversation yesterday with FAA regarding our Title Six plan. They went through a full review of it and I'm very pleased to say they only found two minor issues with the plan as written. Kudos go out to Mary Perla for that. She's the one who's been doing that over the years, and she's very diligent and very specific in our plan so we were very happy to get through that.

So next I just want to give a quick update on some of the projects at the airport and where The first one is our terminal they stand. enhancement project. Right now the biggest push is to get those last two carousels up and running, hopefully sooner rather than later. They do have an end date of really basically December 30th, but right now they're telling us that they are trending ahead of that schedule. So I don't want to commit to anything, but right now it looks like they're going to be able to make up some time. It seems to be going very well. Part of it is the materials and the parts that are coming in and how they're coming in, but right now it looks like they're on a pretty good So with any luck, you know, we'll have schedule. those sooner rather than later.

Our subsurface engineered wetlands is basically complete at this point. We did do the final cover on the engineered wetlands. This is what will help us treat our glycol runoff at the airport. And of course Kim's --

MS. MINKEL: My baby.

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MR. VANECEK: -- star project. Right. Absolutely.

And right now it looks like it will be on schedule and will be on budget for us, so we're in pretty good shape there.

With respect to the Buell Avenue parking lot, it's just ongoing. It should be done by -- project closeout by March of 2022. It doesn't look like we're encountering really any issues, unless, John --

MR. SCHAEFER: No.

MR. VANECEK: -- you have any thoughts on that.

And then the next big, major project we're going to have is our main runway. So 5-23 is the eighty-eight hundred foot runway at the airport. It really is our aorta, if you want to call it that, for the airport, and it has been a long, long time since we have had a major rehabilitation of that runway. So we are finding certain things that are going to unfortunately I think drive up some of the costs of what a normal overlay would be. And this is going to be a -- really a long-term project once we hit the ground running. We would anticipate after design that

we wouldn't close this out until probably somewhere in 2025 is what I'm hearing. We'll have to do it in phases, so we'll be, you know, we'll be very diligent about how we approach that.

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Also, we'll have to get out some public input on traffic patterns at the airport because people will be affected negatively by that for It's only a temporary situation. noise. We went through that way back when I started probably in '99 or 2000. And it's the Amherst folks that will be most impacted by the 14-30 route to primary runway that will be used for a significant period of time. When we did that before, we were able to give some soundproofing to homes around the Cheektowaga area, but unfortunately because the situation is only a temporary condition, we cannot offer that to the residents of the Amherst area that will be affected by this.

And then we are also going to be starting a rehabilitation of our taxiway D runway up at Niagara Falls, and so we're in the process now of

kind of figuring out what we're going to do
because we may have an alternative design to
that. Rather than just repaving it, FAA is
asking us to look at a reconfiguration of that
runway to eliminate what they call hotspots at
the airport. This is where aircraft that are
taxiing to runways and taxiways have an issue to
either miss their turns, et cetera, so that's yet
to be determined what the final design on that
will be.

So then -- let's see. What do I have next here? So our enplanement numbers. As you can tell, we're having huge swings now. Of course that's because we were so far down below. But, it is encouraging to see what's happening with the trend here. Again, right now we still don't have the Canadian component of this for our enplanement numbers, so to be up in these levels now is pretty encouraging and we think that that's actually going to continue here on the path forward.

So what else did I want to say here? So just a couple of thoughts here. So we had --

when we look at what these numbers represent, when we're looking forward to flights in 2021, if I go through September, October, November and December, it's all going up on daily flights per day. So it's -- it will be fifty-four flights per day in September, fifty-nine in October, sixty in November and sixty-one in December. So we're trending in the right part of the time. And that's typically a pretty soft time of the year, other than the Thanksgiving holiday break, so this is very -- I think very, very encouraging here.

Our two big players in the game are

Southwest, they're carrying thirty-four percent
of our traffic right now, and American Airlines
is carrying twenty-five percent of our traffic,
so that's greater than fifty percent. The other
airlines are still trying to rationalize their
routes and I think we'll see some -- as we get
towards the summer months of next year, I think
we'll see some increases in the flights from
those other carriers.

With respect to Niagara Falls, again, Spirit

Airlines has not been flying since the pandemic has started, but we have heard from them that they are -- that they've indicated that they will resume flights out of NFIA probably late spring or early summer next year. Those are tentatively in the schedule right now. I did have an opportunity to talk to the highest planning person out in Schenectady. He was at a conference that I was attending. He really loves Buffalo and Niagara Falls. They want to be in the region, but they're -- you know, he's going to bring them back. And they're going to start with Myrtle Beach and then hopefully we'll get some others, maybe a Fort Lauderdale along the way as well. Let's see. And just for your own information, Allegiant right now is flying and they are not a seven day a week operation, but they are -- on a monthly basis, they're doing five Punta Gorda flights, nine to Tampa/Saint Petersburg and then two to Sanford and the Orlando area.

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Then over here you can see kind of what's been happening over the trends of the year. And

so you can tell -- this is about -- this is all airports in the United States combined and how their checkpoint throughput is going. You can see how we're mirroring that down here. And it's no big surprise that we see in the June, July, August area, that's the summer. And then as anticipated, schools open up, flights start to go down and that's pretty normal for us no matter what year it is whether or not we're higher or lower on the (inaudible).

And, lastly, if I could, I know this is (inaudible). I did see an interesting article that came out. You probably all saw it, but just so you do know, the U.S. is going to be lifting pandemic travel restrictions for international travel to the United States and they expect that to happen in November. So we're very encouraged by that. Hopefully that will get us to bigger and better things as we go forward.

So are there any questions? Mr. Perry?

COMMISSIONER PERRY: So what about Canadians coming this way?

MR. VANECEK: I'm talking about European travel right

now. So Canadians coming this way are still not allowed. This does not address that is my understanding.

MS. MINKEL: For land crossing --

MR. VANECEK: Because those are land crossings. But, they're going to be -- they're going to halt the eighteen-month ban on thirty-three countries that have not been able to fly here so we'll at least have those opportunities. Now, does it affect Buffalo directly? Probably indirectly, because we don't have nonstop flights from Europe. But, if you're flying to New York City and you're coming up to see the falls, et cetera, now we have that tap at least starting to open, and that should be, you know, a big benefit for the communities here.

COMMISSIONER PERRY: But Canadians can come in through commercial airline, helicopter, hang glider, parachuting --

MR. VANECEK: Correct. They can fly over the border; they can't go over the ground border.

22 COMMISSIONER PERSICO: Any way but driving.

23 MR. VANECEK: Any way but driving, correct.

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   MR. PERRY: So there was a lot of calls for -- a lot
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       of times for the Canadians to open the border,
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        like all these big, vociferous calls, but now
       we're not opening our border the other way.
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   MR. VANECEK:
                  Yeah.
                         Yeah.
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    COMMISSIONER PERRY: Can you explain that?
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   MR. VANECEK:
                  If I could pick up the phone and call
       the President directly, I'd be happy to have that
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       discussion with him --
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   MR. PERRY:
                I'm just curious.
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   MR. VANECEK:
                  -- but, unfortunately, you know, that's
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       beyond our abilities to influence that.
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       we can talk about it, but, you know, right now
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       they're still holding I think the latest number
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       is January -- mid January before that will
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       happen, so we'll have to see how that all works
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       out.
    COMMISSIONER PERRY: Yes, I know we can't control it.
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       I was just curious because I've been struggling
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       for a while to think of a logical explanation,
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23 MR. VANECEK: And that's it. Unless there are any

Thank you, Bill.

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to me.

but I haven't figured it out. Maybe it will come

1 other questions?

2 Thank you very much.

CHAIR SISTER ROCHE: Surprisingly, that concludes our committee meetings for this morning, and so we will begin again with the board meeting promptly at twelve-thirty. Thank you all for your attendance and for all of your help.

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Sue Ann Simonin Court Reporting

1 STATE OF NEW YORK) SS: 2 3 COUNTY OF NIAGARA) 4 I, Valerie A. Rosati, a Notary Public in and 5 for the State of New York, County of Niagara, DO 6 HEREBY CERTIFY that the above transcript of a 7 video recording was taken down by me in a 8 9 verbatim manner by means of Machine Shorthand, and that the transcript was then reduced into 10 writing under my direction. 11 12 I further CERTIFY that the above-described transcript constitutes a true and accurate and 13 14 complete transcript of the video recording. 15 16 ala A 17 VALERIE A. ROSATI, Notary Public. 18 19 20 21

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