FACTORS IMPACTING THE AUTHORITY'S FUTURE

Surface Transportation

NFTA-Metro serves the public transportation needs of Erie and Niagara Counties with the support of operating assistance provided by our federal, state, and local government partners as well as revenues generated from passenger fares and advertising. As of March 31, 2026, NFTA-Metro operates 47 bus routes, with 3,852 bus stops and 325 bus shelters, a paratransit system, a 6.4 mile light rail system in the City of Buffalo, and 1 microtransit service in the City of Buffalo. Federal, state, and local operating assistance provides approximately 85 percent of all NFTA-Metro operating revenues and assistance. Passenger fares and advertising make up approximately 15 percent. Federal and state operating assistance is provided based on annual budget appropriation and apportionment amounts. Local operating assistance is primarily based on sales tax revenues in Erie County and mortgages recorded in both Erie and Niagara Counties.

As part of the Authority's 2023-2033 Roadmap, Metro is focused on revenue generation, cost control, increasing organizational liquidity, technological improvements, and continuing to engage with the public regularly. These initiatives are outlined in NFTA-Metro's annual Transit Development Plan (TDP). The 2026 TDP has a long list of recently completed projects that impact the Authority's Roadmap priorities including full implementation of an upgraded fare collection system, extension of NFTA-Metro Rail into the former DL&W trainshed, and continued progress on NFTA-Metro Rail extension in the Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda corridor.

NFTA-Metro's fare collection system – MetGo – was implemented in November 2023. The system provided opportunities for passengers to obtain the best value while enjoying modern payment methods, reduced fare evasion and assisted in ridership improvement. By using MetGo, NFTA-Metro customers never pay more than $5 per day, the price of a day pass or less than 3 trips. Customers can also reload fare cards with credit, debit, online payment, or by using smart phone applications. The MetGo system also implemented fare gates in underground NFTA-Metro Rail stations for the first time.

In 2019, the Authority started construction on an extension of NFTA-Metro Rail revenue service into the former DL&W trainshed which is owned by the Authority. On December 8, 2025, the Authority opened a new Metro Rail Station on the first floor and portions of the second floor of the facility. In April 2022, New York State announced an appropriation of $30 million to rehabilitate the core and shell of the trainshed in order to facilitate additional activation and enhancements to the trainshed. Construction of those improvements is currently underway and includes a pedestrian bridge from the second floor of the trainshed into the adjacent KeyBank Center, improvements to the second floor City View deck to allow for events with a capacity of up to 3,000 visitors, and a truck elevator to service second floor events. The City View deck is scheduled to open in September 2026 and the pedestrian bridge is expected to connect customers to KeyBank Center by Spring 2027.

In February 2018, the Authority started the environmental review process for extending Metro Rail from its current terminus at the University Station along the preferred Niagara Falls Boulevard route alternative through the University at Buffalo North Campus in the Town of Amherst as approved by the Authority Board of Commissioners and recommended by our Alternatives Analysis Study. The Buffalo-Amherst-Tonawanda Metro Rail Corridor contains 20 percent of all regional jobs and more than 10 percent of all regional residents. The proposed project would more than double ridership, link all three University at Buffalo Campuses with a one-seat Metro Rail ride, provide a seamless connection between the region's largest concentration of housing to significant employment, health care, education, and recreation destinations, and generate billions in direct, indirect, and induced economic impact throughout the Corridor. The Authority has $31 million under contract with New York State Department of Transportation to complete the environmental process for the project, project development, and some preliminary engineering.

On February 20, 2026, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published the Notice of Availability of a combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD) and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Project in the Federal Register. As part of the ROD, FTA determined that the Federal requirements for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) were satisfied, thereby memorializing FTA's review of the Project's No Build and Build Alternatives. In April 2026, the Authority's Board of Commissioners approved the findings and mitigation measures for the project in accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act. With the environmental reviews completed, NFTA-Metro has continued preliminary engineering with the intent to enter FTA's Capital Investment Grant (CIG) process in the coming months.

Aviation

The NFTA serves the commercial aviation system of Erie and Niagara Counties by operating BNIA and NFIA. Combined, both facilities have served approximately 5 million passengers per year. Additionally, the airports have been a convenient and less costly option for Southern Ontario travelers. Canadian passenger traffic has been estimated at 29 percent of all traffic at BNIA and up to 65 percent of NFIA passenger traffic. However, closures of the border, such as those experienced during the coronavirus pandemic in 2021 and 2022, have a significant negative impact on Canadian enplanement. Also, fluctuations in the exchange rate of the Canadian dollar and geopolitics have an impact on enplanements. During 2026, approximately 5.2 million passengers were served by the two airports.

Over the past 5 years the NFTA has completed rehabilitation of the main runway and taxiway at BNIA. All three phases cost approximately $100 million with a significant portion of the funding coming from the Federal Aviation Administration. The Authority has three large capital projects planned for the completion in the next few years, which include the HVAC system replacement at BNIA for approximately $76 million, replacement of Authority-owned passenger boarding bridges at BNIA at approximately $17 million, and rehabilitation of the general aviation apron and connecting taxiways at approximately $28 million.