



Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

# ROADMAP

2023 - 2033

# Message from the Executive Director

November 2022

Dear Reader,

I am thrilled to present Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority's (NFTA) Roadmap 2023-2033, our agency's strategic plan. This plan is the culmination of many hours of work and passionate discussion with people inside and outside of our organization to identify our agency's priorities and outline how they can be accomplished.

The past two years have been extremely challenging for transit agencies and airports across the U.S., and the NFTA is no exception. Our ridership and our revenue plummeted with the arrival of COVID-19. But, in the face of these challenges, our employees showed a level of dedication, loyalty and flexibility that is truly admirable. As we move beyond the pandemic, the values laid out in this strategic plan will guide every aspect of our work.

This strategic plan will lead the NFTA into the next decade. The goals and initiatives will help us keep focused on what's most important to our customers. The metrics will keep us accountable. The NFTA has already started to work towards meeting the goals of this plan with projects such as the purchase of new electric buses, building a new light rail station at the DL&W Terminal and completing the Buffalo Airport Terminal Enhancement Project just to name a few. In the months and years to come, our work will focus on the goals and tasks outlined here. This plan serves not only as a roadmap to point us in the direction we are going, but also as a tool of accountability and transparency. Paired with our budget, which includes a capital improvement plan, this presents a long-term strategic vision for the NFTA as it helps to move Western New York forward.

Sincerely,



Kimberley A. Minkel  
Executive Director



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## NFTA by the Numbers

Our 1,600 dedicated employees keep Western New York moving. We are all proud to deliver outstanding public transportation on the ground and in the air.



The Buffalo and Niagara Falls International Airports generate a combined \$1.7 billion dollars yearly to our community.



NFTA-Metro has a fleet of 294 Buses with:

- 47 Bus Routes
- 3,900 Bus Stops
- 6.4 Miles Light Rail System



## Who We Are



The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) is a New York State public-benefit corporation responsible for the public transportation oversight of Erie and Niagara counties in the state of New York.

There are three business centers that operate as the NFTA organization: Surface Transportation, which handles public transit throughout Erie and Niagara counties, Aviation, which handles air related business at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport and Niagara Falls International Airport, and Property and Facilities, which manages properties that are owned and/or operated by the NFTA.

The Surface Transportation Business Unit is responsible for all ground-based transportation services operated and provided by the NFTA. Such services include: public fixed-route bus and rail routes, paratransit and other non-traditional transit services, and intercity bus terminals in Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Surface Transportation units include Metro (fixed-route and rail), Service Planning, Special Services (Paratransit and MetroLink), Transportation Centers, and Customer Service.

The Aviation Group serves as a catalyst for economic growth by maintaining cost effective, customer oriented, and efficient airports to attract and retain comprehensive and competitive air transportation services. The Aviation Group is responsible for the safe, efficient, customer-friendly operation of the

NFTA's two commercial passenger service airports. The Buffalo Airport has its own Airport Rescue & Firefighting Department (ARFF) and the Niagara Falls Airport relies on a joint use agreement with the Niagara Falls Air Force Base to provide these services.

Property and Facilities is responsible for property management, real estate marketing, new/renewal real estate agreements, tenant rental rates, land planning and operating & capital income/expenditures for NFTA non-public buildings, real estate and former rail lines. Property and Facilities provides maintenance services and capital planning for the transportation centers, Operation Control Center, 485 Cayuga, 247 Cayuga, 1404 Main Street and the public areas of the light rail above ground and below ground stations.

Additionally, the agency is supported by a Transit Authority Police Department (TAPD) with two divisions, one to support Metro operations and the other to support Aviation. The Metro TAPD officers perform patrol duties, such as traffic control and enforcement, taking accident and crime reports, making arrests for crimes and warrants, and patrolling all of Metro's rail system, bus routes and NFTA properties. The primary requirement of the Transit Police Airport Division is the rapid response to the Security Checkpoint in the event of a security breach or prohibited items being brought through. Officers routinely respond to the checkpoint for found weapons, drugs and other hazardous items.

# Introduction

Organizations of all types use strategic plans to keep themselves “on track” as they work to achieve their many goals. A strategic plan makes an organization more efficient by directing its resources towards activities that are essential to achieving its goals. It also makes an organization more effective by better delivering the product that it was designed to deliver.

The strategic plan sets out the goals that will help guide our priorities during the upcoming budget process and over the course of the next ten years. It also sets forth the metrics by which we will measure our progress. Laid out in the plan are the seven core values along with 20 strategic priorities. These priorities are supported by 27 key objectives that are then sustained by 71 initiatives created by individual divisions working together in a seamless

manner. These initiatives, key objectives, strategic priorities and core values will help the NFTA realize its vision “to provide safe, efficient, professional, and sustainable transportation services that enhance the quality of life throughout the Buffalo Niagara region.”

In 2012, the Authority adopted a “Blueprint for the Future” to help the agency navigate significant budget deficits and operational challenges. The five values of that plan focused on People, Economic Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, Integrate Quality and Community Partner. These values continue and have been expanded in the attached plan. Most of the deliverables of this previous plan were accomplished through the focused hard work of a dedicated workforce of almost 1,600 transit and airport professionals.



## Vision

*A strategic plan's Vision Statement is a brief description of the future that broadly explains what an organization is trying to become. It describes a future condition in which the organization has achieved its objectives.*

**The NFTA is firmly committed to providing safe, efficient, professional, and sustainable transportation services that enhance the quality of life throughout the Buffalo Niagara region.**

## Mission

*The Mission Statement of a strategic plan is a concise summary of the purpose of an organization and how it intends to realize its vision. It also helps everyone understand what would not be happening if the agency did not exist. The following mission statement confirms the NFTA's main focus is on high-quality transportation services.*

**The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority is a multi-modal entity encompassing a skilled and dedicated workforce. We are firmly committed to providing safe, efficient, professional and sustainable transportation services that enhance the quality of life throughout the Buffalo Niagara region in a manner consistent with the needs of our community.**



### Aviation

Serves as a catalyst for economic growth by maintaining cost effective, customer oriented, efficient airports to attract and retain comprehensive and competitive air transportation services.



### Property

Manage and develop the NFTA-owned real property to optimize the generation of self-supporting discretionary revenue to help support our transportation centers while fostering economic growth.



### Surface

Enhance the quality of life of residents and visitors by providing the highest level of safe, clean, affordable, responsive, and reliable transportation through a coordinated and convenient bus and rail system.



### Support Services

Proactively provide high quality, coordinated, innovative, technological, cost-effective support service solutions for our internal and external stakeholders.

# Core Values

Within the framework of the strategic plan, values are clear principles that guide the allocation of resources and establish how staff meets the agency's needs. The NFTA's Values will inform planning work throughout the agency, including capital project prioritization, service delivery and budgeting. Additionally, the Values outline how agency staff will work together to achieve the agency's strategic goals.

The agency has identified seven key Values to support via an additional seven key initiatives that have accompanying actions and measures to ensure that these Values are supported.

## 1. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The NFTA plays a vital role in the Western New York community. An inclusive work environment that supports and fosters a diverse empowered workforce and a supplier base which reflects our region and helps enhance and promote operational effectiveness and our impact on the community.



## 2. Economic Vitality

The NFTA is committed to operating sustainable business operations that include financial efficiency and revenue maximization. To ensure this, the authority is committed to operating a financially stable operation that is resilient during varied economic cycles. Additionally, financial investments that provide real economic spin off into the surrounding area, as a catalyst for growth.

## 3. Engaged Workforce

We value our employees. We will continue to invest, develop and empower a workforce that embraces the NFTA values and helps move the region forward.



## Core Values



### 4. **Environmental Stewardship**

We are committed to being a leader in sustainability. We are committed to improving air quality, reducing emissions that impact climate change, improve water quality and promoting net zero impact to the environment as we complete energy efficient projects, eliminate waste and embrace technology to reduce the environmental footprint in Western New York.



### 5. **Quality – Customer Experience**

We strive to provide the best customer experience. This includes a timely responsiveness to issues and concerns while ensuring overall operational excellence for the Western New York community.



### 6. **Safety and Security**

The NFTA maintains the highest level of safety and security for our workers, passengers and the general public.

### 7. **Trust, Transparency, and Integrity**

Integrity stands at the top of the NFTA's agenda, and we are committed to strong ethical standards. We follow strict ethical standards for our board of commissioners and all NFTA employees. Employing efficient and effective management practices, the agency is a good steward of public funds. We are an organization that is open and transparent with the highest standards of accountability. Our meetings and our website contain timely information to share with the public in advance of public board and committee meetings.

## Past Accomplishments

Around the block or around the world, the NFTA helps moves people in Western New York. The NFTA, over the past 10 years, has worked under a “Blueprint for the Future” to keep Western New York moving. Under this plan much was accomplished including the following:

- Received J.D. Power Award for the Buffalo Airport ranking #1 in North America for Customer Satisfaction
- 90% Customer Satisfaction of Metro Services
- Completion of a Federal Aviation Administration approved Master Plan for the Buffalo Niagara International Airport
- Expansion of airport parking capacity at the Buffalo Airport by adding 1,000 space long term parking lot extension
- Added a new airport passenger lounge, “The Club” at the Buffalo Airport
- Built a new Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting facility at the Buffalo Airport
- Created both a Veterans lounge and a Nursing lounge at the Buffalo Airport
- Added significant new air service markets and new air service carriers including Frontier Airlines, Allegiant, Spirit, Sun Country and Vacation Express
- Expansion of the baggage claim area and improved security at the Buffalo Airport by completing the Terminal Enhancement Project
- Completed an Aviation Strategic Plan for the Niagara Falls International Airport and the Buffalo Niagara International Airport
- Completion of a Federal Aviation Administration approved Master Plan for the Niagara Falls International Airport
- Received the Transportation Security Administration Gold Standard for Safety and Security
- Transferred the waterfront properties to NYS Parks Department and Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation
- Incorporated Allen Street Station into University at Buffalo Medical School
- Converted bus fleet at Frontier Facility to CNG vehicles, reducing emissions while providing significant financial savings to operations
- Rebuilt 27 rail cars to extend their useful life another 20 years
- APTA Gold Award Safety Security of the Metro Light Rail
- Commissioned the Freedom Wall at Cold Spring Garage and other public art initiatives
- Implementation of a Strategic Diversity Plan
- Completion of a Comprehensive Transit Oriented Development Plan
- Completed State Environmental Quality Review and Federal Alternative Analysis for the Amherst Light Rail Transit Extension
- Expanded storage capacity for wetland treatment at the Buffalo Airport
- Completed Rails for Trails for both the City of Buffalo and the City of Tonawanda

# Strategic Priorities

*The new strategic goals were informed by ongoing and recently completed agency planning efforts and the Strengths/Weakness/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted during the summer of 2022. Each of the seven new goals are in line with our values and will leverage the agency’s resources and opportunities in order to address the needs, challenges and opportunities the agency will face in the coming years.*

This plan identifies steps the NFTA will take to improve its operations and strengthen the NFTA’s brand including developing strategic key partnerships and investing in the Authority’s human and physical capital.

**Ensure Financial Stability and Resiliency**



**Focus on the Customer Experience**



**Social Responsibility**



**High Performing Workforce**



**Safe and Secure Operations**



**Foster Economic Development**



**Trust, Transparency and Integrity**



# Strategic Priorities

## 1. Ensure Financial Stability and Resiliency

- Maintain and increase long-term stable funding sources
- Build a financially sustainable system
- Identify revenue generating opportunities and efficiencies



### *Action Items*

- Work with agency partners to secure dedicated rail and aviation operating and capital funding
- Identify capital needs 5-10 years out
- Work with community partners and developers on Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

# 1. Ensure Financial Stability and Resiliency

Measures/Deliverables	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (3-7 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Dedicated Rail Operating Assistance	☑	☑	☑
Scale Metro Service to match available funding		☑	
Maintain investment grade bond rating	☑	☑	☑
Maintain >75% funding for self-insurance	☑	☑	☑
Issue RFP for joint development at NFTA-Metro Rail Stations	☑		
Study structured parking at BNIA to increase parking revenue	☑		
Develop and maintain 10-year capital plan based on the State of Good Repair and Transit Asset Management Plan	☑		☑
Replace legacy business center solutions with enterprise solutions across business centers	☑	☑	☑

# Strategic Priorities

## 2. Focus on the Customer Experience

- Focus on all aspects of the customers' journey and experience in the system (Direct and Indirect Service)



### *Action Items*

- Continuously improve customer satisfaction
- Improve reliability of service and operations
- Improve aesthetics and cleanliness of facilities/vehicles
- Reduce boarding and travel time (Metro & Aviation)
- Improve customer wayfinding
- Resolve customer complaints through integrated review and standardized response
- Invest in technology

## 2. Focus on the Customer Experience

Measures/Deliverables	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (3-7 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Refine KPIs - Key Metro Performance Indicators and develop Key Aviation Performance Indicators	☑		
Improved website design and functionality	☑		
Customer satisfaction - year over year improvements	☑	☑	☑
Implement an account-based fare collection system with future open payment capabilities	☑		
Enhance PAL reservations/customer support systems to improve reliability and support new products and services	☑		
Improve on-time baggage delivery	☑	☑	☑
Install parking way finding at BNIA		☑	
Implement new service delivery models to improve customer experience and respond to customer needs		☑	

# Strategic Priorities

## 3. Social Responsibility

- Environmental stewardship - protect air, water, land
- Sustainable operations - net zero emissions
- Community engagement



### *Action Items*

- Promote land use and transportation planning that encourages transit
- Integration of sustainability in planning, moving towards net zero environmental impact
- Enhance perception of the NFTA through community immersion



### 3. Social Responsibility

Measures/Deliverables	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (3-7 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Move to Zero Emission Fleet Purchases by 2035			☑
Develop Energy Management Plan	☑		
Develop and adopt formal Sustainability Plan		☑	
Study the use of gray water for the Buffalo Airport	☑		
Complete energy needs study at BNIA to incorporate more EV and ground support equipment capacity	☑		
Increase Urban Area Public Transit Mode Share	☑	☑	☑
Increase multimode use of existing transit stations and Park and Ride locations through improved facilities and partnerships	☑	☑	☑
Develop new Mobility Hubs through collaboration with alternative mode providers and municipalities	☑	☑	☑
Increase Corporate Pass and CRAM programs	☑	☑	☑
Produce Annual NFTA Community Engagement Report	☑	☑	☑
Form/enhance relationships with new/existing charitable organizations	☑	☑	☑
Establish volunteer program to give all employees the opportunity to get involved with our community outreach programs	☑		

# Strategic Priorities

## 4. High Performing Workforce

- Motivated workforce committed to the Mission
- Inclusive workforce that fosters diversity and equity
- Solid culture with strong ethics



### *Action Items*

- Invest in our workforce
- Cultivate inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and promotes equity
- Identify pipeline for career advancement opportunities within the Authority

## 4. High Performing Workforce

Measures/Deliverables	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (3-7 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Provide new professional development opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Refresh salary study every three years		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Apprenticeship program in place for trades	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Update NFTA Diversity and Inclusion Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Refresh Succession Plan every 2 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Implement speed hiring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Revise Mentorship program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Expand Internship program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Develop an improved work schedule plan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Develop an employee engagement program		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Restore Service Awards and award high performers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Build leadership and promote professional skills through training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintain partnership with unionized labor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

# Strategic Priorities

## 5. Safe and Secure Operations

- Improve sense of safety and security
- Reduce Authority accidents and incidents in the system
- Focus on cyber threats



### *Action Items*

- Crime prevention through environmental design
- Expansion of Safety Management System (SMS)
- Focused investment in technology

## 5. Safe and Secure Operations

Measures/Deliverables	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (3-7 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Complete Safety Security Study of Transit Stations	☑		
Police Accreditation	☑		
Improved lighting at facilities		☑	
Implement Site Hardening Plans in Capital Budget		☑	
Establish a TAPD Station at BNIA Pre-Security	☑		
Develop SMS for Aviation		☑	
Continue year over year improvement in safety performance	☑	☑	☑
Implement a Learning Management System to track and schedule training		☑	
Complete multi-factor authentication	☑		
Maintain Cyber Liability Insurance \$5M per occurrence	☑	☑	☑
Complete Cyber Security Response Plan by 2023	☑		

# Strategic Priorities

## 6. Foster Economic Development

- Air Service Development - expand international service and targeted domestic service
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)/Joint Development
- Light Rail Expansion
- Development of the DL&W terminal



### *Action Items*

- Update the Aviation Strategic Plan
- Develop NFTA Property Master Plan
- Implement the Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan
- Secure funding and support for the Amherst Light Rail Expansion
- Secure funding and support for the Bailey Avenue BRT

## 6. Foster Economic Development

Measures/Deliverables	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (3-7 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Update Aviation Strategic Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Update BNIA Master Plan Components	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Update NFIA Master Plan Components		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
NFTA Property Master Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Complete Phase 2 TOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
LaSalle Station Redevelopment		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Establish the non-federal Share of LRT Extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Light Rail Expansion			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DL&W Station	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
DL&W Trainshed Activation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
RFP Bailey BRT Design and Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Bailey Avenue BRT		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

# Strategic Priorities

## 7. Trust, Transparency, and Integrity

- Enhance transparency with timely information
- Engage key stakeholders
- Affirm the NFTA's commitment to the highest ethical standards



### *Action Items*

- Expand performance data reporting
- Stakeholders' meetings on NFTA's initiatives
- Provide ethics training across all areas of the workforce



## 7. Trust, Transparency, and Integrity

Measures/Deliverables	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (3-7 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Launch GTFS-R (Realtime transit)	☑		
Integration of rail signs to display real time information		☑	
Create online performance metrics dashboard		☑	
Complete Ethics training for 100% workforce	☑	☑	☑
NFTA Website redesign to meet ADA goals	☑		
Community Outreach DBE certification fair	☑	☑	☑
Utilize website for major capital updates (and emergency events)	☑	☑	☑
MWBE Peer Outreach	☑	☑	☑

## Evaluation

As in the last strategic plan, rather than specifying a specific timeframe during which the Authority will implement this plan, this Strategic Plan will be a living document that can be updated as needed to respond to evolving conditions. The NFTA will conduct a comprehensive assessment of its progress towards achieving its goals in advance of the development of each capital and operating budget. At that time, the Authority will update the strategic plan elements to address changes in external forces.

In addition, the NFTA will continue to fulfill our Public Authority Reporting Information System (PARIS) mandated reporting requirements, our National Transit Database (NTD) and New York State 17a reporting requirements and track progress towards upholding the values identified in this plan by evaluating the performance metrics listed. Targets for each metric will be defined in line with the budget cycle to ensure there is adequate funding to support the agency's strategic initiatives and meet its targets.

## Conclusion

This Strategic Plan will be used by staff at all levels to guide decision making. This plan serves to remind employees of the big picture they are working towards while maintaining the NFTA's core values, which include: 1) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2) Economic Vitality, 3) Engaged Workforce, 4) Environmental Stewardship, 5) Safety and Security, 6) Trust, Transparency, and Integrity, and 7) Quality – Customer Experience.

Building on the foundation of the “Blueprint for the Future”, this new Roadmap will guide the agency to action along a path that benefits the region. This Strategic Roadmap is a flexible, living document that characterizes the initiatives of the NFTA in a way that supports the Authority's goals. Staying focused on this mission will enable the NFTA to continue to improve the many lives and experiences of those living and visiting Western New York.

