

# 5

# Community Facilities and Utilities

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## Acronyms/Abbreviations

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ECWA .....	Erie County Water Authority
NFTA .....	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
Pre-K .....	Pre-Kindergarten
UB .....	University at Buffalo
UBCCC .....	University at Buffalo Childcare Centers

# 5 Community Facilities and Utilities

This chapter addresses possible impacts to key community facilities and services, including schools, libraries, daycare facilities, places of worship, emergency services, healthcare facilities, and utilities. This chapter describes existing conditions of current service providers, future conditions expected without the Proposed Action, and potential impacts of the Proposed Action. (Refer to Chapter 1, “Project Description,” for a detailed description of the Proposed Action.) This chapter also discusses strategies to be undertaken by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) to minimize effects based on the Proposed Action.

## 5.1 METHODOLOGY

The study area for the analysis of community facility and utility impacts is 1/4 mile on either side of the Proposed Action alignment and a 1/2-mile radius around each station location. Community facilities were identified through review of data from local agencies, online mapping resources, discussions with local agencies, and field verification. For utilities, the NFTA conducted research into county-level utilities to see which towns/cities use their own utility providers and which use county services. Utility mapping was requested from Tonawanda and Amherst, as well as directly from utility providers. Several GIS shapefiles and as-built plans were received and used as reference in developing this chapter. Effects were determined by analyzing how the Proposed Action could create direct and/or indirect effects to facilities and utilities within the study area. Such effects could include directly altering or displacing a facility or indirectly affecting a facility through changes in parking or accessibility.

## 5.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

### 5.2.1 Community Facilities

This section provides an overview of community facilities in the study area, including schools, daycare facilities, libraries, places of worship, emergency services, healthcare facilities, and government offices.

#### 5.2.1.1 Schools

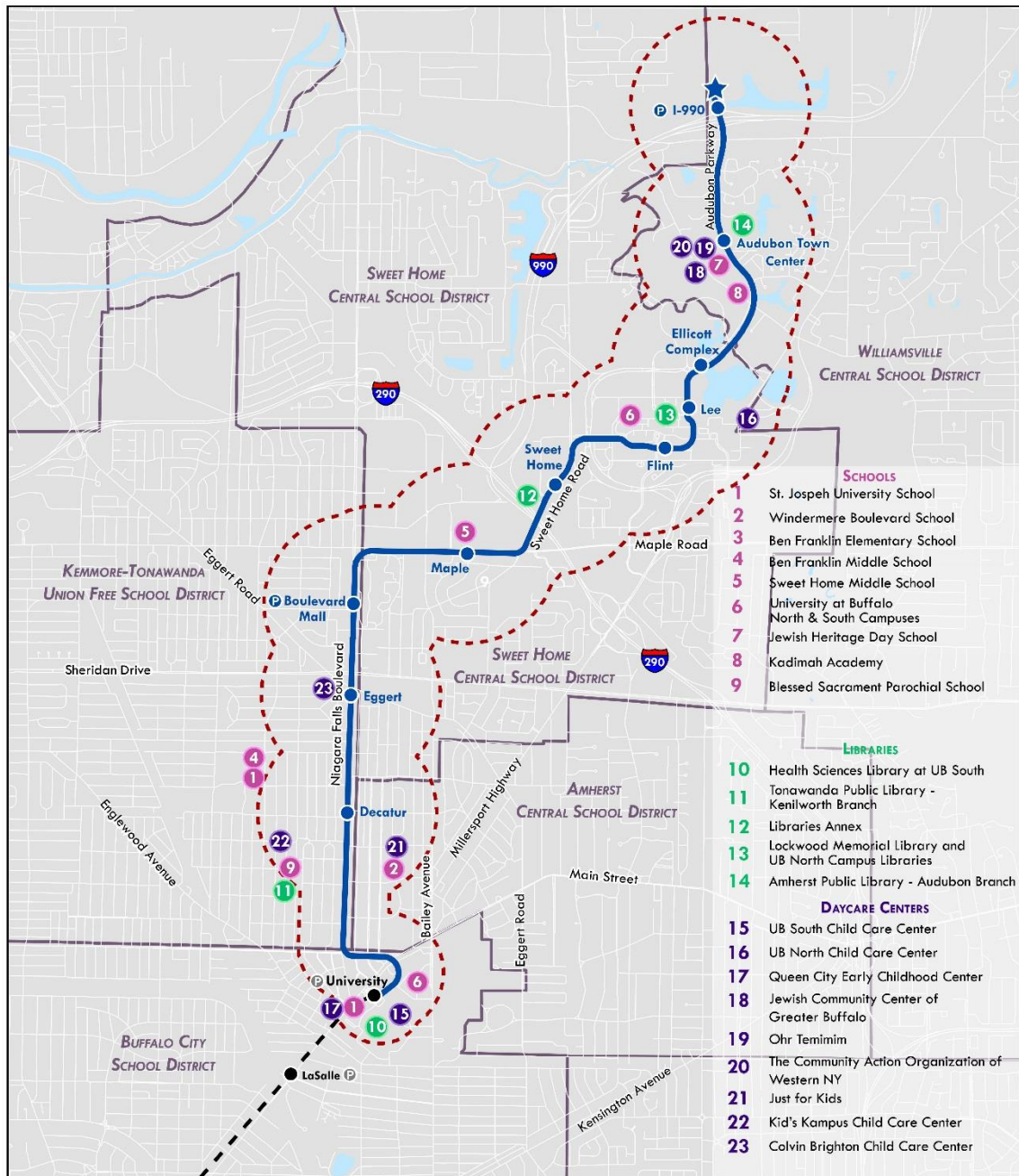
Five school districts serve the study area, and five public schools were identified within these school districts (Figure 5-1). The University at Buffalo (UB) as well as five private schools are also within the study area. A description of the school districts, public schools, UB, and private schools follows and Table 5-1 presents the enrollment data:

- **Buffalo City School District** services all of Buffalo and is divided into four community school zones: Northeast, East, South, and West. Although the southernmost portion of the Proposed Action alignment would fall within this district, there are not schools within the study area. St.

Joseph University School falls geographically within this district, though it is not counted as part of the school district because it is not a public school.

- **Amherst Central School District** comprises two elementary schools (Windermere Boulevard School in the west and Smallwood Drive School in the east), Amherst Middle School in the south, and Amherst Central High School in the middle of the district. Of these schools, the Windermere Boulevard School is within the study area.
- **Kenmore-Tonawanda Union Free School District** encompasses most of Tonawanda and all of Kenmore. This district is the third-largest school district in Western New York and among the largest school districts in Upstate New York. The district is known for its extensive high school offerings. Kenmore East and Kenmore West are two of only four International Baccalaureate schools in the eight counties of Western New York. Within the district, Ben Franklin Elementary and Middle Schools are within the study area. The Blessed Sacrament Parochial School falls geographically within this district, though it is not counted as part of the school district because it is not a public school.
- **Sweet Home Central School District** is a Pre-K through Grade 12 public school district in the towns of Amherst and Tonawanda, which are northern suburbs of Buffalo. The district consists of four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Within the district, Sweet Home Middle School is within the study area.
- **Williamsville Central School District** is the largest suburban school district in Western New York, and includes portions of the towns of Amherst, Clarence, and Cheektowaga. The district includes six elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools. Although the northernmost portion of the Proposed Action alignment would fall within this district, there are not schools in the study area. In addition, the Jewish Heritage Day School and Kadimah Middle Schools fall geographically within this district (Figure 5-1), but because they are private institutions, they are not counted as part of this school district.

**Figure 5-1. Schools, Libraries, and Daycare Centers within the Study Area**



**Metro Rail Expansion**

- Study Area
- Proposed Alignment
- Proposed Station
- Proposed Storage/Light Maintenance Facility
- Proposed Park & Ride
- Existing Station
- Existing Metro Rail Line
- Existing Park & Ride
- School
- Library
- Daycare Center
- School District Boundary



Source: Erie County, [schooldigger.com](http://schooldigger.com), [greatschools.org](http://greatschools.org), and <https://www.buffalolib.org/>, 2019

**Table 5-1. Schools within the Study Area**

Map Key	School	Address	City/Town	Enrollment
1	St. Joseph University School	3269 Main Street	Buffalo	176
2	Windermere Boulevard Elementary School	291 Windermere Boulevard	Amherst	742
3	Ben Franklin Elementary School	500 Parkhurst Boulevard	Tonawanda	538
4	Ben Franklin Middle School	540 Parkhurst Boulevard	Tonawanda	634
5	Sweet Home Middle School	4150 Maple Road	Amherst	703
6	University at Buffalo	North Campus – 12 Capen Hall South Campus – 208 Norton Circle	Buffalo	31,546
7	Jewish Heritage Day School	411 John James Audubon Parkway	Amherst	108
8	Kadimah Middle School	1085 Eggert Road	Buffalo	400
9	Blessed Sacrament Parochial School	263 Claremont Avenue	Buffalo	Not available

Source: schooldigger.com and greatschools.com, 2019; <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2018/09/017.html>, 2018; and <https://www.niche.com/k12/st-joseph-university-school-buffalo-ny/>, 2019.

Notes: Map key is shown on Figure 5-1.

St. Joseph University School is a private school within the study area. The school has approximately 175 students enrolled in Pre-K and Kindergarten through Grade 8, with a student-teacher ratio of approximately 12 to 1.

There is one Amherst Central School District elementary school within the study area—Windermere Boulevard School. Windermere Boulevard School serves Pre-K through Grade 5, with an enrollment of nearly 750 students and a student-teacher ratio of approximately 12 to 1. Situated in a residential area, Windermere Boulevard School sits on 15 acres, complete with playing fields, a contemporary playground, and a habitat/courtyard.

The Ben Franklin Elementary and Middle Schools are in the Kenmore-Tonawanda Union Free School District and are just outside the study area. However, because the study area boundary crosses onto the school property, both the elementary and middle schools have been included in this assessment. Ben Franklin Elementary School has a student enrollment of just under 550 students in grades Pre-K through Grade 4, with a student-teacher ratio of approximately 13 to 1. Ben Franklin Middle School is next door and has an enrollment of just under 650 students in Grades 5 through 8, with a student-teacher ratio of approximately 11 to 1. Situated in a residential area, Ben Franklin Elementary and Middle Schools sit on 22.6 acres, complete with fields, a baseball diamond, turf athletic field, and tennis courts.

Sweet Home Middle School is within the Sweet Home Central School District and is within the study area. Sweet Home Middle School has just over 700 students from Grades 5 through 8 with a student-teacher ratio of approximately 12 to 1. Situated on a prominently commercial strip of Maple Road, Sweet Home Middle School sits on 32.8 acres, containing complete playing fields, multiple baseball diamonds, and outdoor basketball courts.

UB is the largest public university in the State University of New York system and has 31,500 students spread between three campuses. Two of these campuses—North Campus (Amherst) and South Campus (Buffalo)—are within the study area.

Jewish Heritage Day School is a private school in the study area on Audubon Parkway. The school has 108 students in Pre-K and Kindergarten through Grade 8, with a student-teacher ratio of approximately 7 to 1.

Kadimah Academy is a private school in the study area on Eggert Road. The school is home to grades nursery through eighth and has a low student-teacher ratio of 6 to 1.

Blessed Sacrament Parochial School is a private school on Claremont Avenue in the study area. The school is a subset of the Blessed Sacrament Church.

### 5.2.1.2 Daycare Facilities

According to New York State Office of Children and Family Services and New York City Health Department, nine licensed day care facilities are within the study area. In addition, two daycare centers are on the UB campuses (Table 5-2).

**Table 5-2. Daycare Centers within the Study Area**

Map Key	Daycare Facility	Address	City/Town
16	UB South Child Care Center	3435 Main Street	Buffalo
17	UB North Child Care Center	100 St. Rita's Lane	Amherst
18	Queen City Early Childhood Center	3242 Main Street	Buffalo
19	Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo	2640 North Forest Road	Getzville
20	Ohr Temimim	411 John James Audubon Pkwy	Amherst
21	The Community Action Organization of Western NY	2700 N. Forest Road	Getzville
22	Just for Kids	291 Windermere Boulevard	Buffalo
23	Kid's Kampus Childcare Center	300 Wendel Avenue	Buffalo
24	Colvin Brighton Child Care Center	748 Woodland Drive	Tonawanda

Source: University at Buffalo Child Care Center, 2019

The UB Child Care Centers (UBCCC) offer programs to infants, toddlers, and preschool and school-age children. Daycare centers range in options from day-time care to after-school care. Priority for admission is given in the following order:

- Siblings of current students at the same UBCCC facility
- Children of UBCCC staff
- Children of current UB students, staff and faculty
- Children of current State of New York employees
- Children of community residents

### 5.2.1.3 Libraries

As shown on Figure 5-1 and in Table 5-3, four public libraries are within the study area. A fifth library, the Kenilworth Branch of the Tonawanda Public Library, is on the study area's border. It is assumed that people accessing libraries within the study area would also use this branch because of its proximity. Three of the four libraries are affiliated with UB North and South Campuses, which



are accessible to the public, and the fourth is the Audubon Branch of the Amherst Public Library system.

**Table 5-3. Libraries within the Study Area**

Map Key	Library	Address	City/Town
8	Health Sciences Library at UB South Campus	3435 Main Street	Buffalo
9	Tonawanda Public Library - Kenilworth Branch	318 Montrose Avenue	Buffalo
10	Libraries Annex	3850 Rensch Road	Amherst
11	Lockwood Memorial Library and UB North Campus Libraries	Putnam Way	Amherst
12	Amherst Public Library - Audubon Branch	350 John James Audubon Parkway	Amherst

Source: Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, 2019

### 5.2.1.4 Places of Worship

The study area comprises 16 places of worship (Figure 5-2 and Table 5-4). These places of worship are distributed throughout the study area north of the existing University Station and south of the proposed Audubon Station. Of these places of worship, Christian churches predominate.

**Table 5-4. Places of Worship within the Study Area**

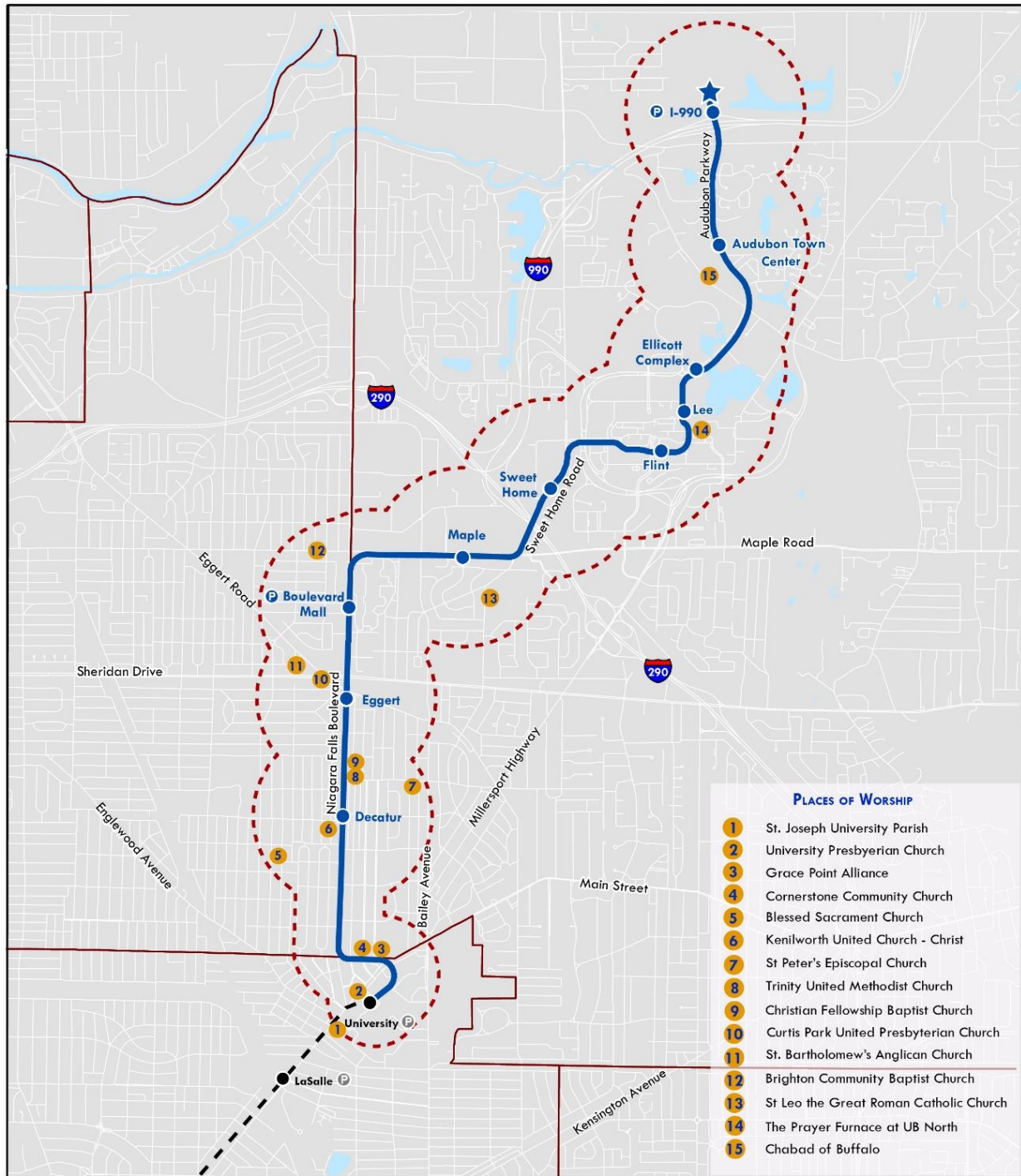
Map Key	Places of Worship	Address	City/Town
1	St. Joseph University Parish	3269 Main Street	Buffalo
2	University Presbyterian Church	3330 Main Street	Buffalo
3	Grace Point Alliance	39 Kenmore Avenue	Amherst
4	Cornerstone Community Church	49 Capen Boulevard	Buffalo
5	Blessed Sacrament Church	263 Claremont Avenue	Tonawanda
6	Kenilworth United Church - Christ	45 Dalton Drive	Tonawanda
7	St Peter's Episcopal Church	205 Longmeadow Road	Amherst
8	Trinity United Methodist Church	711 Niagara Falls Boulevard	Amherst
9	Christian Fellowship Baptist Church	765 Niagara Falls Boulevard	Amherst
10	Curtis Park United Presbyterian Church	748 Woodland Drive	Tonawanda
11	St Bartholomew's Anglican Church	2368 Eggert Road	Tonawanda
12	Brighton Community Baptist Church	1225 Brighton Road	Tonawanda
13	St Leo the Great Roman Catholic Church	885 Sweet Home Road	Amherst
14	The Prayer Furnace at UB North	520 Lee Road #112	Amherst
15	Chabad of Buffalo	2450 N Forest Road	Amherst

Source: Association of Religion Data Archives, 2019

Notes: Map key is shown on Figure 5-2.

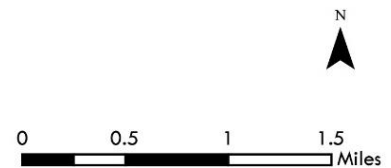


**Figure 5-2. Places of Worship within the Study Area**



**Metro Rail Expansion**

- Study Area
- Proposed Alignment
- Proposed Station
- ★ Proposed Storage/Light Maintenance Facility
- P Proposed Park & Ride
- Existing Station
- Existing Metro Rail Line
- City and Town Boundary
- P Existing Park & Ride
- # Place of Worship



Source: Erie County and Association of Religion Data Archives, 2019

### 5.2.1.5 Emergency Services

Buffalo, Amherst, and Tonawanda emergency services (including police, fire, and ambulance) serve the study area. Tonawanda has its own paramedic team, though it is also served by Twin City Ambulance—which serves Amherst as well. Table 5-5 and Figure 5-3 identify the stations and public safety services located within the study area and would most likely serve the Proposed Action. In addition to this list, the NFTA Transit Police’s Metro Division performs patrol duties, such as controlling and enforcing traffic, taking accident and crime reports, making arrests for crimes and warrants, and patrolling the Metro’s rail system and NFTA properties.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 5-5. Emergency Services within the Study Area**

Map Key	Emergency Service	Address	City/Town
1	New York State University Police – University at Buffalo	Bissell Hall	Amherst
2	Amherst Police Department	500 John James Audubon Parkway	Amherst
3	North Bailey Fire Company	966 Sweet Home Road	Buffalo
4	Egbertsville Fire District	1880 Eggert Road	Amherst
5	Kenilworth Fire Company	84 Hawthorne Avenue	Buffalo

Source: Erie County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, 2019

### 5.2.1.6 Healthcare Facilities

The healthcare facilities in Table 5-6 do not include small medical practices with one or two doctors, but do include larger facilities that provide a wider range of services. Some small medical offices within the study area are not listed in Table 5-6. Healthcare facilities within the study area range from the Buffalo Veterans Hospital and Medical Center near the UB South Campus to two smaller medical and assisted living facilities. As shown on Figure 5-3, facilities are clustered around two stations: the existing University Station and the proposed Audubon Station. These facilities provide varying services as listed in Table 5-6.

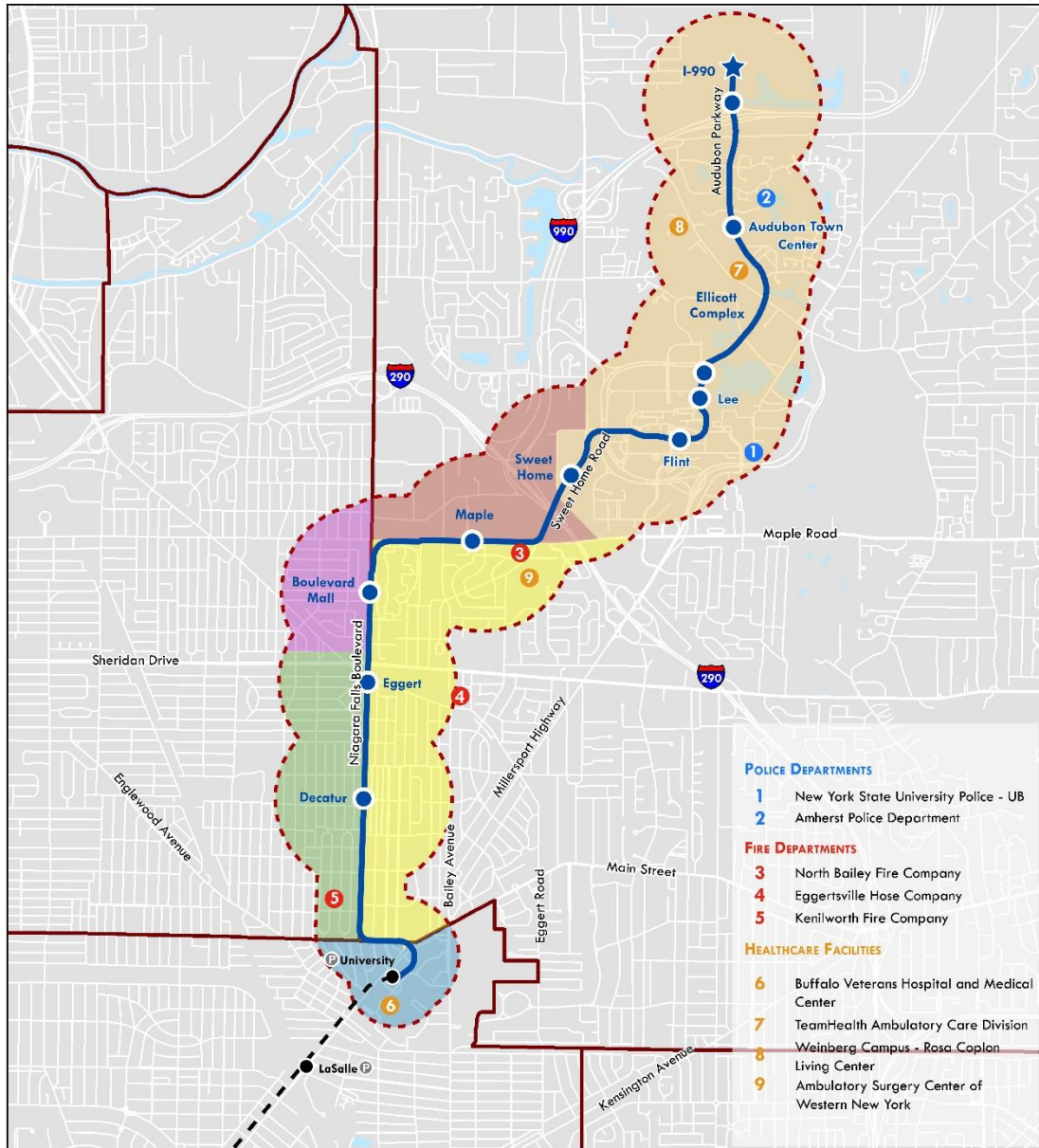
**Table 5-6. Healthcare Facilities within the Study Area**

Map Key	Healthcare Facility	Address	City/Town	Services Provided
6	Buffalo Veteran’s Hospital and Medical Center	3495 Bailey Avenue	Buffalo	Full service hospital for veterans
7	Team Health Ambulatory Care Division	1 John James Audubon Parkway #200	Amherst	Ambulatory care facility
8	Weinberg Campus – Rosa Coplon Living Center	2700 N Forest Road	Amherst	Assisted living facility
9	Ambulatory Surgery Center of Western New York	945 Sweet Home Road	Buffalo	Surgery Center

Source: <https://www.buffalo.va.gov/>, <https://www.teamhealth.com/what-we-do/ambulatory-care/>, and <https://www.weinbergcampus.org/Skilled-Nursing-Rehab/Rosa-Coplon-Living-Center.aspx>, 2019

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nfta.com/Police/divisions/metro/index.asp>

**Figure 5-3. Emergency Services and Healthcare Facilities within the Study Area**



Source: Erie County, Erie County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, <https://www.buffalo.va.gov/>, <https://www.teamhealth.com/what-we-do/ambulatory-care/>, and <https://www.weinbergcampus.org/Skilled-Nursing-Rehab/Rosa-Coplon-Living-Center.aspx>, <https://koordinates.com/layer/96513-erie-county-new-york-fire-districts/download/>, 2019

Although outside the study area, the following nearby hospitals and larger healthcare facilities would serve the community around the Proposed Action:

- **ECMC Hospital:** 462 Grider Street, Buffalo, NY 14215
- **Elmwood Health Care:** 2128 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14207
- **John R. Oishei Children’s Hospital:** 818 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY 14203
- **Buffalo General Medical Center:** 100 High Street, Buffalo NY 14203
- **Kenmore Mercy Hospital:** 2950 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14217
- **Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital:** 1540 Maple Road, Williamsville, NY 14221
- **Sisters of Charity Hospital:** 2157 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214
- **UBMD Internal Medicine:** 1020 Youngs Road, Williamsville, NY 14221

#### **5.2.1.7 Government Offices**

Amherst has several government offices northeast of the proposed Audubon Station. The Amherst Court, Amherst Center for Senior Services, and Amherst Police Department are in the study area. Buffalo and Tonawanda do not have government offices within the study area.

#### **5.2.2 Utilities**

This section provides an overview of utility services in the study area, including water, sewer, electricity, gas, and telecommunications. Known connections for water, electric, gas, and telecommunications in the study area are detailed in maps requested from and provided by the service providers.

##### **5.2.2.1 Water Service**

Water service in the study area is divided by municipality. Buffalo Water Authority and Buffalo Sewer Authority service the portion of the study area within Buffalo.

The portion of the study area in Amherst is within a lease managed area, where water is sent to contracted municipality. The Erie County Water Authority (ECWA) owns and operates the system and is responsible for customer service, billing, maintenance, and capital improvements. Amherst is responsible for capital improvements.

Tonawanda is served by its Water and Sewer Maintenance Division, which operates and maintains the town’s water distribution, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer systems from its 525 Belmont Avenue facility. The water distribution system consists of roughly 375 miles of water mains, 2,200 hydrants, and 5,000 valves, providing water to over 65,000 persons with over 23,000 accounts. The water system provides bulk water to the village of Kenmore.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tonawanda.ny.us/departments/water-resources/water-sewer-maintenance.html>



### 5.2.2.2 Sanitary and Storm Sewer Service

Similar to water service, sewer service within the study area is divided by municipality boundaries. The Buffalo Sewer collection system covers 110 square miles, which includes Buffalo.

Amherst is in Erie County Sewer District No. 5, which provides collection and conveyance services.<sup>3</sup> The Erie County Sewer Districts are special service districts that provide sewer services to communities within their respective boundaries, as specified by contracts between each district and the local jurisdictions served. Sewer districts are responsible for constructing, operating, maintaining, and administrating sanitary sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.

Tonawanda is served by its Water and Sewer Maintenance Division, which operates and maintains the town's sanitary sewer and storm sewer systems from its 525 Belmont Avenue facility.

### 5.2.2.3 Electricity Service

National Grid is the energy provider that serves the study area. National Grid is one of the largest investor-owned energy companies in the world. In the United States, National Grid operates over 9,000 miles of electricity transmission and delivers electricity and natural gas. The business serves over 3.3 million customers with electrical power and 3.4 million customers with natural gas. National Grid carries out its business through a number of subsidiary companies. In Western New York, this subsidiary is Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation, which National Grid acquired in 2000.<sup>4</sup>

### 5.2.2.4 Natural Gas Service

National Fuel is the natural gas provider that serves the study area. National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation sells or transports natural gas to more than 740,000 customers through a local distribution system in Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania. The company provides interstate natural gas transmission and storage for affiliated and nonaffiliated companies through an integrated gas pipeline system that extends over 2,300 miles from southwestern Pennsylvania to the New York-Canadian border at the Niagara River.

### 5.2.2.5 Telecommunications Service

Verizon is a major telecommunications provider in the study area. Verizon is an American multinational telecommunications corporation based in New York City. Verizon provides telecommunication services to 153.1 million people across the United States. Verizon FIOS services are available to customers in Tonawanda and Amherst.

Spectrum Cable is another major provider of telecommunications services in the study area. Spectrum provides telecommunications services to 102.5 million people across 46 states. Its most prominent market shares are in New York, California, and Texas.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www2.erie.gov/dsm/index.php?q=sewer-district-information>

<sup>4</sup> "National Grid Buys Niagara Mohawk for \$8.9 Billion," [http://www.energyonline.com/Industry/News.aspx?NewsID=3898&National\\_Grid\\_Buys\\_Niagara\\_Mohawk\\_for\\_%248.9\\_Billion](http://www.energyonline.com/Industry/News.aspx?NewsID=3898&National_Grid_Buys_Niagara_Mohawk_for_%248.9_Billion)

### **5.3 FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The No Action condition would consist of a future scenario without the Proposed Action; it would include the projects that are already committed and planned by others. As a result, impacts to community facilities and utilities would not occur under the No Action condition. Major community facility projects are not projected to occur within the study area by 2040, which includes schools, daycare facilities, libraries, places of worship, emergency services, healthcare facilities, and government offices.

Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Community Character” identifies projects that are proposed within the study area by 2040. These projects would result in an overall increase of water supply and sanitary and storm sewage generation caused by general growth in the area. Utility connections would be provided to serve the mixed-use development project near the proposed I-990 Station. It is anticipated that the No Action condition would not adversely affect community facilities and utilities in the study area.

### **5.4 PROPOSED ACTION**

The Proposed Action would not directly displace community facilities adjacent to the rail right-of-way. Pedestrian and vehicular access to community facilities and services along the Proposed Action alignment would be minimally affected by the Proposed Action operations. Vehicles turning left on Niagara Falls Boulevard may have to drive an additional distance to the nearest signalized intersection and make a u-turn. Most community facilities would experience positive impacts from increased access to transit and transportation options provided by the Proposed Action. The extension of the Metro Rail would provide increased access to community facilities such as places of worship, emergency services, healthcare facilities, and government offices; therefore, increased usage of facilities could occur. Additionally, more people would be able to utilize Metro Rail, and therefore, less traffic may be on the roads near community facilities. Chapter 13, “Transportation”, describes the Proposed Action’s effects on traffic operations. While the Proposed Action would not directly introduce a new population of school-aged children to Tonawanda and Amherst, some facilities such as schools, daycare facilities, and libraries could experience indirect increases in demand as they become more accessible to neighboring populations.

Traffic signal designs would be included as part of the Proposed Action to minimize delays for emergency vehicles at intersections. All at-grade signalized intersections would have signal preemption and priority to Metro Rail vehicles. Further coordination with emergency response vehicles (departments) will occur to determine what type of upgrades and equipment would be needed to add emergency vehicle priority at signalized intersections. NFTA has and will continue to coordinate with emergency service providers within the study area. Through this coordination, emergency service providers have indicated the potential to reroute emergency access plans and that the Proposed Action would not result in an adverse impact to emergency services. Emergency services will be considered under the Proposed Action during preliminary and final design and a Preliminary Hazard Analysis will be conducted during preliminary design to further investigate and identify emergency service needs. In particular, vertical clearances for emergency vehicles would need to be assessed when designing catenary structures.

As described in Chapter 19, “Construction Effects”, accessibility to community facilities along the Proposed Action alignment—Sweet Home Middle School, Trinity United Methodist Church, and Christian Fellowship Baptist Church—could be affected during the construction of the Proposed Action. Specific details on construction will be determined during preliminary and final design. Access to community facilities would be maintained during construction; however, detours or temporary bridges could be required. Changes to accessibility would be temporary and a maintenance and protection of traffic plan will be prepared to mitigate potential adverse effects.

In terms of safety and security, NFTA police will patrol the Proposed Action stations and track, and NFTA maintenance will care for tracks, catenary, and substations. As such, the Proposed Action would not place an additional burden onto government services in the study area.

The Proposed Action could affect existing electrical power, water and sewer facilities, storm drainage systems, natural gas lines, and telecommunications transmission lines. Electrical power to operate the Proposed Action would be drawn from existing National Grid service that would require the placement of substations. Stations would also use some power and water. Design of stations, substations, and catenary structures (i.e., a cable suspended between two points) are still under development. As such, the impact to these systems from the construction of the Proposed Action would be assessed during preliminary engineering, though it is likely that some utilities would need to be relocated and/or provided with electromagnetic and stray power protection. Therefore, it is anticipated that the Proposed Action would not adversely affect community facilities and utilities in the study area.

## 5.5 MITIGATION

The conceptual design of the Proposed Action incorporated mitigation measures, in terms of both avoidance and minimization, to reduce the potential for impacts to community facilities. For example, the conceptual design was modified to include the addition of a shoulder on Niagara Falls Boulevard to provide access for maintenance vehicles, emergency vehicles, and delivery trucks. In addition, the Proposed Action would employ mitigation measures to reduce the impacts and costs associated with relocation of utilities both above and below ground. Where feasible, possible utility conflicts would be minimized during preliminary and final design.

NFTA has and will continue to conduct extensive public information activities to inform residents and provide the opportunity for participation in evaluating the Proposed Action, station locations, environmental concerns, etc. Public presentations have been offered to the public at-large, community groups, public officials, institutional officials, and local, state, and federal agencies. Appendix C, “Public Outreach and Coordination Report” summarizes these activities and meetings. Public involvement will continue throughout design and construction, and comments and concerns from area residents will continue to be solicited.