



December 18, 2024

External Stakeholder Meeting

NFTA-Metro Paratransit Expansion Study

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc.



Agenda

- 1 Study Update
- 2 Expansion Analysis
- 3 Implementation Strategy
- 4 Discussion





PAL Study

Paratransit Study Objectives

- Ensure that NFTA's complementary paratransit service (PAL):
 - Is efficient, making the best use of public funds
 - Meets customer needs today and in the future
 - Offers innovative services
 - Is equitable
 - Delivers excellent customer service
- Evaluate the feasibility and costs of expanding PAL service
- Develop a replicable model for paratransit service expansion in New York State



Study Progress

Existing Conditions & Peer Practices



- Tasks complete
- Report and technical memorandum available on the project website
www.nftametroparatransitstudy.com

Future Conditions



- Preliminary findings presented during September public meetings.
- Additional estimates being presented today

Recommendations



- Under review
 - Existing PAL service improvements
 - Roadmap for future service

A report summarizing the expansion analysis and related findings will be published shortly.



Study Findings

Existing Challenges with PAL Service

Operations

- Scheduling practices
- Technology issues
- Service monitoring practices

Improvements underway

Staffing

- Driver shortages
- Training and retention issues
- Work rule limitations

Fleet

- Aging fleet
- Market challenges in acquiring vehicles
- Limited maintenance capacity

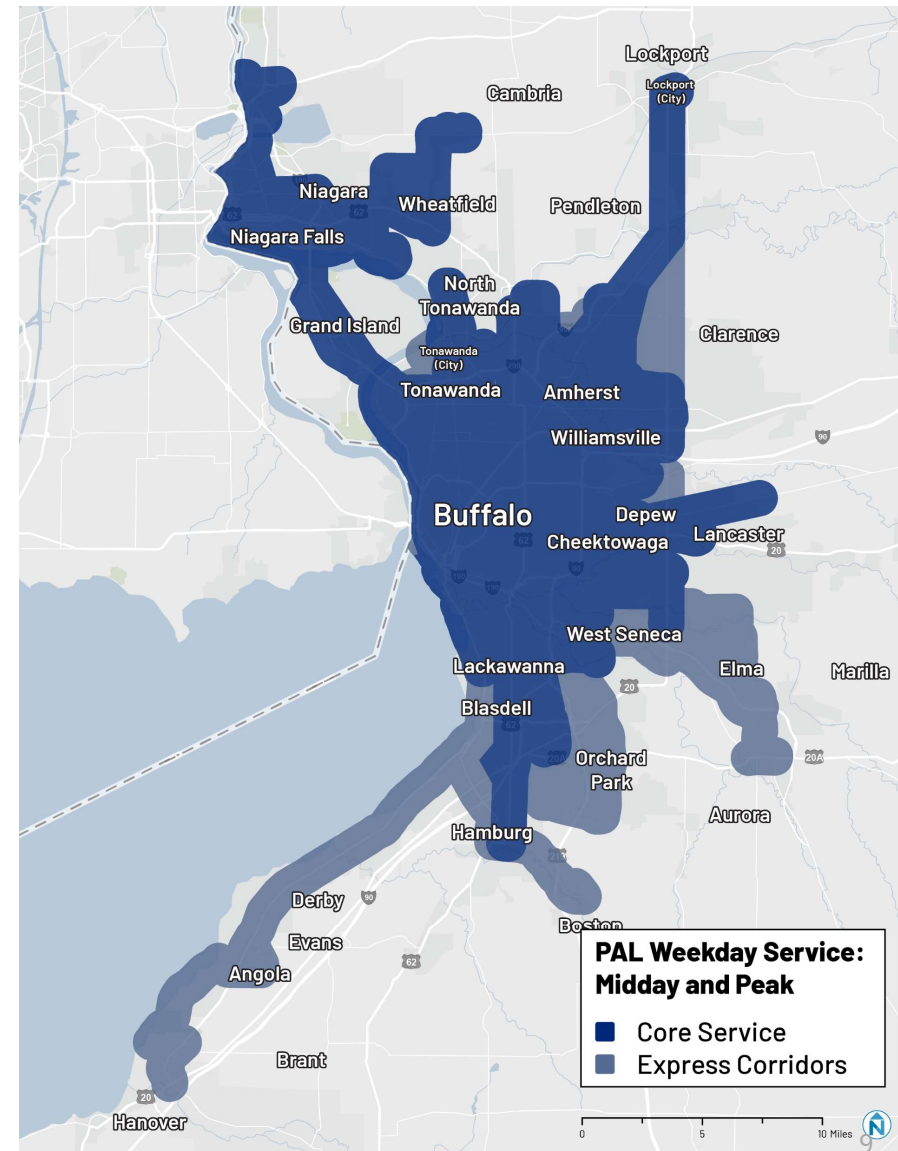
The ongoing challenges cannot be resolved quickly. NFTA cannot consider service expansion without first addressing the challenges.



Expansion Analysis

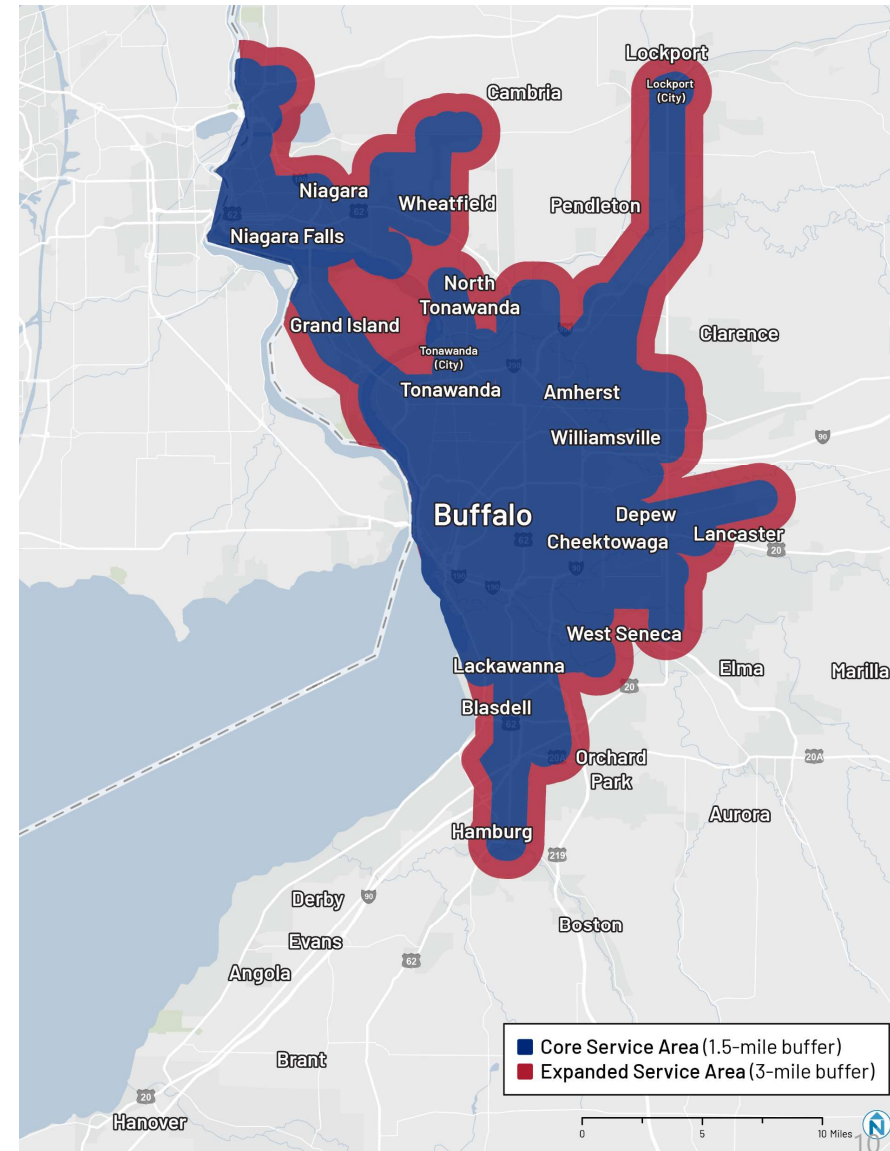
1.5-mile Buffer (Existing)

- Core service area
 - 0.75 miles on either side of Metro bus routes
 - 0.75 miles from Metro rail stations
- Service area of 262 square miles
- PAL service is also provided in Metro bus express corridors on non-holiday weekdays during peak commuting hours



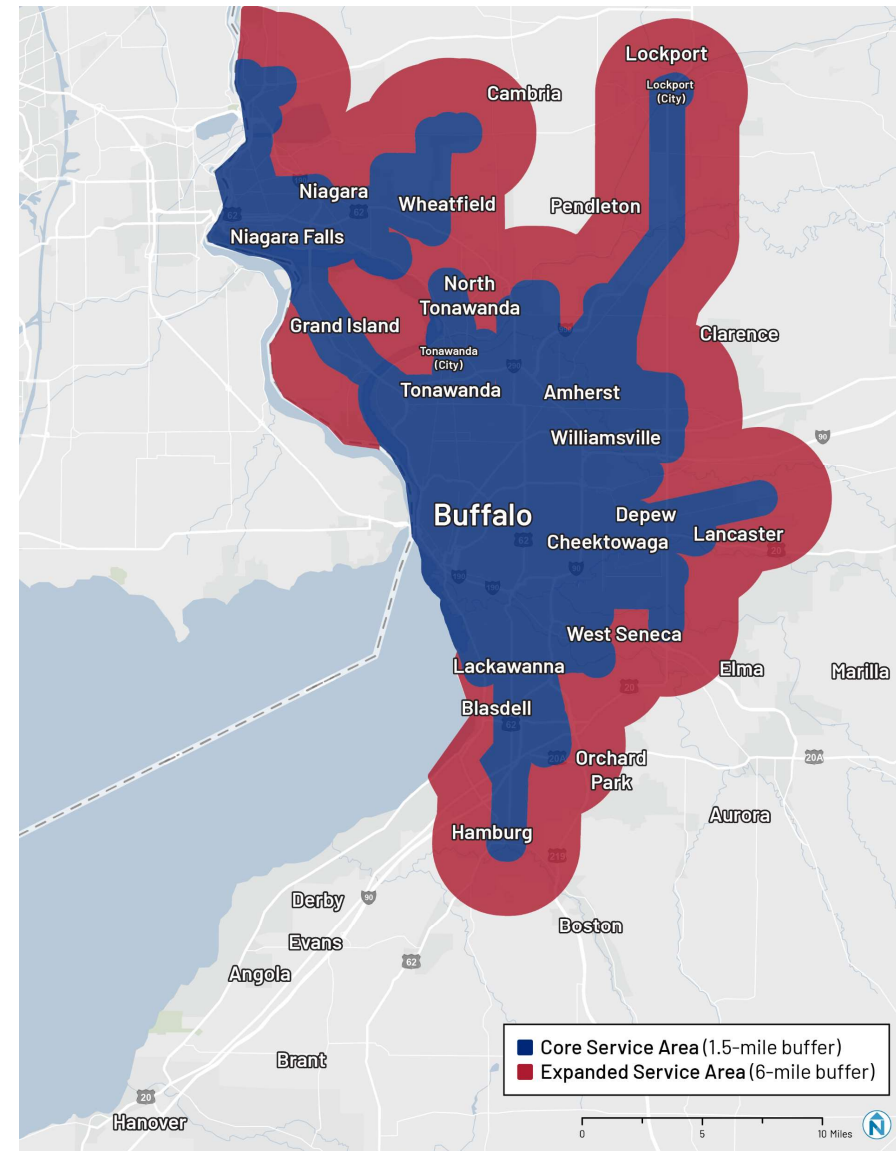
3-mile Buffer Expansion

- Expansion of PAL service to:
 - 1.5 miles on either side of Metro bus routes
 - 1.5 miles from Metro Rail stations
- Service Area: 367 square miles (**40%** increase over core service area)



6-mile Buffer Expansion

- Expand service area to:
 - 3 miles on either side of Metro bus routes
 - 3 miles from Metro rail stations
- Service Area: 518 square miles (**98%** increase over core service area)



Summary of Changes in Area, Population, and Annual PAL Trips

Service Area/Scenario	Area (Square Miles)	Population	Annual PAL Trips
1.5-mile buffer (core service area)	262	784,500	186,900
3-mile buffer (core + 1.5-mile expansion)	367	893,900	217,400
Increase over existing core	105 (40%)	109,400 (14%)	30,500 (16%)
6-mile buffer (core + 3-mile expansion)	518	969,800	238,700
Increase over existing core	256 (98%)	185,300 (24%)	51,800 (28%)

Annual Vehicle Hours, Trips per RVH, Vehicles, and Driver Needs Under Expansion Scenarios

Service Area/Scenario	Revenue Vehicle Hours (RVH)	Trips per RVH	Vehicles ¹	Drivers ²
1.5-mile buffer (existing core)	109,469	1.76	64	90
3-mile buffer (core + 1.5-mile expansion)	133,221	1.63	78	104
Increase (decrease) over existing	23,752 (22%)	(0.13)	14 (21%)	14 (16%)
6-mile buffer (core +3-mile expansion)	159,116	1.50	93	114
Increase (decrease) over existing	49,647 (45%)	(0.26)	29 (46%)	24 (27%)

1. Vehicles required to meet daily pullout needs

2. Drivers required for anticipated increase in RVH

Conditions Required for Service Expansion

To deliver additional PAL service with NFTA resources, NFTA would need to hire more drivers, acquire more vehicles, and increase maintenance capacity.

In addition, NFTA cannot expand the PAL service area until it addresses ongoing challenges with service delivery (vehicles, drivers, efficiencies).

Resources Required for Service Expansion

Operational Elements

- Cost per revenue service hour
 - Currently \$110
- New paratransit vehicles
 - Currently \$145,000
- Expanded maintenance capacity (see scenarios)

Additional Needs

- After addressing current needs,
 - Hire more drivers
 - Acquire more vehicles
- Expand maintenance capacity

To estimate future costs of service expansion, the study team selected 2030.

2030 Operating and Vehicle Costs

3-Mile Buffer	Hours (RVH)	Vehicles	Combined
Increase	23,752	14	
2030 cost increase	\$3,253,500	\$2,409,600	\$5,663,100
Less fare revenues	(\$120,900)		(\$120,900)
Total added costs with inflation	\$3,132,600	\$2,409,600	\$5,542,200

6-Mile Buffer	Hours (RVH)	Vehicles	Combined
Increase	49,647	29	
2030 cost increase	\$6,800,400	\$4,991,400	\$11,791,800
Less fare revenues	(\$207,200)		(\$207,200)
Total added costs with inflation	\$6,593,200	\$4,991,400	\$11,584,600

Notes

- Estimates assume 2030 as first year of operation
- Costs for maintenance capacity expansion are not included
- Operating costs will escalate with inflation
- Vehicle costs in subsequent years will be lower due to 5-year replacement cycle

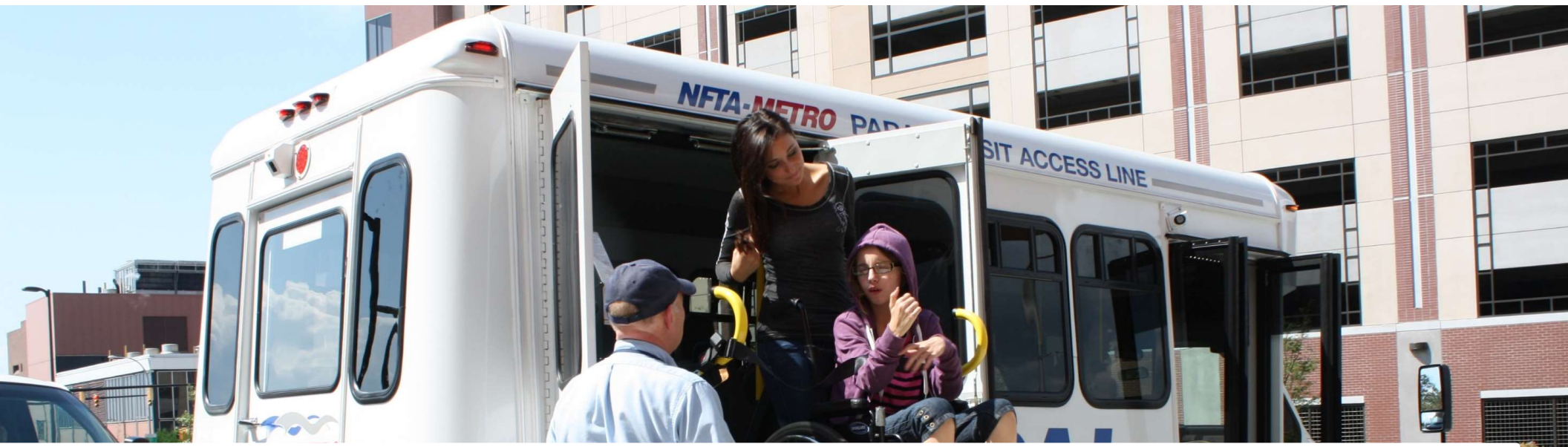
Maintenance Capacity Expansion Option

Mid-Term Expansion Option: Renovate Existing NFTA Facilities

- \$5.8 million for renovations
- Could result in increased costs to provide fixed-route service
- Zero-emission and electrification requirements may further increase costs

Long-Term Expansion Option: Construct New Facility

- \$90-100 million to construct new facility
- Would include maintenance and repair, fleet storage, control center (call taking, scheduling, and dispatching), and operations (supervisors, drivers)



Improving PAL Service to Support Expansion



Recommendations – PAL Service



Improve use of technology, which may include updating or replacing paratransit software.



Improve eligibility practices (including in-person interviews), to limit PAL eligibility to customers who need the service (per ADA).



Negotiate trip requests within ADA parameters to offer realistic promise times and improve on-time performance.

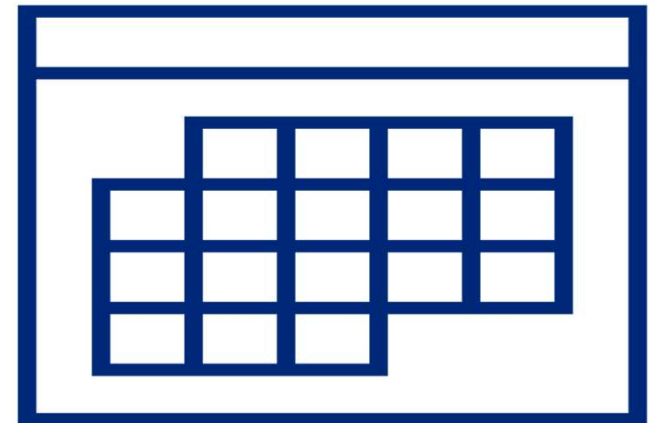


Implement operational efficiencies to better distribute demand and improve on-time performance.

Timing and Objectives for Improvements

- **Near-term (2024-2025)**
 - Improve service delivery by the end of 2025
 - Hiring additional drivers
 - Replacing aging vehicles
- **Medium-term (2026-2029)**
 - Build capacity for service expansion
- **Long-term (2030 and beyond)**
 - Implement expanded paratransit service

- Medium and long-term improvements and capacity-building strategies require additional resources.



Medium-Term Alternative – Supplemental Service

- Another option to increase PAL capacity is to hire third-party contractors known as non-dedicated service providers (NDSPs).
- Under this scenario:
 - NFTA employees would continue to provide PAL service.
 - NFTA would hire a vendor to provide trained drivers, typically using sedans.
 - The vendor would link with NFTA's PAL scheduling software and deliver a portion of each day's scheduled trips.
- To implement this option, NFTA would need to:
 - Negotiate with the labor union to ensure current NFTA drivers and staff do not lose work opportunities
 - Hire staff for contractor monitoring and oversight
 - Possibly cover all wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) trips using PAL vehicles

NDSP Supplemental Service Cost Estimate

- Estimated annual costs for service in the expansion areas (2030):
 - 3-mile expanded service area: \$1,590,000—\$1,830,000 per year
 - 6-mile expanded service area: \$2,970,000—\$3,400,000 per year
- It is important to note:
 - Service costs would increase annually.
 - Using a supplemental service provider would require additional resources for staff oversight (at least \$100,000 per year)



Discussion

Thank you!



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