Buffalo Exchange Street Station
Redevelopment Project
PIN 5761.87
75 Exchange Street
City of Buffalo
Erie County
A. Recommendation for Design Approval: The project cost and schedule are consistent with the Capital Program.

Rail Projects Group Director

7/12/2018

B. Design Approval: The required environmental determinations have been made and the preferred alternative for this project is ready for final design.

Office of Design Director

7/13/2018
LIST OF PREPARERS

Group Director Responsible for Production of the Design Approval Document:

Susan Andrews, PE, Director, Rail Projects Group, NYSDOT, Main Office

Description of Work Performed:
Directed the preparation of the Design Approval Document in accordance with established standards, policies, regulations and procedures, except as otherwise explained in this document.

Note: It is a violation of law for any person, unless they are acting under the direction of a licensed professional engineer, architect, landscape architect, or land surveyor, to alter an item in any way. If an item bearing the stamp of a licensed professional is altered, the altering engineer, architect, landscape architect, or land surveyor shall stamp the document and include the notation "altered by" followed by their signature, the date of such alteration, and a specific description of the alteration.

This report was prepared by the following NYSDOT staff:

Mark Jakubiak, RLA, Rail Projects Group, NYSDOT, Main Office

Description of Work Performed:
Prepared the Design Approval Document in accordance with established standards, policies, regulations and procedures, except as otherwise explained in this document.
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CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction

This Design Report and Environmental Assessment was prepared in accordance with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Project Development Manual and NYSDOT Procedures for Implementation of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) (17 NYCRR (New York Codes, Rules and Regulations) Part 15). Transportation needs have been identified (see Section 1.2.2), project purpose and objectives established (see Section 1.2.3) to address the needs, and reasonable alternatives have been developed (see Section 1.3). This project is 100% State funded. NYSDOT is the SEQRA Lead Agency.

The Buffalo Exchange Street (BFX) Station Redevelopment Project (“the Project”) involves the replacement of the BFX Station building and platform with a new station building and platform that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as other facility improvements to enhance the condition and aesthetic appearance of the overall facility at the current BFX Station location.

The existing station is currently owned by the City of Buffalo and operated by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak).

1.2. Purpose and Need

1.2.1. Project Location

A Location Study Report was developed to provide a technical evaluation of potential locations and sites for the placement of a new train/intermodal station to replace the existing Amtrak Buffalo-Exchange Street Station. Based on the technical evaluation and input from the Stakeholder Committee, the study partners (NYSDOT, City of Buffalo, and Empire State Development) identified the Downtown Existing Exchange Street: Platform on the North site (existing Downtown Buffalo Amtrak Station site) as the site to move forward with for a new Downtown Amtrak Station. The Location Study is included in Appendix B.

The existing BFX Station is located at 75 Exchange Street in the City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York (see Figure 1). The overall station property is situated on the south side of Exchange Street, east of Washington Street, north of the existing CSX Niagara Branch track milepost (MP) 1.9 and an elevated portion of Interstate 190 (I-190), and west of the I-190/Oak Street ramp. The station is located along the Empire Corridor, a 493-mile rail system connecting Penn Station, in New York City, with Niagara Falls, New York. The station is within walking distance of central business district destinations and is served by municipal bus. The project area encompasses the existing station property as well as the areas west of the station between Exchange Street and the Empire Corridor bound by Main Street.
1.2.2. Project Needs

The existing BFX Station, constructed in 1952, is in an advanced deteriorated state and does not meet Amtrak’s standards for station design and accessibility. In 2016, a rain storm caused damage to the roof of the BFX Station, forcing the temporary closure of the station building until temporary repairs to the roof were undertaken. Likewise, the existing associated non-ADA-compliant, low-level platform and canopy are also outdated and deteriorating. The facility has poor lighting, inadequate restroom facilities, limited accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists, and lacks security. The BFX Station is currently served daily by the Amtrak Maple Leaf Service Train as well as four daily Amtrak Empire Service trains. The facility does not meet the current and future needs for intercity rail passengers. The existing station lacks station amenities common to other modern intercity stations, and does not offer a highly-visible, accessible and attractive station for passengers traveling to and from downtown Buffalo.

1.2.3. Project Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to replace the existing BFX Station with a new ADA-compliant station to be located on the same property within downtown Buffalo. The new facility would have the capacity to accommodate the anticipated increased ridership.

The objectives of this project in support of the project purpose are to:
• Provide an ADA-compliant intercity passenger rail station and platform that would not preclude intercity buses, additional rail services, and other intermodal enhancements.
• Improve the condition and aesthetic appearance of the overall site through strategic design of the new station building and overall site.
• Provide improved ride-share, taxi, pedestrian and bicycle access to railway and bus services at the new facility.

1.3. Alternatives Considered

The following two alternatives are being considered for the Project:

**No Build Alternative:** The No Build Alternative assumes no improvements in the project area other than those planned by others or implemented as part of routine maintenance. The No Build Alternative would result in continued deterioration of the existing facility. Although it does not meet the project purpose and need, evaluation of the No Build Alternative serves as the baseline condition against which the effects of the Build Alternative are evaluated.

**Build Alternative:** The Build Alternative involves several site improvements at the current BFX Station property including a pedestrian plaza, landscaping, drainage and lighting. The existing BFX Station building would be demolished and a new, ADA-compliant station building would be constructed on the same property, proximate to the footprint of the existing BFX Station building. The new station building would be higher in elevation and closer to Exchange Street than the existing building, moving its position further from the I-190 viaduct. A new, ADA-compliant, 540-foot-long, high-level platform would be constructed to replace the existing non-ADA-compliant, low-level platform and would be located directly adjacent to the new station building. The new platform would be located along the north side of the tracks, extending approximately 100 feet east of Washington Street and would terminate slightly east of the Oak Street Ramp.

Temporary low-level platforms would be constructed while portions of the high-level platform are under construction. Once finished, the new platform would open for use and the temporary low-level platforms would be removed. Minimal utility relocation would be required at this site under the Build Alternative.

The proposed design is presented in Appendix D.

Refer to Chapter 4 for a discussion of social, economic and environmental conditions and consequences.

**Permits and Agency Coordination:**

**Permits**

This project will not require any permits.

**Coordination**

NYSDOT will continue to coordinate with the following agencies:

• New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA) – Fiberoptic relocation and Right-of-Way
• City of Buffalo – Street Lighting, Water and Sewer

1.5. Project Costs & Schedule

Design Approval is scheduled for June 2018, with construction scheduled to last 20 months beginning in October 2018. The project cost is +/- 20.0 M.
<table>
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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
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<td>Location Study</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Approval</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease and Maintenance Agreements</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Start</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Complete</td>
<td>June 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6. Preferred Alternative

The Build Alternative is the preferred alternative. See Section 3.1 for a discussion of this alternative.

1.7. Opportunities for Public Involvement

A public information meeting was held on Monday, April 16, 2018 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m at the Buffalo Transportation Pierce Arrow Museum. The meeting was well attended and reaction to the plan’s unveiling was overwhelming positive.
CHAPTER 2 - PROJECT CONTEXT: HISTORY, TRANSPORTATION PLANS, CONDITIONS AND NEEDS

This chapter addresses the history and existing context of the project site, including the existing conditions and needs for the Project.

2.1. Project History

The existing BFX Station was constructed in 1952 and operated for a decade before the New York Central Railroad ended service to Niagara Falls and closed the station. Amtrak reopened the station in October 1978 when passenger train service was extended to Niagara Falls. The BFX Station has deteriorated over the years and in 2016, a rain storm caused damage to the roof of the BFX Station, forcing the temporary closure of the station building until temporary repairs to the roof were undertaken. Shortly after this storm, on October 26, 2016, Governor Andrew Cuomo issued a challenge to the City of Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown to convene a group of stakeholders, work with a consultant, engage the community, and return with a recommendation for a preferred station location, in which a new station facility could be developed to replace the current BFX Station in the City of Buffalo, in a six-month timeframe. Further, Governor Cuomo pledged $1,000,000 for a consultant to study the feasibility of various locations for a new train station. This led Mayor Byron W. Brown to convene a 17-member Stakeholder Committee to review the technical analysis conducted by the consultant, solicit public input, and ultimately decide on a preferred location for the new BFX Station. See the Resolution of Stakeholders on a Decision for a New Train Station Location in the City of Buffalo in Appendix A. NYSDOT has considered the information presented in the City Buffalo Train/Intermodal Station Site Selection Study and has completed a Location Study Report that provides the results of the evaluation of potential locations for the placement of a new train/intermodal station to replace the existing Amtrak Buffalo-Exchange Street (BFX) Station. The Location Study Report is in Appendix B.

2.2. Transportation Plans and Land Use

2.2.1. Local Plans for the Project Area

2.2.1.1. Local Comprehensive Plans (“Master Plan”) -

The City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan, dated February 7, 2006, has an emphasis on smart growth principles, building on cultural assets, investing in infrastructure and business development and enhancing the green environment. The Project is consistent with the City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan. The comprehensive plan can be found at http://www.oneregionforward.org/plan/queen-city-in-the-21st-century-comprehensive-plan/

2.2.1.2. Local Private Development Plans –

Canal Side Land Use Improvement Project General Project Plan, dated December 18, 2009, adopted by New York State Urban Development Corporation, is envisioned to redevelop a blighted area of the City by transforming it into a vibrant, transit-oriented, mixed use development that will attract year-round activities, attract visitors and generate private economic development activity. The Canal Side Development District is 1 mile west of the existing station and outside of the project area. The Canal Side Land Use Improvement Project General Project Plan can be found at: https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2013MGPPFinalwoAttachments.pdf
2.2.2. Transportation Plans

The Project is consistent with the 2009 New York State Rail Plan – Strategies for a New Age, which calls for the revitalization and improvement of passenger station facilities, amenities and operations. The plan was developed in cooperation with New York’s freight railroads, Amtrak, commuter railroads, transportation planners, and New York residents. The 2009 New York State Rail Plan can be found at: https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/planning-bureau/state-rail-plan

2.3. Transportation Conditions, Deficiencies and Engineering Considerations

The existing Amtrak BFX Station provides State Corridor service including the Amtrak Maple Leaf (2 trains a day) and Empire Service Trains (4 trains a day) – 6 trains a day total. The station is not served by the Lake Shore Limited.

2.3.1. Service

State Corridor service available at BFX Station includes the Empire Service and Maple Leaf Service. Exhibit 2.3 A portrays the schedule of State Corridor service available daily at the BFX Station.

Exhibit 2.3 A: BFX Station Amtrak Service Schedule (Effective October 23, 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Train No.</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Normal Days of Operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastbound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>3:37 PM</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>4:30 AM</td>
<td>Monday - Saturday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>7:25 AM</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Leaf</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1:05 PM</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westbound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Leaf</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3:14 PM</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>L6:24 PM</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>L9:23 PM</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L indicates train can leave earlier than time shown.

Source: Amtrak

2.3.2. Ridership

Passenger ridership has increased by approximately 131% over the past decade at the BFX Station. Ridership generally has been evenly split between boardings and alightings (Exhibit 2.3 B). Looking to the future, Amtrak projects an annual ridership increase of 2% per year due to growing popularity of rail travel, the potential addition of High-Speed Rail (HSR) service along the Empire Corridor in the next few decades, as well as a decreased need for in-person ticketing area as transit passengers move towards mobile ticketing.

Exhibit 2.3 B: BFX Station Ridership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Boardings</th>
<th>Alightings</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Year-over-Year Change</th>
<th>Percentage Year-over-Year Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8,338</td>
<td>8,053</td>
<td>16,391</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>10,053</td>
<td>10,744</td>
<td>20,797</td>
<td>4,406</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11,514</td>
<td>12,228</td>
<td>23,742</td>
<td>2,945</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14,706</td>
<td>15,465</td>
<td>30,171</td>
<td>6,429</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2011 | 16,673 | 17,711 | 34,384 | 4,213 | 13.9%  
2012 | 17,332 | 18,851 | 36,183 | 1,799 | 5.2%  
2013 | 18,806 | 19,591 | 38,397 | 2,214 | 6.1%  
2014 | 20,547 | 20,675 | 41,222 | 2,825 | 7.3%  
2015 | 20,632 | 20,952 | 41,584 | 362 | 0.8%  
2016 | 18,554 | 19,406 | 37,960 | -3,624 | -8.7%  

Source: Amtrak, 12/21/2016 and WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2017  
Note: Amtrak operates on the federal fiscal year.

The HSR Empire Corridor Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), dated January 2014, also forecasts growth in passenger rail ridership over the next two decades with the implementation of HSR service in the Empire Corridor. The environmental review for HSR service in the Empire Corridor continues to advance and the selection of a preferred HSR scenario has not yet been identified. Exhibit 2.3 C indicates levels of ridership that are projected at the BFX Station under the HSR scenarios being considered. The DEIS can be found at: [https://www.dot.ny.gov/empire-corridor](https://www.dot.ny.gov/empire-corridor).

Exhibit 2.3 C: BFX Forecasted Rail Trips

<table>
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<th>HSR Scenario</th>
<th>BFX Station</th>
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<tr>
<td>2009 Base Year</td>
<td>23,024</td>
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<tr>
<td>2035 No Build</td>
<td>48,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2035 79 MPH</td>
<td>130,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2035 90 MPH</td>
<td>168,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2035 110 MPH</td>
<td>202,490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: High Speed Rail Empire Corridor Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 3, Appendix B – Ridership and Revenue Forecasting, NYSDOT, pp B-155 and B-158 – B-159

2.3.3. Station and Site Ownership

The existing BFX Station site and station building are owned by the City of Buffalo. The track is owned by CSXT. Ownership of the passenger platform is split between the City of Buffalo and CSXT.

2.3.4. Station Operation and Features

The BFX Station operates Monday to Friday from 6:30 AM to 4:30 PM. The station building and ticketing office are closed on weekends. The station provides minimal public amenities including a small enclosed waiting room, a ticketing counter, restrooms, vending machines, and 20 parking spaces (10 short term and 10 long term), in addition to employee back-of-house spaces. There is one employee who works Tuesday-Friday, 10 hours a day. Another employee covers Monday for the same hours and works elsewhere the other 3 days. The employees are responsible for providing passengers with customer service from behind the ticket counter or on the station floor or platform. This includes janitorial duties and processing tickets.

There is no checked baggage service at the BFX Station. A steel and metal deck canopy exists at the platform with limited passenger conveniences, such as seating or trash receptacles.

Amtrak’s website offers patrons using this station location the ability to find and reserve a guaranteed parking spot near the station, an added convenience for long-term parkers.

2.3.5. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

Though the building itself is ADA accessible, the platform is an outdated and non-ADA-compliant asphalt low-level platform, which means it is approximately eight inches above top-of-rail and passengers must use steps to reach the main level of the train cars. There is no detectable warning system installed along the platform edge and no wheelchair lift for boarding. The parking lot has one accessible parking space, which
meets the minimum requirements for parking lots with less than 25 spaces. The BFX Station is accessible via ADA curb cuts located in front of the station.

2.3.6. Site Visibility

Visibility of the BFX Station is poor due to site topography and siting of the station building as it is set back and below grade from the street edge along Exchange Street. The elevated section of the I-190 Niagara Thruway further diminishes the visual presence of the station building. There is an existing Amtrak Buffalo sign adjacent to the building that identifies the station. However, the trees lining the street limit the sign's visibility for approaching traffic from either direction along Exchange Street.

2.3.7. Access

The BFX Station is accessible by several modes of transportation. Pedestrian access to the BFX Station from the Exchange Street sidewalk is via a set of stairs located directly in front of the station. In addition, a 6-foot-wide sidewalk ramp on the east and west sides of the station run along the station access drive.

Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) Metro Rail’s Erie Canal Harbor and Seneca Stations are located within a quarter-mile walk from the existing station. However, wayfinding signage is lacking. A singular “Metro Rail Ahead” sign located at the northwest corner of Washington and Exchange Streets directs Amtrak passengers to the Metro Rail. A study conducted by NFTA, NFTA Access Enhancement Study for Canalside & Cobblestone Districts, indicated both a need and desire to offer improved wayfinding as well as enhanced connectivity and customer experience between the BFX Station and the Erie Canal Harbor Metro Rail Station.

NFTA Metro Bus stop ID 16511 is located on Exchange Street at the western access driveway. The stop is currently serviced by Metro Bus routes 14, 16, 36, and 74. Metro Bus stop ID 16510 is located in front of the station in the parking lot and is serviced by Metro Bus routes 24, 61, 68, and 79. Parking is available in the station parking lot for Metro Bus layover parking.

NFTA’s Metropolitan Transportation Center (MTC), which serves as the hub for intercity and intracity bus service, is located 0.5 miles north of the station at 181 Ellicott Street. The MTC is accessible via the Metro Rail Church Street Station, through the fare free zone. NFTA is currently considering design strategies to improve connectivity and user experience along North Division Street between the Church Street Station and MTC. The MTC has 21 bays that are used for both intercity (e.g., Greyhound, Trailways, Fullington) and intracity Metro Bus. The intercity portion of the MTC currently services 48 daily bus schedules. The annual ridership at this station is approximately 470,000 passengers.

The BFX Station can be accessed from the I-190 Niagara Thruway via Interchanges 6-Elm Street and 7-Church Street, from NYS Route 33 via Oak Street, and from NYS Route 5 (Skyway) via the Seneca Street exit. Access for bicyclists is available via city streets; there are no designated on-street bicycle routes or off-street bike paths that provide direct access to the station.

2.3.8. Infrastructure

2.3.8.1. Track

The right-of-way at the existing BFX Station has one mainline track located south of the station and platform. East of the station platform the track is at-grade and straight, with overhead bridges at the I-190 Oak Street ramp and Elm Street ramp, and at Michigan Avenue. Beginning at the platform and heading west, the track becomes depressed in relation to street grade, passing under a bridge at Washington Street, passing through a tunnel between Main and Pearl Streets, and again through a tunnel between Perry Boulevard and Erie Street. The horizontal tunnel clear width at this location is 30-feet with a vertical overhead clearance above the top of rail of approximately 16-feet, 10-inches. The track is below street grade and open above between Main Street and Washington Street, with retaining walls on either side of the right-of-
way. The track alignment from around Washington Street to north of Erie Street is on a radius; the track from around Washington Street continuing east is on a straight tangent track. The existing operating speeds are 60 miles per hour (MPH) for passenger trains and 30 MPH for freight trains.

2.3.8.2. Platform

The existing BFX Station has a low-level platform that is 8-inches above top-of-rail. The low-level platform does not allow for level boarding, which does not meet ADA standards. The platform is sloped towards the tracks, which does not follow current design considerations listed in the Amtrak Station Program and Planning Guidelines. The 12-foot-wide asphalt concrete platform has cracks throughout the length. The platform is partially covered by an overhead lighted canopy for approximately 150 linear feet. There is no available seating on the platform beneath the canopy. The steel canopy has extensive visible rusting on its underside. The existing platform is depicted in Figure 2 in Appendix C.

2.3.8.3. Station Building

The existing BFX Station building is a simple red brick structure with a gabled roof, with a gross area of approximately 1,700 square feet (see Figure 1 in Appendix C). The building is in an advanced deteriorated state and does not meet Amtrak’s standards for station design and accessibility. The facility has poor lighting, inadequate restroom facilities, limited accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists, and lacks security. Due to the station’s location approximately eight feet below Exchange Street as well as its setback from the street, the building exhibits little presence and visibility for either pedestrians or motorists.

2.3.8.4. Station Site

The existing BFX Station site is located below street grade with access driveways sloping down towards the station from Exchange Street to the east and the west. The driveways and main parking lot are concrete with concrete and granite curbs. The concrete in the parking lot has cracks formed throughout and the curbs located at the parking lot are deteriorated or missing. The existing conditions of the site are depicted in Figures 3 and 4 in Appendix C.

2.3.8.5 Lighting

Exchange Street and the BFX Station access driveways are illuminated with overhead street lights. The parking lot adjacent to the station does not have lighting.

2.3.8.6 Parking

There is limited parking available in the parking lot in front of the BFX Station. Parking in this lot is limited to one ADA spot and minimal additional parking. Parking spaces in this lot are not delineated. An additional 20 parking spaces are available in an asphalt parking lot adjacent to the station site to the east owned by New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA). Parking spaces in this lot are not delineated. There are additional parking lots located to the west of the station that are owned by the NYSTA. NYSTA leases the parking lots to a private company that operates the lots.

2.3.8.7 Signage

The BFX Station is identified with an overhead sign adjacent to the building. The visibility of the sign for approaching traffic is restricted by trees lining Exchange Street. Wayfinding to Metro Rail and Metro Bus is limited. It was noted in the NFTA Access Enhancement Study for Canalside & Cobblestone Districts that Amtrak has expressed interest in improving connectivity and wayfinding to the Metro Rail and Metro Bus.

2.3.8.8 Landscaping
Landscaping at the station is limited to trees in a landscaped island between Exchange Street and the station parking lot. Trees also line the sidewalk along the access driveways.

### 2.3.8.9 Site Utilities

There is currently a 20-inch water main on the south side of Exchange Street and a 12-inch water main running along the north side of Exchange Street. The building is supplied by a 2-inch water line running from the Exchange Street water main. The sanitary sewer service is provided by the City of Buffalo within a combined sanitary/storm sewer trunk line. That sewer trunk line flows north to south within the center of Washington Street, and branches along Exchange Street with a 24-inch x 36-inch brick sewer flowing west to east. The BFX Station building connects to the sewer at Exchange Street with a 6-inch sewer pipe. The gas service is provided from an 8-inch medium pressure (coated steel anode protected) line running east to west within the south side of Exchange Street. Fiber optic and telephone services are within both the Washington and Exchange Street corridors.

### 2.3.9. Potential Enhancement Opportunities

#### 2.3.9.1. Landscape -

Landscape at the existing BFX station includes street trees growing in grass strips along Exchange Street and a lawn area adjacent to the access drive.

#### 2.3.9.2. Terrain -

The terrain along Exchange Street is relatively flat, however the existing BFX station is sited in a low area several feet below the Exchange Street elevation.

#### 2.3.9.3. Unusual Weather Conditions -

There are no unusual weather conditions within the project area.

#### 2.3.9.4. Visual Resources -

The existing BFX Station is set back approximately 100 feet from Exchange Street and sits +/- eight feet below the street elevation which limits visibility from roadway users. A parking garage and parking lot are directly across the street from the station. To the east is another parking lot and the Niagara Thruway Exit 6 interchange ramps. To the south of the BFX Station is the I-190 Niagara Thruway Viaduct. To the west is a parking lot that is partially under the I-190 Niagara Thruway Viaduct. Visual resources which include parks, historic and archeological resources, natural area, vistas and protected landscapes are not visible from the project area. See Appendix C and D for photos of the existing station and conceptual renderings of the proposed station.

#### 2.3.9.5. Opportunities for Environmental Enhancements -

Environmental enhancement opportunities to the project area include replacement of the deteriorated station with a new state-of-the-art, ADA-complaint station built to the International Green Construction Code (IgCC) and managing stormwater using green infrastructure practices. Additional opportunities for enhancements include creating a hardscaped plaza with lighting and the potential for a public art installation beneath the I-190 viaduct between the station building and Washington Street and wayfinding signage to guide visitors to local attractions and transportation choices.
CHAPTER 3 – ALTERNATIVES

This chapter discusses the alternatives considered and describes the engineering aspects for the Build Alternative for the Project.

3.1. Project Alternatives

Two alternatives were considered for this project: The No-Build Alternative and the Build Alternative, as described below.

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build alternative will result in the continued deterioration of the existing station, resulting in increased maintenance and eventually requiring the structure to be closed. Since this alternative will not satisfy the Project purpose and objectives, it is not considered a reasonable alternative, but will serve as a baseline and be used for comparison with the Build Alternative for the purpose of evaluating impacts.

Build Alternative

Following the Stakeholder Committee’s decision in April 2017 to select the Downtown location for the Amtrak Station (see Appendix A for the resolution), NYSDOT with input from the City of Buffalo and Empire State Development further outlined criteria for selecting an Amtrak station site within Downtown. A Location Study Report that documents the technical evaluation of locations and sites for the placement of a new train/intermodal station to replace the existing Amtrak Buffalo-Exchange Street Station is in Appendix B. The Location Study Report identifies the Downtown Existing Exchange Street: Platform on the North site (existing Downtown Buffalo Amtrak Station site) as the preferred site for the Build Alternative.

The new Buffalo Exchange Street Station would be sited on the same property and in proximity to the current Exchange Street Station location; however, the proposed station would be both higher in elevation and closer to Exchange Street. A 540-foot long, high-level platform would be located directly adjacent to the station building on the north side of the tracks. The new platform would extend from approximately 100’ east of Washington Street to the Oak Street ramp overpass. Track work would start 40’ west of Pearl Street and continue 2,800’ east. All track work would be within the existing railroad right-of-way limits.

Beneath the I-190 viaduct between the station building and Washington Street; a hardscaped plaza with lighting with the potential for a public art installation would welcome passengers to the station or the city depending on their direction of travel.

Passengers who drive to the station would park at the east end of the platform to keep vehicle circulation separate from pedestrian traffic and allow frequent commuters who use mobile ticketing to access the platform directly. Short-term passenger drop-off, taxi queuing, and Metro Bus service is located along Exchange Street to minimize travel distance for visitors and infrequent users who may be unfamiliar with the station. While the new station is under construction, a temporary station could be accommodated elsewhere onsite to maintain ticketing and waiting area functions.

Intercity bus parking for the service combinations that consider intercity bus service would be located in the existing parking lot adjacent to the station to the east (near the Oak and Elm Street ramp overpasses). Bus layover parking would be located in the existing parking lot between Exchange Street and the Michigan Avenue Bridge. Minimal utility relocation would be required if siting the station in the same general location. Existing utilities may need to be upgraded if long distance or intercity bus services are added based on supply requirements and existing water pressure.
3.2. Project Procurement

The project is being procured as a design build project. NYSDOT has developed preliminary plans that have been provided in the Request for Proposals that will contain prescriptive design criteria. The design builder will be responsible for delivering final design and construction in accordance with established standards, policies, regulations.

3.3. Miscellaneous

NYS Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act (SGPIPA)

Pursuant to ECL Article 6, this project shall be compliant with the New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act (SGPIPA).

To the extent practicable this project will meet the relevant criteria as described in ECL § 6-0107.
CHAPTER 4 - SOCIAL, ECONOMIC and ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS and CONSEQUENCES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter documents the social, economic, and environmental conditions within the area that may be affected by the Project and describes any potential consequences of the Build Alternative. The analysis was prepared using the NYSDOT Environmental Manual (TEM).

4.1.1 Environmental Classification

4.1.1.1 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Classification

The Project is 100% State funded; therefore, it is not subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

4.1.1.2 State Environmental Quality review Act (SEQRA) Classification

The NYSDOT has determined that this project is a SEQRA Non-Type II Action, in accordance with 17 NYCRR Part 15 - Procedures for Implementation of State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) because “passenger terminal or station projects and automobile parking area projects” do not qualify as Type II actions under 17 NYCRR Part 15.14(51)(ii). SEQRA Non-Type II Actions include those for which the environmental impacts are not clearly established and require preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Project is being progressed as SEQRA Non-Type II Action for which this EA has been prepared.

4.1.2 Coordination with Agencies

4.1.2.1 Coordination with Agencies

NYSDOT will coordinate review with the appropriate agencies, as necessary, which may include the following:

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
- New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- City of Buffalo

4.2 Social

This section evaluates the Project’s potential effects on social conditions, such as land use, community character, and population.

4.2.1 Land Use

4.2.1.1 Demographics and Affected Population

The Project is located in a non-residential area of the city near Coca-Cola Field, Harbor Center, KeyBank Center, and Canalside. The Project offers a benefit to the community by providing an additional transportation choice.
4.2.1.2 Comprehensive Plans and Zoning

Replacement of the existing station is consistent with the City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan, dated February 7, 2006 and would not require changes to local zoning.

4.2.2 Neighborhoods and Community Cohesion

4.2.2.1 Community Cohesion

The Project involves the replacement of the existing rail station with a new station on the same property and would not divide neighborhoods, isolate part of a neighborhood, or otherwise negatively affect community cohesion. The Project elements, which include replacement of the BFX Station building, replacement of the low-level platform with a new, ADA-compliant high-level platform, hardscaping, landscaping and associated improvements, would enhance transit services and foster connectivity within the region.

4.2.2.2 Home and Business Relocations

The Project would not require the acquisition of occupied dwellings or businesses or displacement of residents, businesses, or employees.

4.2.3 Social Groups Benefited or Harmed

This Project would provide the community with a new ADA-compliant station while improving pedestrian connections to the station by enhancing the pedestrian crossing at Washington Street and providing a plaza connection to the Buffalo Metro Rain Station on Main Street.

4.2.3.1 Elderly and/or Disabled Persons or Groups

The Project would provide elderly and disabled persons a new ADA-compliant station. Improvements would include replacement of the existing low-level platform with a new, ADA-compliant, high-level boarding platform that would enable disabled and elderly passengers to board trains without the assistance of steps and lifts.

4.2.3.2 Transit Dependent

The Project would provide transit dependent persons with a new train station that would improve connections to nearby transit facilities including the Buffalo Metro Rail and bus service by providing wayfinding signs to Metro Rail and Metro Transportation Center, new lighted sidewalks and new safer crosswalk at Washington Street.

4.2.3.3 Low Income, Minority and Ethnic Groups (Environmental Justice)

The Project is not located in or near areas with minority and/or low-income populations. Moreover, as the Project would not result in adverse impacts, no disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and/or low-income populations would occur.

4.2.4 School Districts, Recreational Areas, and Places of Worship

4.2.4.1 School Districts

The Project is located within the City of Buffalo School District. There are no schools within or adjacent to the project area.
4.2.4.2 Recreational Areas

No recreational areas are located within or adjacent to the project limits.

4.2.4.3 Places of Worship

There are no places of worship within or adjacent to the project area.

4.3 Economic

No businesses would be closed or relocated as a result of the Project. Provisions would be made that would allow customers continued access to all businesses located within surrounding areas during construction. As a result, no adverse economic effects expected from this project.

4.4 Environmental

4.4.1 Wetlands

4.4.1.1 State Freshwater Wetlands

A review of the NYSDEC Freshwater Wetlands Map quadrangle and NYSDOT Environmental mapper indicates there are no NYSDEC-regulated (Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) Article 24) freshwater wetlands within or adjacent to the project area.

4.4.1.2 State Tidal Wetlands

A review of the NYSDEC GIS wetland data files indicates that there are no NYSDEC jurisdictional tidal wetlands or regulated adjacent areas within or near the project area; therefore, ECL Article 25 does not apply.

4.4.1.3 Federal Jurisdiction Wetlands

A review of National Wetlands Inventory indicated that there are no Federal Jurisdictional Wetlands within or adjacent to the project area.

4.4.2 Surface Waterbodies and Watercourses

There are no surface waters, regulated streams or stream banks, or Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers within or adjacent to the project area.

4.4.3 Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers

There are no wild, scenic, or recreational rivers within or adjacent to the project area.

4.4.4 Navigable Waters

There are no Navigational Waters within or adjacent to the project area.
4.4.5 Floodplains

4.4.5.1 State Flood Insurance Compliance Program -

A review of the NYSDOT Environmental Viewer indicated that there are no floodplains within or adjacent to the project area.

4.4.6 Coastal Resources

According to the Coastal Zone Area Map from the NYSDOS Coastal Zone Management Unit, the Project is not located in a State Coastal Zone Management (CZM) area or in or near a Coastal Erosion Hazard Area.

4.4.7 Groundwater Resources, Aquifers, and Reservoirs

NYSDEC aquifer GIS data files have been reviewed and it has been determined that the Project is not located in an identified Primary Water Supply, Principal Aquifer Area or Sole Source Aquifer area.

4.4.8 Stormwater Management

A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) with the appropriate sediment and erosion control measures will be developed. A SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges is not required since the project area drains into a combined sewer system. However, the Project would incorporate green infrastructure principles to reduce stormwater runoff.

4.4.9 General Ecology and Wildlife Resources

A site visit to the project area indicated that there is no fish, wildlife, or waterfowl habitat.

4.4.9.1 Habitat Areas, Wildlife Refuges, and Wildfowl Refuges

There are no habitat areas, wildlife refuges or wildfowl refuges within or adjacent to the project area.

4.4.9.2 Endangered and Threatened Species

According to the Natural Heritage Database database, there are no state-protected, threatened, or endangered species located in or near the project area.

4.4.9.3 Invasive Species

A site visit to the project area did not indicate any presence of known invasive species within the right-of-way.

4.4.9.4 Roadside Vegetation Management

Existing roadside vegetation consists primarily of maintained grass strips and street trees. Additional tree plantings and turf areas would be incorporated into the Project.
4.4.10 Critical Environmental Areas

4.4.10.1 State Critical Environmental Areas

According to information obtained from NYSDEC, there are no Critical Environmental Areas within or adjacent to the project area.

4.4.10.2 State Forest Preserve Lands

According to information obtained from NYSDEC, there are no state forest preserve lands within or adjacent to the project area.

4.4.11 Historic and Cultural Resources

4.4.11.1 National Heritage Areas Program

The Project is within the United States National Park Service designated Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor; however, the station reconstruction would not affect any historic, cultural, or natural resources which contribute to the National Heritage Area designation.

4.4.11.2 State Historic Preservation Act – Section 14.09

“The Project is State funded and is therefore subject to Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA) of 1980. The SHPA requires state agencies to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to properties listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places (SR) to the fullest extent practicable, and to fully explore all feasible and prudent alternatives that would avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to such properties.

Based on the results of a cultural resources screening prepared for the project, NYSDOT found that there is no potential for the undertaking to cause such impacts, due to no eligible or listed properties identified.” The documentation was sent to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and they concurred as stated in a letter dated April 17, 2018.

4.4.11.3 Architectural Resources

The cultural resources screening, using the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), found that there are no architectural resources that are listed in or eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places within or adjacent to the Project Area.

4.4.11.4 Archaeological Resources

The Project would not involve activities within previously undisturbed areas. Therefore, there is no potential for the presence of intact archaeological resources within the proposed area of disturbance for the Project.

4.4.12 Parks and Recreational Resources

The project is not located within or adjacent to any State or National Heritage Areas and there are no listed nationally significant natural areas within, or adjacent to, the project area. The Project does not impact parklands or facilities that have been partially or fully federally funded through the Land and Water Conservation Act. No further consideration under Section 6(f) is required. The Project does not involve the use of land from a park to which Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program funds have been applied, therefore Section 1010 does not apply.
4.4.13 Visual Resources

The Project would have negligible effects on the existing visual corridor. Impacts to the visual environment include the introduction of new visual elements, such as sidewalks, streetscaping, and reconfigured intersections. To enhance the visibility of the new station, the existing ground elevation would be raised and the new station building would be sited closer to Exchange Street. The predominant viewer groups would be motorists and pedestrians, and from their perspective, there would be a positive visual improvement.

4.4.14 Farmlands

Based on a review of the NYS Agricultural District Maps for Erie County, the Project is not located in or adjacent to an Agricultural District.

4.4.15 Air Quality

The Project is located in Erie County, which is considered an ozone nonattainment area. The Project is considered an exempt project, as per Table 2 in Section 93.126 of 40 CFR.

An air quality analysis for carbon monoxide (CO) is not required since this Project would not increase traffic volumes, reduce source-receptor distances by 10% or more, or change other existing conditions to such a degree as to jeopardize attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The Project does not require a project-level conformity determination.

A Mesoscale Analysis is not required for the Project since it does not significantly affect air quality conditions over a large area and is not a regionally significant project.

4.4.16 Noise

The project proposes to replace the existing Buffalo Exchange Street Station with a new station which will be sited on the same property and in proximity to the current Exchange Street Station location. A new station platform will also be constructed on the south side of the station. A General Noise Assessment was conducted in accordance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidance manual "Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment", FTA-VA-90-1003-06 to assess the impacts of both rail generated noise and construction noise which may be expected to occur as a result of the Project. The General Noise Assessment identified an existing "moderate" noise impact at the Courtyard by Marriott Buffalo Downtown/Canalside due to the locomotive warning horn blowing. This project will not result in an increase to existing noise levels beyond what is already present and therefore a noise analysis is not required. Since the project will not result in an increase to existing noise levels and since rail operations (e.g. horn blowing) are not under the jurisdiction of the Department, no noise abatement measures were considered. Refer to Appendix E for the General Noise Assessment.

4.4.17 Asbestos

The Pre-Demolition Survey, dated April 2018, indicates that asbestos containing materials are present in the existing train station. Refer to Appendix E for the Pre-Demolition Survey. The Design-Builder would be responsible for removal and abatement of asbestos containing material (ACM) and obtaining any necessary variances and/or permits.

4.4.18 Hazardous/Contaminated Material

The Environmental Site Assessment Report, dated, May 2018, indicates that Contaminated non-hazardous fill of an inconsistent nature is expected to be present across the property and will be encountered during construction within the project limits. Unless incorporated into the site plans and re-used on-site, all
excavated soils should be stockpiled for subsequent characterization sampling and laboratory analysis unless direct loading and transport to a disposal facility is allowed based on the test results in this report. The Design-Builder would be responsible for removal and disposal of any hazardous or contaminated material and obtaining any necessary variances and/or permits.

4.5 Construction Impacts
Construction effects would be temporary and would cease with the completion of construction. Although the project would be planned, designed, scheduled, and staged to minimize disruption to abutting communities and the environment during construction, short term impacts would occur.

Temporary effects to adjacent neighborhoods could include:

- Traffic congestion and detours;
- Presence of construction equipment, materials and staging areas;
- Noise and vibrations from construction equipment and vehicles;
- Airborne dust and possible mud on roadway surfaces; and
- Removal of or damage to vegetation (e.g., trees, shrubs, grass).

Overall, no long-term adverse construction-related effects are anticipated for the Build Alternative.

4.6 Conclusion

This Final Design Report/Environmental Assessment (FDR/EA) has been prepared to provide sufficient information and documentation of the analyses and conclusions used for determining whether the proposed action may or will not have a significant effect on the environment. Based upon this assessment, the Department concludes that the proposed project has no potential for significant adverse social, economic or environmental effects. A Determination of No Significant Effect (DONSE) will be filed in accordance with 17 NYCRR 15.10.