



**Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee
2025 Project Review and Consultation Application**

**Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
“Bicycle and Pedestrian Access to DL&W Station via Shoreline Trail”**

Niagara River Greenway Commission Consultation and Review Form

Date of Submittal: 9/17/2025

Project Registration Number (office use only):

Type of Review Required (please check one):

☒ Mandatory Consultation for proposals seeking Greenway Funding

☐ Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement for proposals not seeking Greenway Funding

PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name:	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
Mailing Address:	181 Ellicott St, Buffalo, NY 14203
State:	NY
Zip Code:	14203
Federal ID#:	16-6008839
Charities Registration #:	

PROJECT TYPE (Please check only ONE)

☒ Trail Development / Improvement

☐ Interpretation / Cultural Monuments

☐ Ecosystem / Riparian Habitat Restoration

☐ Stewardship

☐ Niagara River Greenway Placemaking / Public Access / Wayfinding

FUNDING COMMITTEE

☐ Host Community Standing Committee

☐ Ecological Standing Committee

☒ Buffalo and Erie County Standing Committee

☐ State Parks Standing Committee

☐ Unsure at this time / N/A

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED

\$323,034

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES

Source	Amount
Confirmed, Transit Infrastructure Grant/Federal Earmark	\$1,000,000
Confirmed, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation	\$1,933,500
Anticipated, Transportation Alternatives Program	\$4,274,111

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name:	<u>Bicycle and Pedestrian Access to DL&W Station via Shoreline Trail</u>
Location (include GPS coordinates if possible):	Empire State Trail/Shoreline Trail between Michigan Avenue and South Park Avenue (42.873186, -78.875734)
Project Site Address:	164 Ohio St, Buffalo, NY 14203
State:	NY
Zip Code:	14203
Minor Civil Division(s):	
County:	Erie County
Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other):	Own

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL

Name:	Kimberley A. Minkel
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PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT

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1. Project Summary

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Access to DL&W Station project will construct a multi-use trail, entrance and gateway structures, landscaping buffers, lighting, sidewalks, fences, wayfinding signage and stair bypass features between the intersection of Michigan & Ohio Street and South Park Avenue along the Shoreline Trail, a segment approximately 0.4 miles in length. This project will enhance connectivity between the recently completed transit station and the surrounding multi-use trail network. Final design has been progressing alongside NFTA's Shoreline Rehabilitation and is expected this fall. NFTA expects to contract the work this winter with a notice to proceed with construction activities in early 2026 and phased construction completion by early 2028. This project is important because, under existing conditions, the right-of-way surrounding the NFTA-Metro Rail DL&W Station is narrow, uninviting, and unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists. These accessibility issues create a gap in the trail network, limit public interaction with Buffalo's waterfront and other downtown attractions, jeopardize the success of future development connected to the NFTA-Metro Rail DL&W Station, and make activities in and around the property less attractive. With concurrent investments in DL&W Station and Shoreline Rehabilitation projects, now is the time to complete these critical updates to a gap in the trail network.

2. Support for Niagara River Greenway Vision

The proposed project advances the Niagara River Greenway vision, including the principles, goals, and criteria that define that vision through the following:

- a. Excellence – This project builds off more than \$200 million in private investment, \$30 million in publicly-funded pedestrian-oriented infrastructure projects in the Canalside and Cobblestone Districts, and \$125 million in public investment in the Station and Shoreline Rehabilitation. NFTA’s investments into DL&W Station make a direct connection between the transit network and the multi-use trail network linking Buffalo’s waterfront destinations, providing seamless access for people traveling along the water. The proposed bicycle and pedestrian access improvements will encourage trail network usage, facilitate continued redevelopment of the Canalside and Cobblestone Districts and link communities in the Old First Ward via a world class trail facility.
- b. Sustainability – Public transit infrastructure investments in DL&W Station encourage smart growth and sustainable land use practices recommended by WNY Regional Economic Development Council’s Strategy for Prosperity, One Region Forward, and the City of Buffalo’s Downtown Waterfront Improvements Plan by creating infrastructure supportive of healthy and attractive development and enhanced quality of life that promotes the ecological, economic, and physical viability of the region’s waterfront.
- c. Ecological Integrity & Restoration – The NFTA has worked with community stakeholders continuously through the development of DL&W Station to ensure the project contributes to the community’s knowledge of and access to the natural landscape of the Buffalo River along the Shoreline Trail. DL&W Station artwork features birds sighted at the nearby Tifft Nature Preserve calling attention to the unique landscape and wildlife native to the Buffalo Waterfront. Through the remainder of its work, NFTA will continue to work diligently to ensure nearby aquatic and wildlife habitats are not adversely impacted by the proposed access improvements. By extending Metro Rail access to the DL&W Station and strengthening the bicycle and pedestrian accessibility to the surrounding area, this project has the potential to catalyze further improvements to the Buffalo Waterfront, including redevelopment of the upstairs of the DL&W Station building.
- d. Public Well-Being – The proposed project will enhance the traveling experience for thousands Metro Rail riders who use transit to access employment, regional trails and recreation facilities and other tourist destinations on Buffalo’s waterfront. While DL&W Station will soon provide a coatless connection between Metro Rail and KeyBank arena, the proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Access improvements will restore a gap in the trail network and support growth in the use of these facilities known to improve public health and well-being.
- e. Accessibility and Connectivity – Under existing conditions, public access along the Buffalo River parallel to the DL&W Trainshed has been interrupted to allow for the construction of DL&W Station and shoreline rehabilitation projects. With the successful completion of DL&W Station,

shoreline rehab, forthcoming outdoor deck improvements and bicycle and pedestrian access projects, however, this project will open the DL&W Trainshed to the traveling public and significantly improve accessibility and connectivity of the Shoreline Trail. Affordable and accessible connections between the Canalside and Cobblestone Districts and growing tourism, health, education, and life-science clusters along Main Street, where Metro Rail operates, will also be significantly improved through the implementation of this project.

- f. Authenticity – Up until the late 1970’s the DL&W served both freight and passenger rail operations with trains arriving and departing from both the upper and lower levels of the building. In 1979 the train station was demolished and the remaining trainshed repurposed as the maintenance and storage yard for Metro Rail. In the spirit as its former use as an inter-modal transportation hub along Buffalo’s waterfront, DL&W Station along with the proposed bicycle and pedestrian access improvements will return transit service to the DL&W Trainshed and reactivate the site for multi-modal transportation activity.
- g. Celebration – Accompanying the significant investments that have been made in and around the Canalside and Cobblestone Districts in recent years has been a rapid expansion of special events along the waterfront including concerts, sporting events, historic tours, and other recreation activities that celebrate Buffalo’s heritage as a waterfront community. This project will provide enhanced transit and pedestrian access to the Districts and the surrounding waterfront that provides residents and visitors a convenient and affordable transportation option to attend these events and enjoy the rejuvenated public spaces along the Buffalo River. Currently, it is estimated that 10 to 15 percent of Canalside eventgoers use Metro Rail to and from their event.
- h. Partnerships – Improving access to DL&W Station will provide the NFTA the opportunity to partner with several public and private entities including the Buffalo Sabres/KeyBank Center, and Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation to further enhance connections in the Canalside and Cobblestone Districts. With DL&W Station integrated into the waterfront trail network as a multi-modal transportation hub, additional partnerships may also be forged with neighboring park-and-ride, kayak, canoe, and/or recreational watercraft activity that integrate transit service and passengers with the surrounding Greenway, Shoreline Trail, and Buffalo Waterfront.
- i. Community Based – Through the DL+W Multimodal Access Study, the NFTA worked with a Project Steering Committee to develop a vision for the future of the trail connection and solicit input on the many alternatives considered for multimodal access improvements across the Cobblestone District. The NFTA will continue to engage these groups and the public throughout project implementation to ensure community-based citizen involvement in the project. As evidence of its alignment with the public’s vision for their community’s future, this project has been included in many local planning documents and initiatives. Most recently, the project was cited in the City of Buffalo’s Downtown Waterfront Improvement Plan. Finally, the project is included in GBNRTC’s 2040 Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan for its ability to promote the smart growth and livability principles espoused within the Plan.

3. Project Budget

The following budget represents expected costs for the project:

ITEM	RCWJRF	Federal Earmark	NYS TAP	NRG	Total Project Cost
Design	\$433,650	\$258,884	-	-	\$692,534
Construction	\$1,499,850	\$741,116	\$4,274,111	\$323,034	\$6,838,111
Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-
Operation & Maintenance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$1,933,500	\$1,000,000	\$4,274,111	\$323,034	\$7,530,645

Notes:

- Acquisition – The proposed project will be constructed on NFTA property. Current designs include the option to construct a deck over a portion of the Cotter Slip to relieve a choke point. The Cotter Slip is owned by City of Buffalo.
- Operation & Maintenance – DL&W Station, the adjacent NFTA-Metro Rail Yard & Shop Facility, and the proposed project are currently owned, maintained, and operated by NFTA. NFTA will operate and maintain the new station, as well as all related infrastructure constructed as part of this project to provide improved multi-modal access to the station. A facility management and maintenance plan is being developed to ensure the project is properly maintained and fully operable for public use.

4. Local Support

Community, stakeholder and partner input and feedback have been central to the development of the proposed bicycle and pedestrian access improvements. The concepts to be advanced and implemented through this project were developed through a robust stakeholder process included in the DL+W Multimodal Access Enhancement Study. Stakeholders involved in this process included representation from other public entities, including City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning and Department of Public Works, GBNRTC, Erie County Dept. of Planning, NYS Parks Department, NYS Dept. of Transportation, Niagara River Greenway, and Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation; community-based organizations, including Buffalo Place, GObike Buffalo, Buffalo-Niagara Waterkeeper, and Western New York Land Conservancy / Riverline LLC; and private companies, such as the Buffalo Sabres and Savarino Companies. Stakeholder and community feedback informed both development of design alternatives and selection of the preferred alternatives.

5. Project Scope and Details

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Access to DL&W Station via Shoreline Trail project scope includes improvements to Riverwalk/Shoreline Trail and Station Access (Work Area 1), the Bridge View Plaza (Work Area 2), and the Michigan Avenue Trail Entrance (Work Area 3)..

Located at the intersection of the Shoreline Trail, Niagara River Greenway, and Empire State Trail, the DL&W Trainshed and its surrounding spaces provide critical access for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling along the City of Buffalo's waterfront to Canalside, the Cobblestone District, and areas to the north and south. This project aims to transform the current narrow, uninviting public spaces into a safe and accessible multimodal network that connects people to the Buffalo River and downtown attractions. The area has the potential to serve as a gateway to the waterfront for people coming from the south and southeast, enhancing connectivity to key transit corridors and waterfront spaces.

The project seeks to overcome existing barriers such as confusing intersections, sharp turns, driveways, and chain link fencing that hinder pedestrian and cyclist access. By improving these conditions, the project will create a transportation network that supports the adaptive reuse of the DL&W Trainshed, facilitates both commuter and recreational activity, and strengthens connections along Buffalo's waterfront. The vision is to create a dynamic space that enhances the experience of those traveling to and from the station while celebrating the area's historical significance.

The proposed project follows the existing Empire State Trail/Shoreline Trail alignment in the City of Buffalo from just west of the DL&W Trainshed to the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Ohio Street.

WORK AREA 1 DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Work Area 1 (WA1) includes a 1,300' portion of the Riverwalk that begins approximately 300' west of the DL&W Trainshed and includes the narrow section of trail bounded by the Buffalo River and the terminal itself (note that work west of the DL&W Trainshed only includes potential railing replacement). The existing conditions of this work area are not conducive to pedestrians and bicyclists, including surface deterioration and nonstandard, varying trail widths.

Specific design elements in Work Area 1 include:

- Site Furniture (including bike racks, planter boxes, seating & waste receptacles)
- Decorative pavement markings
- New Lighting (including safety/security lighting and decorative/accent lighting)
- Railing Improvements
- Updated Signage
- Catenary Pole Relocation
- Wayfinding

WORK AREA 2 DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Work Area 2 (WA2) includes an unprogrammed, 5,000 square foot swath of pavement near the NFTA's DL&W Trainshed employee access entrance. The existing asphalt surface was recently reconstructed due to the seawall collapse in 2022. The Shoreline Restoration Project restored the adjacent section of the seawall, which included new pavement and railing throughout the area; however, it remains unprogrammed..

Specific design elements in Work Area 2 include:

- Site Furniture (including bike racks, seating, seated swings, & waste receptacles)
- Shade Structure
- Seat Walls and Landscape Walls
- Surface Treatment (concrete, unit paver installation, decorative pavement markings)
- New Lighting (including both light poles & seat wall lighting)
- Railing Improvements
- Updated Signage
- Fencing Improvements
- Landscaping
- Programmable Space

WORK AREA 3 DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Work Area 3 (WA3) encompasses the Shoreline Trail entrance approaching Michigan Avenue. This includes crosswalks and safety enhancements to the NFTA facility entrance. This work area also includes improvements to a trail pinch point around the E.M. Cotter boat slip.

Specific design elements in Work Area 3 include:

- Surface Treatment (concrete replacement & decorative pavement markings)
- Lighting (pedestrian scale poles)
- Updated Signage
- Fencing Improvements
- Landscaping
- Gateway Feature
- E.M. Cotter Slip Modifications

RENDERING #1

This image shows part of the Shoreline Trail/Riverwalk that runs along the southern side of the DL&W Station. The walkway is bordered by the brick exterior building wall on the north and a black aluminum railing on the south. The exterior wall shows several of the existing industrial windows along the entire length, as well as four of the existing building columns. The perspective of this rendering is slightly above eye level, looking diagonally down the length of the promenade.

Starting on the west, positioned directly against the building wall, there are several large, three-dimensional letters in bold that spell out “DL&W STATION.” They are made of industrial materials and serve as placemaking signage and a photo opportunity along the trail.

Two of the columns located along the exterior wall of the building appear painted in this rendering; however, there is a note that states that the painted columns previously proposed in the 2022 Multimodal Access Study will no longer be included in the design due to historic preservation regulations.

Three large, turquoise planter boxes are positioned against the building with dense, leafy foliage. The planters are separated by a wooden bench and some yellow, metal bike racks.

A smooth, standard concrete surface is located directly next to the building, with an exposed aggregate section along the seawall. The two surface treatments are divided by a wide, green pavement stripe that runs through the center of the trail width.

Black aluminum railing with vertical bars and decorative diagonal elements is embedded into the seawall capstone along the waterfront. The railing design matches the existing railing along the riverwalk and Canalside.

Lastly, there is a dimension marked on the rendering for the 6.5-foot seawall expansion that is part of the Shoreline Rehabilitation Project. This dimension shows that the total trail width in this section will increase from about 14 feet to 20 feet.

9. Current seawall extends expanded in wall rehabilitation project

Painted building columns proposed in planning study will not be included per SHPO regulation.

+/- 14'

+/- 20'

+6.5'

RENDERING #2

This perspective is facing northeast, looking down at the triangular Bridge View Plaza. The plaza is bordered by the same black aluminum railing along the water (Buffalo River on the south and Cotter Slip on the east), and an artistic fencing element, containing a long section of brightly colored, vertical panels forming a playful fence along the northwest side of the work area, separating the plaza from the NFTA facility and tracks.

The plaza space is arranged so that seating areas, and artistic elements are all accessible by paved surfaces. A lawn area provides flexible program space.

Starting at the lower west corner of the plaza, along the back fence line, there is a wooden bench swing placed along the trail facing the water. Directly east of the swing is a paved area with picnic tables and sunshades, which is bordered to the northeast by a flexible lawn space. Gabion walls are located between the lawn and fence line, forming a textured outer edge. On the other side of the lawn space is a black metal shade structure with seating underneath, placed on a paved surface.

A walkway path separates the lawn area from precast concrete seat walls and lounge chairs that are located towards the middle/southeast corner of the plaza.

A couple trees and other foliage is incorporated throughout the design to give the space a park-like feel. Slender pedestrian-scale light poles are spaced along the winding paths and near gathering areas.

Program Elements

1. Precast concrete seat walls
2. Gabion landscape walls
3. Bench swings
4. Lounge chairs
5. Shade structure w/ seating below
6. Artistic fencing element
7. Flexible lawn
8. Railing
9. Pedestrian scale lighting



RENDERING #3

The third rendering is a rendered plan view of the Bridge View Plaza with a differing layout. This aerial view shows slightly less green space to minimize impacts to the existing NFTA parking lot. The same amenities from the previous image are incorporated into this view; however, placements, dimensions and/or quantities vary due to the decrease in available space to accommodate NFTA parking needs.

The layout shown decreases the footprint of the existing parking lot by reducing the lane width and eliminating one parking space.

Decorative pavement markings are shown on this rendering on top of the trail surface, including a wide green solid line along the center of the main trail path and some light blue half circles, varying in size, along the outer edges of the pavement.

Some of Work Area 3 is included in this aerial view, including the Cotter Slip, which has a shaded shape shown in the northwest corner labeled for proposed decking. The edge of the shape along the water is curved to support the winding alignment of the trail.



Fencing / screening

Shade Structure

Gabion Walls

Dinette Seating

Pavement Markings

Plant beds

lawn

Gabion Walls

Bike Racks

Lounge Seating

Concrete Seat Walls

Option 1

- Restripe parking to reduce footprint
- Existing parking 38
- Proposed 37

RENDERING #4

This image is an aerial view (facing north) of the Trail Entrance near the Cotter Slip and the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Ohio Street. The northern tip of the Cotter Slip is shown in the top left corner of this image with a shaded area representing potential decking in the northwest corner. The trail travels from Work Area 2 on the west side of the Cotter Slip around the slip on the north, crosses the NFTA facility entrance with a new crosswalk, and ties to the Empire State Trail at the northwest corner of the Michigan Avenue and Ohio Street intersection. Potential improvements to the existing sign at this location are noted.

A long, narrow, green-planted strip and new anti-climb security fencing runs between the NFTA fence/tracks and the trail. Plantings include medium-height shrubs providing a visual barrier.

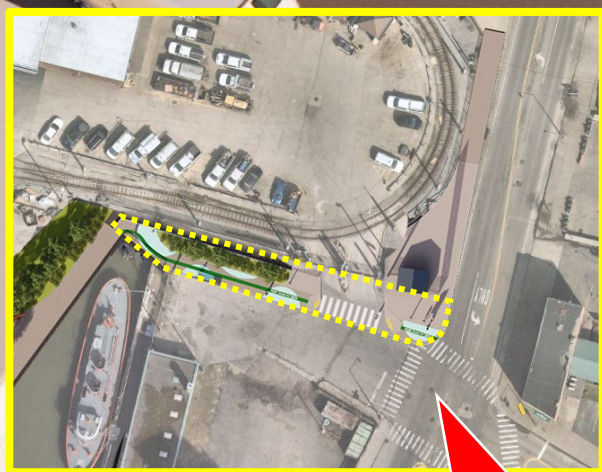
Small, modern lampposts are placed along the walkway to provide pedestrian scale lighting.

There are decorative pavement markings along the trail that are similar to the other work areas; however, additional wayfinding is incorporated into the markings, including arrows and labels for the Shoreline Trail. There is also a gateway feature near the northeast corner of the Cotter Slip that provides additional wayfinding and serves as an entry point for the riverwalk.

This design avoids impacting the southern side of Ohio Street, which is currently used for parking at the Cotter building.

Program Elements

1. Plantings – screening for parking
2. Pedestrian scale lighting
3. Potential improvements to existing signage
4. New fencing
5. Gateway element
6. New crosswalk
7. Decorative pavement markings
8. Potential decking over Cotter Slip



RENDERING #5

The final image is another aerial rendering that focuses on the Cotter Slip from a bird's eye view. This image shows a wood deck extending partially over the water at the northwest corner of the slip. It is made of wood and has a metal railing along the curved edge. The boat and existing cluster pile are included in the image to show that the deck fits when the Cotter is in the slip.

Program Elements

1. Plantings – screening for parking
2. Pedestrian scale lighting
3. Potential improvements to existing signage
4. New fencing
5. Gateway element
6. New crosswalk
7. Decorative pavement markings
8. Potential decking over Cotter Slip



6. Project Timeline

ITEM	DATE
Design Completed	October 2025
Construction Bid/Proposal Due	December 2025
Construction Notice to Proceed	February 2026
First Phase Completion	January 2027
Project Completion	January 2028