



January 19, 2017

Hon. Mayor Byron W. Brown
City of Buffalo Train/Intermodal Station Site Selection Committee
City Hall
65 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Re: Buffalo Train/Intermodal Station Site Selection Study

Dear Mayor Brown and Members of the Selection Committee:

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership is the region's private sector economic development organization and regional chamber of commerce. On behalf of our members, who employ more than a quarter of a million people in the Buffalo Niagara region, we are pleased to offer the following comments on the Buffalo Train/Intermodal Station Site Selection Study.

We encourage the Station Selection Committee to be guided by a set of core value-driven goals in conducting a comprehensive analysis of potential station alternatives. These goals should be consistent with our regional vision for Buffalo Niagara and build upon the most significant economic revitalization efforts presently occurring throughout the region. Such a project has potential beyond a simply modernized transportation facility; it has the potential to be a key investment in leveraging a more sustainable and growing Buffalo Niagara economy.

1. Implementation of One Region Forward

Investment in all significant infrastructure projects such as a new rail terminal should be consistent with the vision set forth by One Region Forward (1RF). This regional growth plan has a stated objective of "Connecting Our Places by Expanding & Diversifying our Transportation Options." The selected location of a station should build upon the region's expanding intermodal transportation system. The facility must prioritize integration of multiple forms of mobility to effectively move people into and throughout the region. The most effective location for doing so would be at the nexus of our existing automobile, transit, bicycle and pedestrian systems: downtown Buffalo.

A new rail station should be planned not simply as an intercity travel facility, but also in direct conjunction with other transportation modes such as the NFTA Metro Rail and the NFTA Bus Terminal. A new station should sufficiently accommodate connection with buses, automobiles, ridesharing, pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Consideration for future function as a commuter rail station between our regional population and downtown Buffalo should also be an important factor and any final design should not preclude this function in the future.

2. Revitalization of Downtown Buffalo

The initial impetus for this study was to replace Buffalo's aging, obsolete and structurally failing downtown Exchange Street Station. A new station should build upon Downtown Buffalo's ongoing revitalization efforts which have made great strides in growing a place to live, work and recreate. The location of a station downtown also presents an opportunity for a branded gateway into the region's most significant economic district and visitor destinations. Any new intercity and intermodal station should most directly support such significant economic drivers as Buffalo's central business district and Canalside.

Such a facility should also be an important component of repairing the urban fabric of downtown. Given the location of the existing rail line beneath Interstate 190, a new facility has the opportunity to improve the physical connection and mitigate barriers between the Central Business District and Canalside.

3. Leveraging the Economic Opportunity of our Bi-National Region

We also advocate that new station alternatives should be evaluated based upon economic opportunity. Increasingly, the business community is looking towards our Bi-National region and building relationships with partners in Southern Ontario as Buffalo Niagara's most significant opportunity. The evaluation of station alternatives should strongly consider the economic and growth opportunities that such a facility can support, most especially strengthening our physical connectivity within the International Golden Horseshoe region that extends from Buffalo to the Greater Toronto Area. This is a globally significant economy of more than \$400 billion annual GDP and a population of 9 million residents. Toronto's Union Station is located in the heart of downtown Toronto and serves as a vibrant, intermodal starting point for visitors and business travelers to experience their city. Such a location in Buffalo should consider similar qualities and efficiently and directly connect the economic opportunity of the bi-national region with the core of our City.

As you know, the Buffalo Niagara Partnership has been a partner in significant downtown, regional and international planning and infrastructure development efforts. We view the investment in a new rail facility as an important next step in supporting an expanding and sustainable 21st century economy. We are pleased to have the opportunity for comment in this initial evaluation phase and look forward to continuing engagement as the study progresses towards a set of alternatives for consideration.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. Leonard
Senior Director, Economic Development