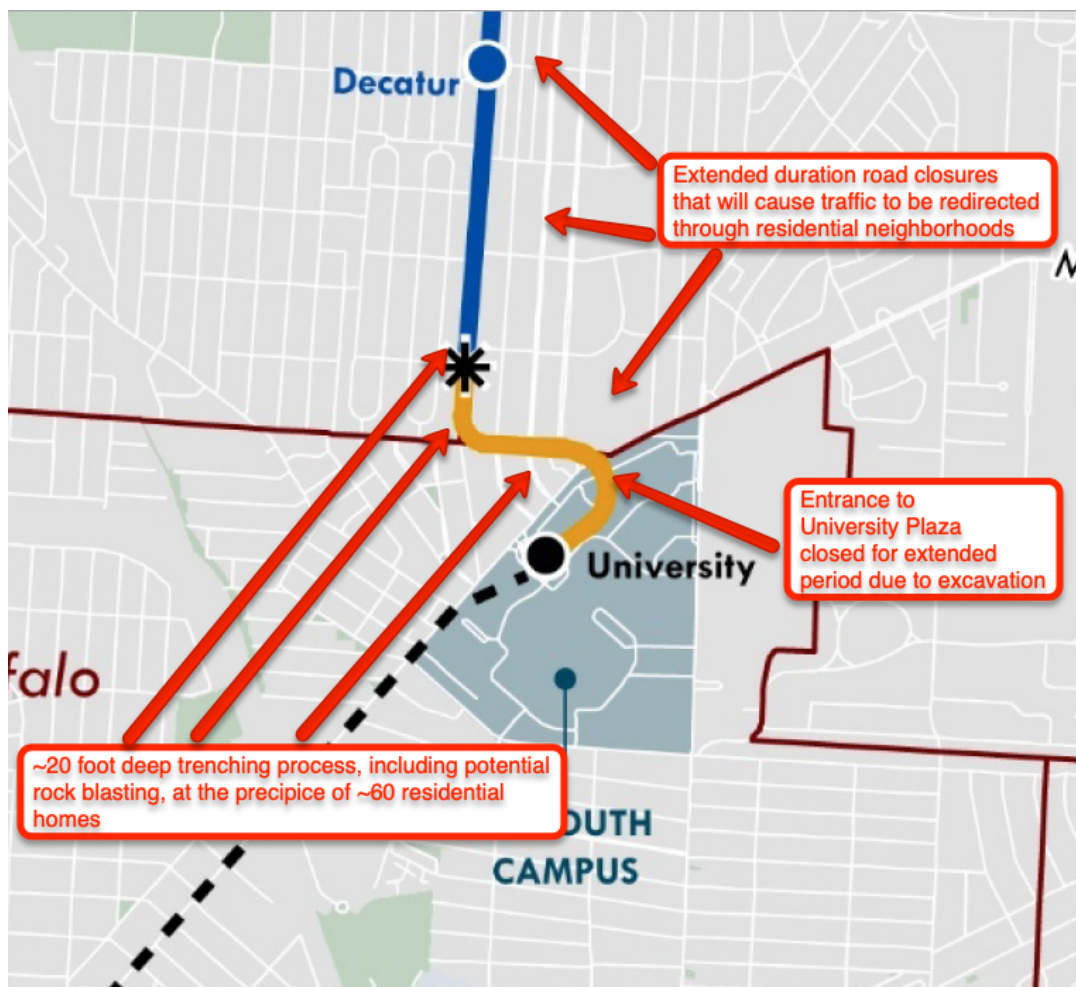


## Stop the Metro Meeting Notes - 5/24/23

Meeting was brought to order at 7:03 pm with approximately 18 attendees. It was explained that this gathering was meant to be a forum for those persons opposed to the extension of the Metro Rail.

### History/NFTA LPA Report

Following was a discussion regarding the history underlying the Metro Rail extension leading up to the rejection of the underground Bailey Avenue route in favor of the less costly route running underground from the University Station to Main St., then west on Kenmore Ave to Niagara Falls Blvd, where the rail would make a 90 degree turn, come above ground to then run north on Niagara Falls Blvd. Maps of the route and traffic patterns from NFTA's LPA (Locally Preferred Alternative Refinement Technical Report) were displayed on overhead screens.



Mention also was made of the recent pink markings on Kenmore Ave. and Niagara Falls Blvd sidewalks placed there by a Philadelphia company KCI Technologies locating the utilities to be moved due to construction. It was mentioned that the pink markings were connected with the NFTA's creation of an environmental impact statement to ultimately be presented in support of the request for federal funds; it did not mean that construction was going to happen soon.

A 2018 Buffalo News article and the likely erroneous statement that the extension has wide community support was also mentioned.

Discussion ensued about eminent domain issues, such as loss of property along Niagara Falls Blvd including between 5 ft (Tonawanda side) plus 8 ft (Amherst side) of property frontage to accommodate the widening of Niagara Falls Blvd., as well as some private homes to allow new park and ride parking, the potential \$1 billion+ cost of the expansion (2018 costs), disruption to surrounding neighborhoods during construction and the fact that the light rail system is and/or would be outdated on completion with the advent of electric and autonomous vehicles.

### **Petition**

The petition was read out loud, asking if anyone had changes to be made to the text of the petition. No one responded with any changes, additions or deletions.

Discussion ensued about the number of signatories to date, the need to encourage friends, family members, neighbors and co-workers to sign, the potential need for a paper copy of the petition to offer to people with names to be added later to the online petition. It was also noted that a person does not have to live in the affected neighborhood in order to add his/her signature to the petition.

### **Path Forward**

Several suggestions were made about future endeavors including:

- Use of the Telegram app to foster communication between opponents of the extension – Instructions would be posted on the Stop the Metro website for obtaining the app;

- Setting up a not-for-profit corporation – a vote was taken and the majority was opposed to taking this step at this time;

- Possibility of accepting donations to cover expenses associated with the opposition. It was pointed out that the “donate” button on the Change.org website is not specifically tied to Stop the Metro;

Use of road signs/lawn signs – one audience member stated that he never notices such things;

Use of social media to promote the opposition to the extension – Facebook, nextdoor.com;

Contacting local news organizations to obtain more wide-ranging coverage of the opposition – it was suggested to wait on this option until the volume of people attending meetings/opposing the extension grows;

Consistency in scheduling meetings;

Contacting merchants who would be adversely affected by the construction;

Use of Public Comment Map on the NFTA website –a link would be created on stopthemetrol.com;

Attend the NFTA public meeting to be scheduled this summer.

One audience member expressed confusion regarding the tenor of the meeting: were people opposed to having the light rail in their neighborhood or were they opposing the use of light rail altogether? The audience member pointed out benefits of light rail, e.g. reduction of air pollution. Discussion ensued about the underlying purpose of the opposition including viable options to the use and placement of the extension.

The next meeting is set for June 14, 2023 at 7pm at the Cornerstone Community Church.

The meeting was adjourned 8:13 pm.