Southtowns Connector/
Buffalo Outer Harbor Project

Final Design Report/ Final Environmental Impact Statement Section 4(f) Evaluation

PIN 5044.01

May 2006

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Commissioner - Thomas J. Madison, Jr.
Regional Director - Alan E. Taylor

FHWA-NY-EIS-06-02F
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
REGION ONE

FINAL DESIGN REPORT/FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

for

PIN 5044.01: Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project
Erie County, NY

Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)
and 49 U.S.C. 303

by

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
New York State Department of Transportation

Cooperating Agencies:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Department of State, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

ABSTRACT:

This report describes the social, economic and environmental effects of improving a segment of NYS Route 5 from the Buffalo Skyway Bridge touchdown to NYS Route 179; constructing a new arterial road in the City of Buffalo from I-190 to Tifft Street; reconstructing Ohio Street in the City of Buffalo from Michigan Avenue to NYS Route 5; and implementation of various multi-modal access improvements along these roadways. The Alternatives proposed include the Null Alternative; the Modified Improvement Alternative involving simplification of the existing road system; the Boulevard Alternative involving the conversion of NYS Route 5 from an expressway to a six-lane boulevard; and the Hybrid Alternative involving a combination of the Modified Improvement and Boulevard Alternatives. This report supports the Modified Improvement Alternative.

04/28/06
Date

Philip J. Clark
Director, Design Division
New York State Department of Transportation

5-10-06
Date

Robert Arnold
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM:

Alan E. Taylor
Regional Director, Region 5
New York State Department of Transportation
125 Main Street
Buffalo, New York 14203
Phone: (716) 847-3238

Robert Arnold
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building
Albany, New York 12207
Phone: (518) 431-4127

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.1 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Action

This report is a Final Design Report/Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Section 4(f) Evaluation (FDR/FEIS/4(f)) for the Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor (STC/BOH) Project, prepared to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

ES.2 Description of the Action

The proposed action involves undertaking a series of road improvements on the NYS Route 5 corridor along the Lake Erie waterfront from the Buffalo Skyway Bridge to Milestrip Road (NYS Route 179). The corridor includes portions of the City of Buffalo, City of Lackawanna, and the Town of Hamburg. These improvements are intended to:

- Provide improved and/or new road access to specific redevelopment sites within the corridor, such as the NFTA Outer Harbor Lands, Union Ship Canal Redevelopment Area, former LTV/Republic Steel site, and the former Bethlehem Steel site;

- Reconfigure the Route 5/Fuhrmann Boulevard/Ohio Street complex along the Buffalo Outer Harbor into a system designed to be more compatible with the proposed land uses included in local plans, consisting of either a wide, at-grade boulevard or a combination arterial/parallel access road system;

- Provide and preserve adequate service for commuter/commercial traffic between the Southtowns and downtown Buffalo; and

- Improve local access to and along the waterfront for other modes including transit, bicycles and pedestrians.

ES.3 Description of Other Proposed Actions in the Area

One NYSDOT road project is scheduled within and extending beyond the project area (PIN 513415 Southtowns Corridor [LaSalle-Kane]). This involves mill and overlay and limited reconstruction on a portion of Route 5 from LaSalle Street in the vicinity of the Ford Motor Plant in Hamburg to Kane Street in the City of Lackawanna. Local road and trail improvements are planned for the following locations:

- A new internal access road being implemented by the City of Buffalo for the Union Ship Canal Redevelopment Area, extending from Commerce Drive in the City of Lackawanna;

- NYSDOT's planned in-kind replacement of the Ridge Road Bridge passing over the CSX rail corridor in the City of Lackawanna;

- A new truck access road proposed by the Town of Hamburg connecting Lake Avenue with Milestrip Road (Route 179);

- An Outer Harbor Multi-Purpose Greenway being designed by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority and Erie County to create interim and permanent pedestrian/bicycle access improvements along Fuhrmann Boulevard (north of Gallagher Beach) and Ohio Street; and

- A Tifft Street Greenway being designed by the City of Buffalo to create interim and permanent pedestrian and bicycle access improvements along Fuhrmann Boulevard (south of Gallagher Beach) and Tifft Street corridors.

ES.4 Summary of Alternatives under Consideration

ES4.1 Null Alternative

The Null Alternative involves implementing only currently planned and committed transportation projects within the STC/BOH project area. For purposes of this assessment, the Null Alternative includes only those improvements currently on the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) 2002-2006 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

ES.4.2 Build Alternatives

Three feasible build alternatives were formulated to improve transportation access within the STC/BOH project area. The alternatives are generally distinguished by the alignment of NY Route 5 and Fuhrmann Boulevard between the southern terminus of the Skyway to Ridge Road.

The plans, profiles and typical sections for all alternatives are located in **Appendix A** of the FDR/FEIS/4(f) document but are described here:

- **Modified Improvement Alternative ($95.1 Million).** This alternative reconfigures the NY Route 5/Fuhrmann Boulevard complex along the Buffalo Outer Harbor into a system designed to be more compatible with the proposed land uses included in local plans (see **Figure ES-1**).

– A new diamond interchange constructed just south of the southern terminus of BIN 1001579 (Skyway) to improve local access to a reconstructed Fuhrmann Boulevard and the NFTA Outer Harbor lands.

  This new interchange will replace the existing slip ramps currently serving the Outer Harbor. A roundabout will be constructed at the intersection of the interchange cross road and the reconstructed Fuhrmann Boulevard on the west side of NY Route 5 (discussed later).

– Replacement of BIN's 1001559, 1001549, 1001539, with more aesthetically sensitive structures and the removal of BIN's 1001569 and 1074270 on NY Route 5 and the removal of BIN 2260780 on Fuhrmann Boulevard.

– The original proposal to lower the elevation of NY Route 5 will not be included in this alternative. Public comments related to the NY Route 5 elevation indicated a desire to retain the embankment section to lessen the effects of snow drifting on NY Route 5, reduce the frequency of vehicular/animal accidents and to reduce project costs. The NY Route 5 embankment that currently exists shall remain from BIN 1001559 ("Beachline") to BIN 1001579 (Tifft Street).

– The original proposal to construct a pedestrian structure over NY Route 5 has not been included in this alternative. The proposed pedestrian structure has been replaced with a more cost-effective pedestrian/eco-sensitive underpass. This structure will be aesthetically sensitive and allow for direct access to Tifft Nature Preserve from the Small Boat Harbor and connect the multi-use paths that exist now or those that will be constructed. This structure, along with BIN 1001579 (Tifft Street) and BIN 1001549 (Ohio Street) shall also provide a means of travel for small and medium size animals to limit vehicle-animal collisions.

– Reconstruction of Fuhrmann Boulevard into a two way roadway on the western side of NY Route 5 from the Union Ship Canal to the U.S. Coast Guard Station.

  The reconstructed Fuhrmann Boulevard will include the installation of sidewalks and/or multi-use paths along with architectural lighting, a new closed drainage system, landscaping, signage and striping from the Union Ship Canal to the U.S. Coast Guard Station.

  The recommended roadway section of Fuhrmann Boulevard shall consist of:

  <u>Union Ship Canal to Tifft Street</u>

  2 – 3.30 m (11 ft.) lanes (one lane in each direction)

  <u>Tifft Street to Michigan Street</u>

  4 – 3.30 m (11 ft.) lanes (two lanes in each direction) with a 2.40 m (8 ft.) median. A new roundabout at the new interchange cross road and Fuhrmann Boulevard is also proposed.

Michigan Street to the U.S. Coast Guard Station

3 – 3.30 m (11 ft.) lanes (one lane in each direction with a continuous two-way center left turn lane)

A new northbound slip exit ramp will be constructed from NY Route 5 to Ohio Street. Ohio Street will terminate at a "T" intersection with Fuhrmann Boulevard (on the western side of NY Route 5). The section of Fuhrmann Boulevard presently located to the east of NY Route 5 between Tifft Street and Ohio Street will be removed. A new entrance drive will be constructed from Tifft Street to access the Tifft Nature Preserve. The Tifft Street Greenway will be reconstructed to compliment roadway reconstruction.

The existing Tifft Street ramp (Ramp "H") to southbound NY Route 5 is removed and replaced by a new slip ramp constructed south of Tifft to link Fuhrmann Boulevard southbound to NY Route 5 southbound. In addition, two ramps will be constructed north of Tifft Street to complete the Tifft Street/NY Route 5 interchange.

The existing bike/pedestrian path is reconstructed/maintained along Fuhrmann Boulevard (on western side of NY Route 5) to compliment roadway reconstruction.

- **Boulevard Alternative ($124.0 Million).** This alternative reconstructs the NY Route 5/Fuhrmann Boulevard complex to convert it into a single, six-lane boulevard to serve both through traffic and local access from the southern terminus of the Skyway to Ridge Road (see **Figure ES-2**). This alignment incorporates a wide landscaped median to separate northbound/southbound lanes and lowering of the roadway's elevation to grade. North of the Skyway, the road connects to the remaining portion of Fuhrmann Boulevard and includes improvements to provide access to Times Beach and the US Coast Guard Station. Vehicular access to properties is provided through curb cuts along the new boulevard, while bicycle/pedestrian access is provided along the lakeside of the roadway. All grade separations at east-west roads are eliminated and replaced with signalized intersections. The Boulevard Alternative also reconstructs or widens the Father Baker Bridge over the Union Ship Canal to accommodate six lanes and pedestrian/bicycle access, as well as reconstruction/widening of one bridge crossing over existing rail lines in the corridor.

- **Hybrid Alternative ($131.9 Million).** This alternative is a combination of alignments used in the Improvement (as depicted in the June 2005 DR/DEIS) and Boulevard Alternatives (see **Figure ES-3**). From the southern terminus of the Skyway to Ohio Street, the Hybrid Alternative is an alignment similar to the Improvement Alternative (as depicted in the June 2005 DR/DEIS) --- maintaining NY Route 5 and Fuhrmann Boulevard as separate facilities and converting Fuhrmann Boulevard to a continuous, two-way, two-lane roadway on the west side of NY Route 5 between the US Coast Guard Station and Ohio Street. At Ohio Street, NY Route 5 would transition at a signalized intersection to a six-lane boulevard with a wide center landscape median, similar to the characteristics of the Boulevard Alternative, and Fuhrmann Boulevard is removed south of Ohio Street.

ES.4.2.1 Project Components in All Build Alternatives

The three build alternatives identified above involve a series of other road improvements in key locations within the STC/BOH Study Area, including the following.

- **NY Route 5 – Ridge Road to South Buffalo Railroad Bridge.** Passing through the Bethlehem Park section of the City of Lackawanna, this project component adds a new southbound lane to NY Route 5 along the former Bethlehem Steel site frontage to create a total of six travel lanes in this segment (see **Figures ES-1, ES-2 and ES-3**). The South Buffalo Railroad Bridge is reconstructed and widened to allow for this improvement. In addition, the existing center turn lane along this segment is converted to a landscaped median (with left turn lanes at key intersections) and streetscape improvements implemented to provide safe bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access (e.g., bicycle trail, sidewalks, transit shelters, bus curb cuts, etc.).

- **NY Route 5 – South Buffalo Railroad Bridge to NY Route 179 (Milestrip Road).** This project component incorporates streetscape and safety improvements along NY Route 5 as it passes through a community business district in the Woodlawn section of the Town of Hamburg (see **Figures ES-1, ES-2 and ES-3**). These improvements are similar to those proposed along NY Route 5 between Ridge Road and the South Buffalo Railroad Bridge with the exception of any road widening, given that this segment currently contains six travel lanes.

- **Ohio Street Improvements.** From Michigan Avenue to NY Route 5 through Buffalo's First Ward neighborhood, this project component reconstructs Ohio Street so that it provides better local access between downtown Buffalo and the Lake Erie waterfront (see **Figure ES-4**). The alignment includes three lanes (two travel lanes and a center turn lane) within the existing curb-to-curb width of the roadway and streetscape improvements to provide safe pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access. In addition, this project component includes construction of a segment of the Industrial Heritage Trail along the west side of Ohio Street and the east side of Ganson Street, including a sidewalk marked with commemorative medallions with locations for interpretive stations.

- **New I-190/Tifft Street Arterial.** This project component consists of construction of a new four-lane (or two-lane expandable to four-lane) arterial road connecting I-190 to Tifft Street, with signalized intersections at Seneca Street, Elk Street, and South Park Avenue (see **Figure ES-5**). The alignment of the new road consists of construction of new on/off ramps at the existing Seneca Street interchange on I-190 and it follows a former railroad right-of-way to a new fixed bridge over the Buffalo River beyond the river's navigable portion for commercial vessels. The alignment passes through the eastern portion of the former LTV/Republic Steel site. In addition, a new bicycle/pedestrian trail is constructed along the full length of the alignment.

ES.5 Preferred Alternative

ES.5.1 Identification

The NYSDOT, the lead agency for this project, recommends that the **Improvement Alternative**, as described in the June 2005 Design Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft 4(f) Evaluation (DR/DEIS/Draft 4(f)) with modifications as described in the description portion of this recommendation, be progressed.

ES.5.2 Description

The plans, profiles and typical sections for the recommended alternative are located in **Appendix A** of the FDR/FEIS/4(f) document but are described here:

a. Reconfiguring the NY Route 5/Fuhrmann Boulevard complex along the Buffalo Outer Harbor into a system designed to be more compatible with the proposed land uses included in local plans. The Modified Improvement Alternative shall consist of:

- A new diamond interchange constructed just south of the southern terminus of BIN 1001579 (Skyway) to improve local access to a reconstructed Fuhrmann Boulevard and the NFTA Outer Harbor lands.
- Replacement of BIN's 1001559, 1001549, 1001539, with more aesthetically sensitive structures and the removal of BIN's 1001569 and 1074270 on NY Route 5 and the removal of BIN 2260780 on Fuhrmann Boulevard.
- The original proposal to lower the elevation of NY Route 5 will not be included in the preferred alternative. Public comments related to the NY Route 5 elevation indicated a desire to retain the embankment section to lessen the effects of snow drifting on NY Route 5, reduce the frequency of vehicular/animal accidents and to reduce project costs. The NY Route 5 embankment that currently exists shall remain from BIN 1001559 ("Beachline") to BIN 1001579 (Tifft Street).
- The original proposal to construct a pedestrian structure over NY Route 5 has not been included in the preferred alternative. The proposed pedestrian structure has been replaced with a more cost effective pedestrian/eco-sensitive underpass. This structure will be aesthetically sensitive and allow for direct access to Tifft Nature Preserve from the Small Boat Harbor and connect the multi-use paths that exist now or those that will be constructed. This structure, along with BIN 1001579 (Tifft Street) and BIN 1001549 (Ohio Street) shall also provide a means of travel for small and medium size animals to limit vehicle-animal collisions.
- Reconstruction of Fuhrmann Boulevard into a two way roadway on the western side of NY Route 5 from the Union Ship Canal to the U.S. Coast Guard Station.

The reconstructed Fuhrmann Boulevard will include the installation of sidewalks and/or multi-use paths along with architectural lighting, a new closed drainage system, landscaping, signage and striping from the Union Ship Canal to the U.S. Coast Guard Station.

The recommended roadway section of Fuhrmann Boulevard shall consist of:

Union Ship Canal to Tifft Street

2 – 3.30 m (11 ft.) lanes (one lane in each direction)

Tifft Street to Michigan Street

4 – 3.30 m (11 ft.) lanes (two lanes in each direction) with a 2.40 m (8 ft.) median. A new roundabout at the new interchange cross road and Fuhrmann Boulevard is also proposed.

Michigan Street to the U.S. Coast Guard Station

3 – 3.30 m (11 ft.) lanes (one lane in each direction with a continuous two-way center left turn lane)

b. The reconstruction/rehabilitation of NY Route 5 from Ridge Road south to NY Route 179 into a six lane (three lanes in each direction) boulevard with a 3.60m (12') wide landscaped median.

   This portion of the project will include the installation of sidewalks and multi-use paths along with architectural lighting along the west side of NY Route 5.

c. The construction of a new arterial road, called the **Tifft Street Arterial** through the former LTV/Republic Steel site connecting I-190 (at an improved interchange in the Seneca/Elk/Bailey area) to Tifft Street, aligned east of the existing CSX railroad corridor.

   This will include the installation of sidewalks and/or multi-use paths along with architectural lighting along the length of the new arterial.

d. Reconstruction of Ohio Street into a landscaped arterial. This will include the installation of sidewalks and a multi-use path along the west side of Ohio Street.

   The pedestrian facilities along Ohio Street include architectural lighting, signing and site specific markers in conjunction with the Industrial Heritage Trail. These elements are in concert with the 4(f) Evaluation which resulted in a signed Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Highway Administration, New York State Department of Transportation and New York State Historic Preservation Office.

The current total estimated construction cost for the recommended alternative is $95.1 million.

ES.5.3 Justification

This Preferred Alternative has been recommended based upon it most appropriately meeting the stated project objectives, balancing major stakeholder concerns and addressing public

comments received during the public comment period. The proposed changes to the Improvement Alternative (as described in the DR/DEIS/Draft 4(f) document dated June 2005) are the direct result of major stakeholder input and public comments.

The project as proposed, while addressing project issues, maintains independent utility in conjunction with regional transportation plans and transportation system components. Segments within the overall project may be built over a period of years while still maximizing positive results in the areas of public access and economic development.

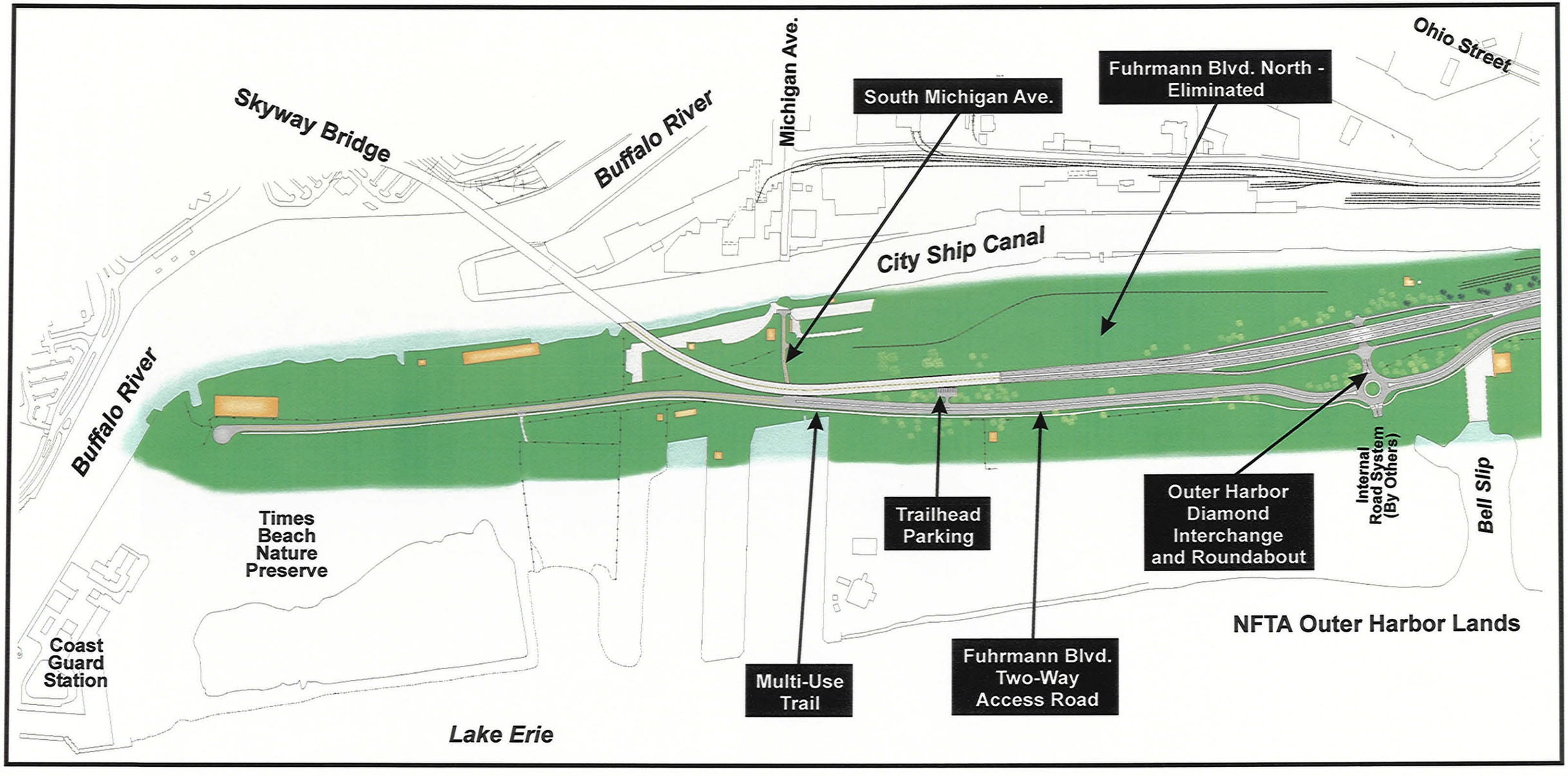
ES.5.4 Project Limits

The overall project limits as described in the DR/DEIS/Draft 4(f) document dated June 2005 remain the same. It is recommended that the project be staged, however, due to the overall project cost of $95.1 million.

The recommended first portion of the project to be constructed is the northern portion of NY Route 5 (north of the Union Ship Canal) and all of Fuhrmann Boulevard, north of the Union Ship Canal. This first segment would consist of all work described in ES.5.2.a. above and totals approximately $35.01 million.

ES.6 Summary of Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts/Benefits

Table ES-1 summaries all anticipated social, economic, and environmental impacts and benefits associated with each of the Build Alternatives, compared to the Null Alternative.



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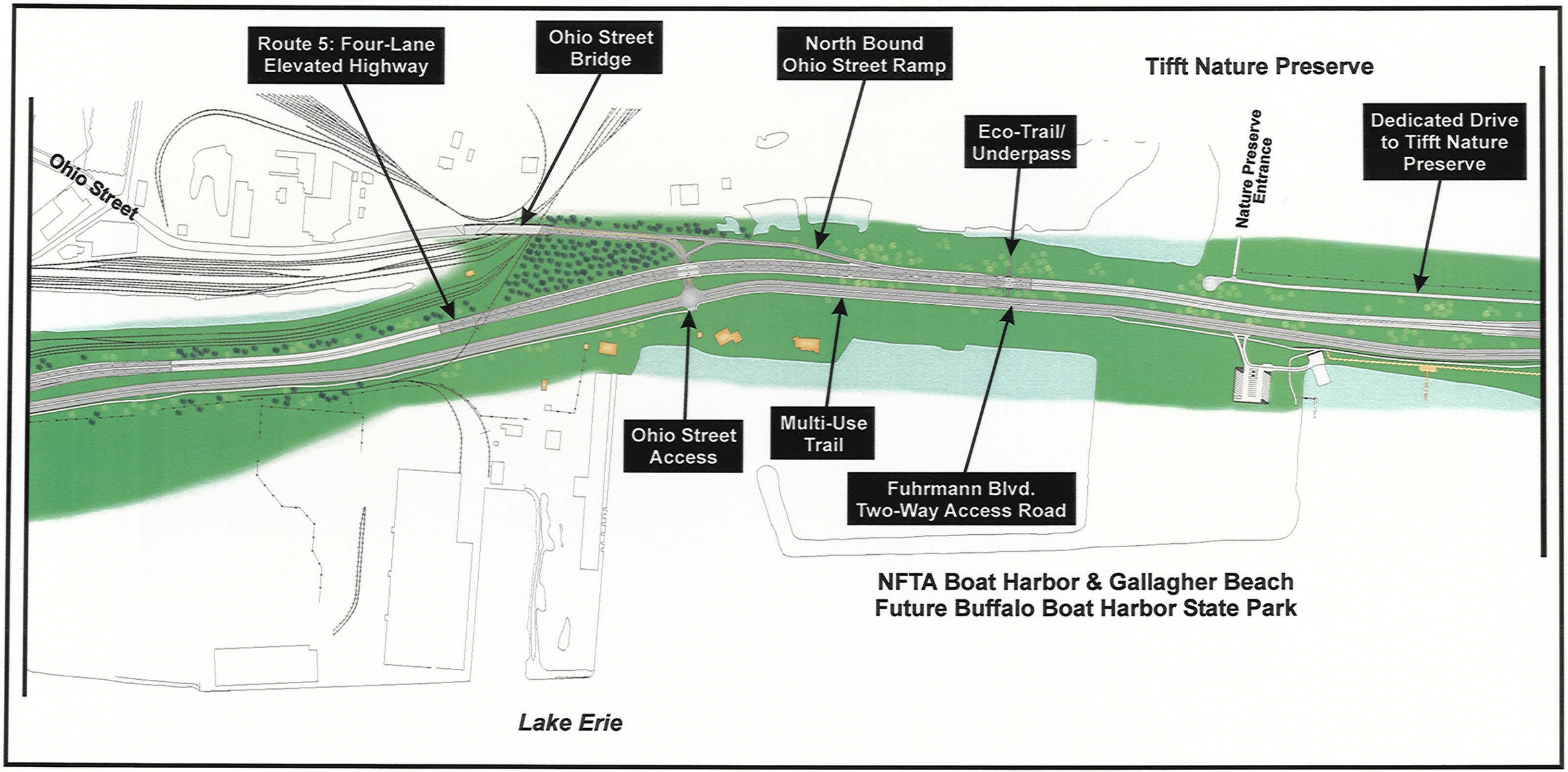
N E S W

ES-1

Modified Improvement Alternative - North of Ohio Street

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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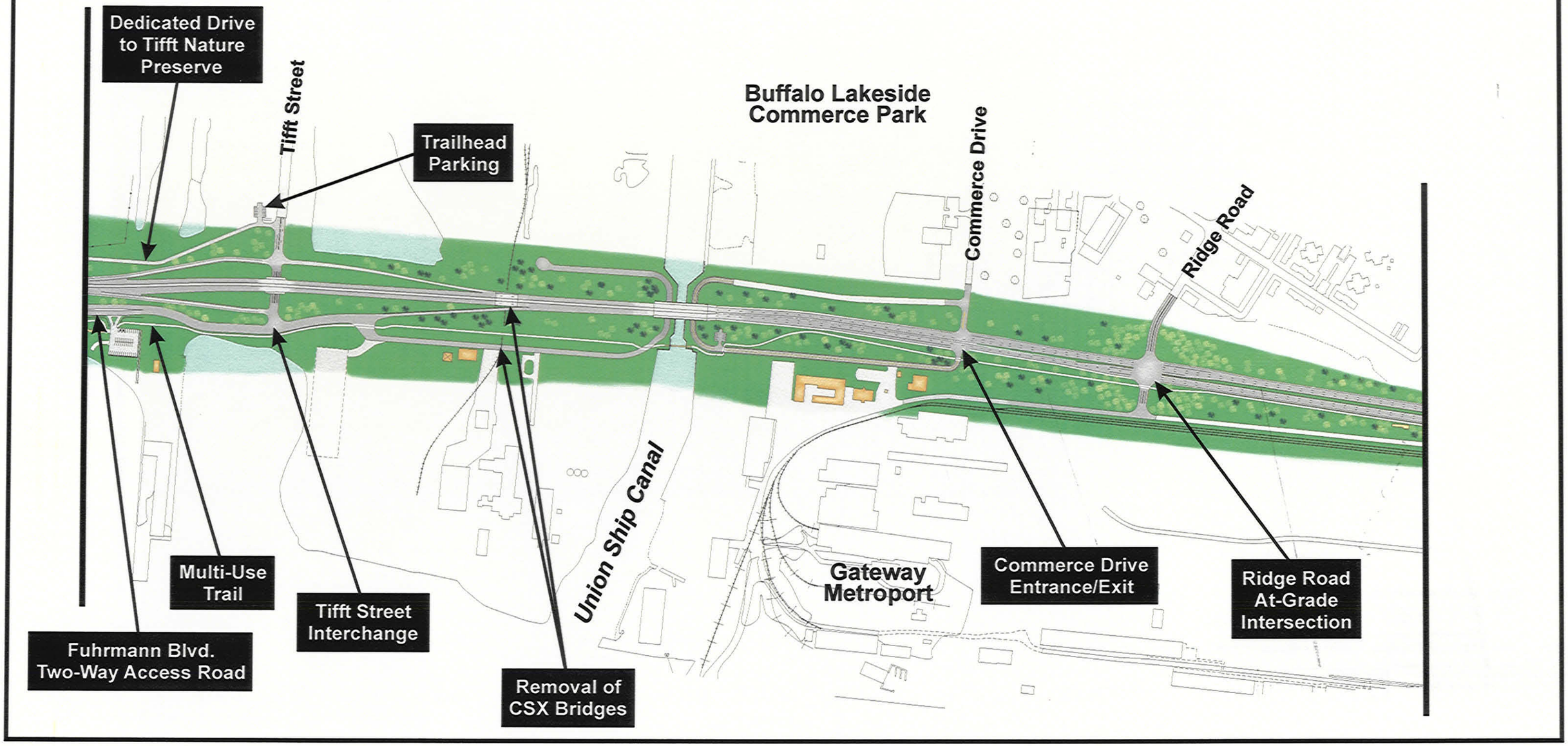
N E S W

ES-1 (continued)
Modified Improvement Alternative - North of Tifft Street

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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N E S W

ES-1 (continued)
Modified Improvement Alternative - North of Ridge Road

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project

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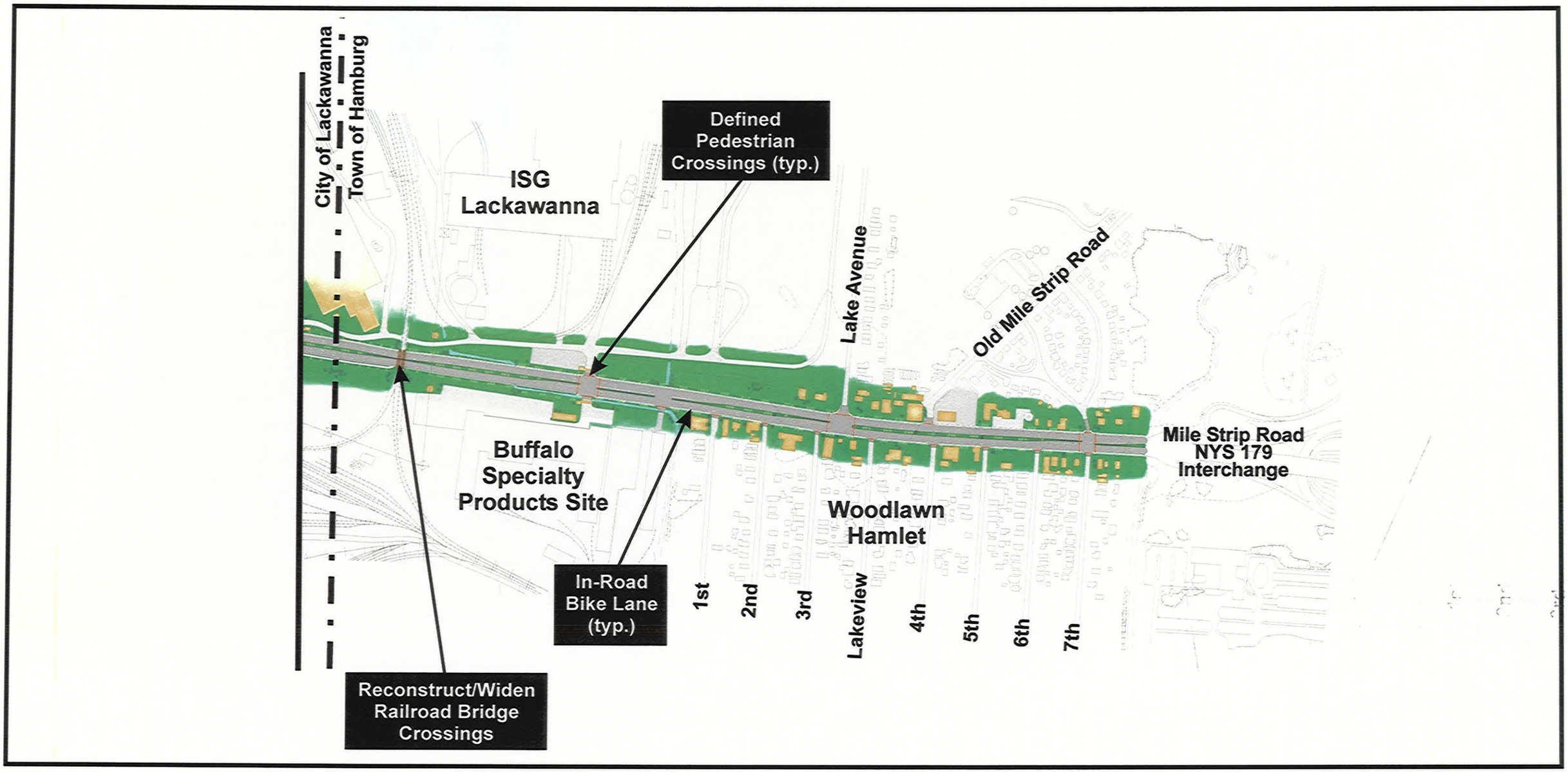
ES-1 (continued)
Modified Improvement Alternative - North of Town of Hamburg Line

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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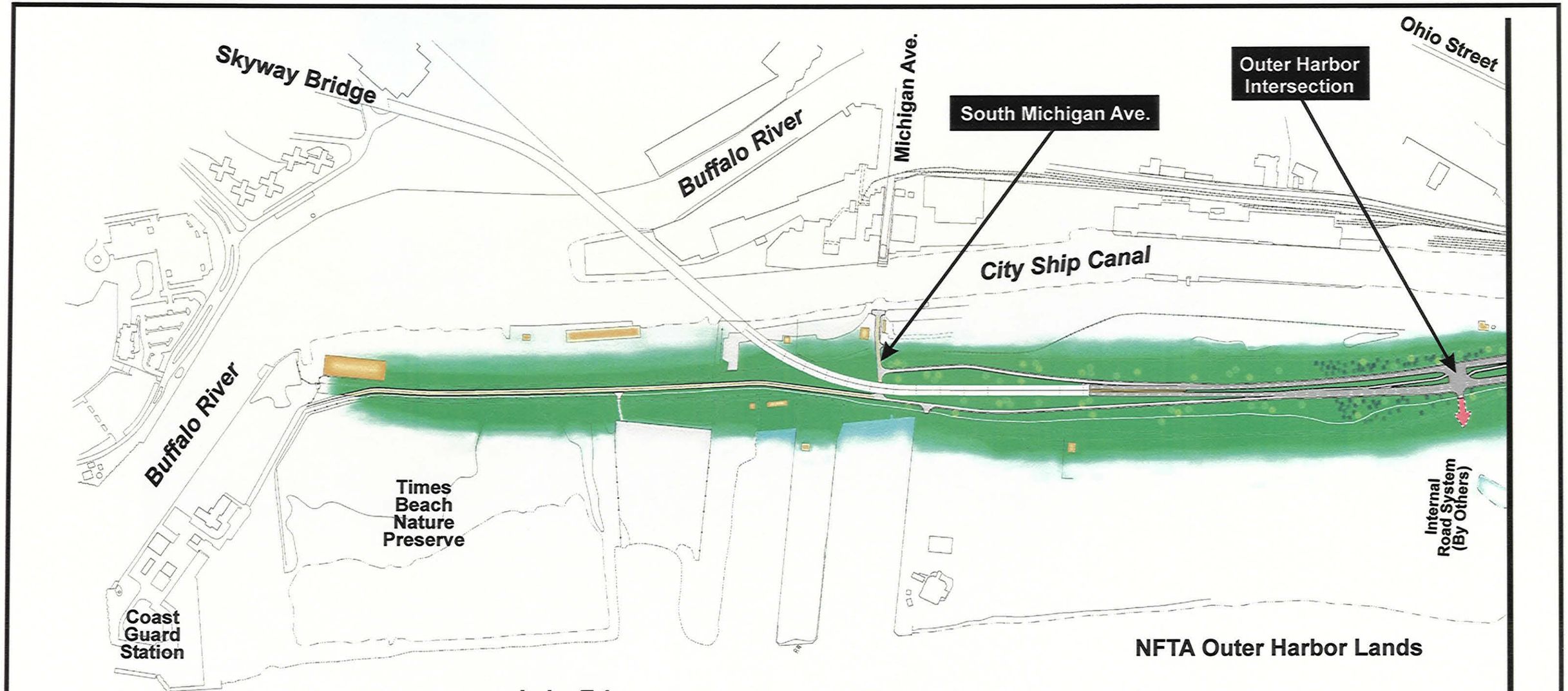
ES-1 (continued)
Modified Improvement Alternative - North of NYS 179

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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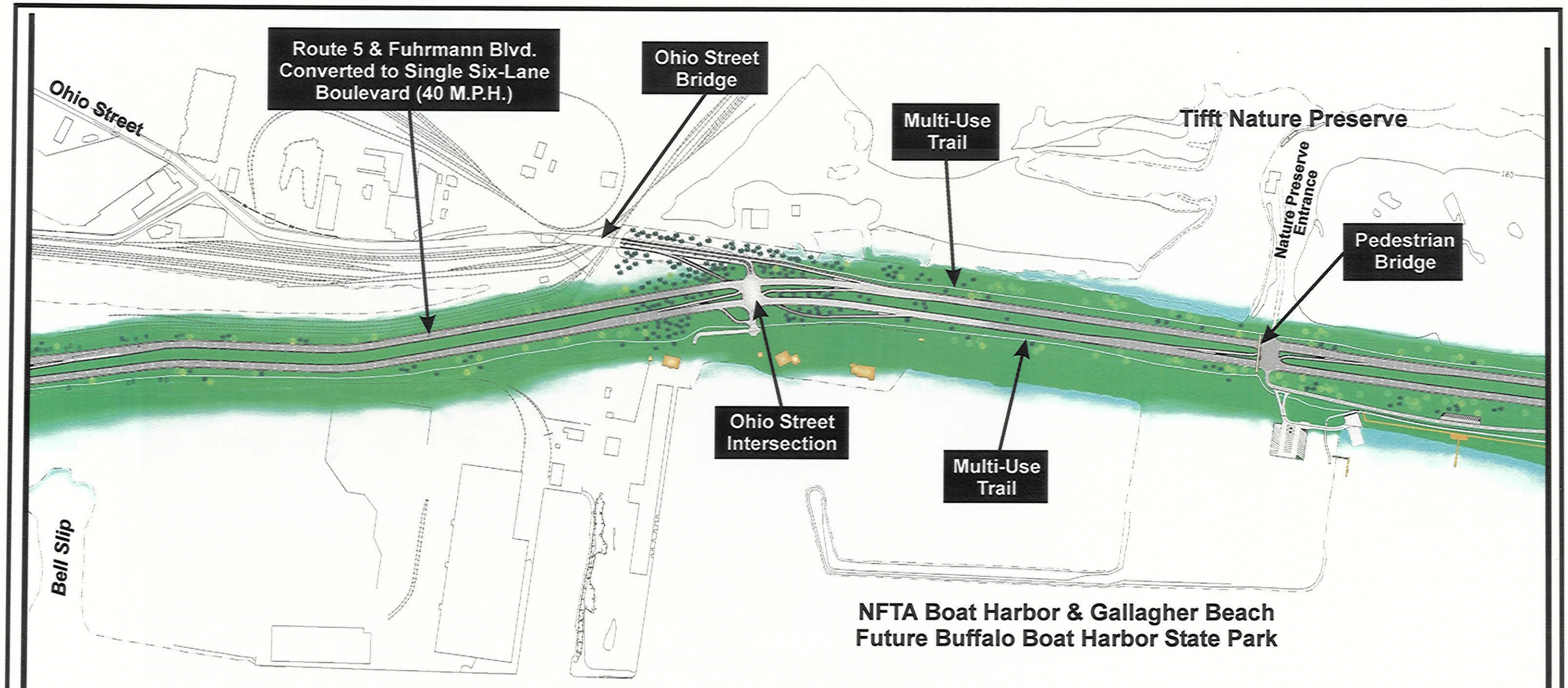
N E S W

ES-2
Boulevard Alternative -
North of Ohio Street

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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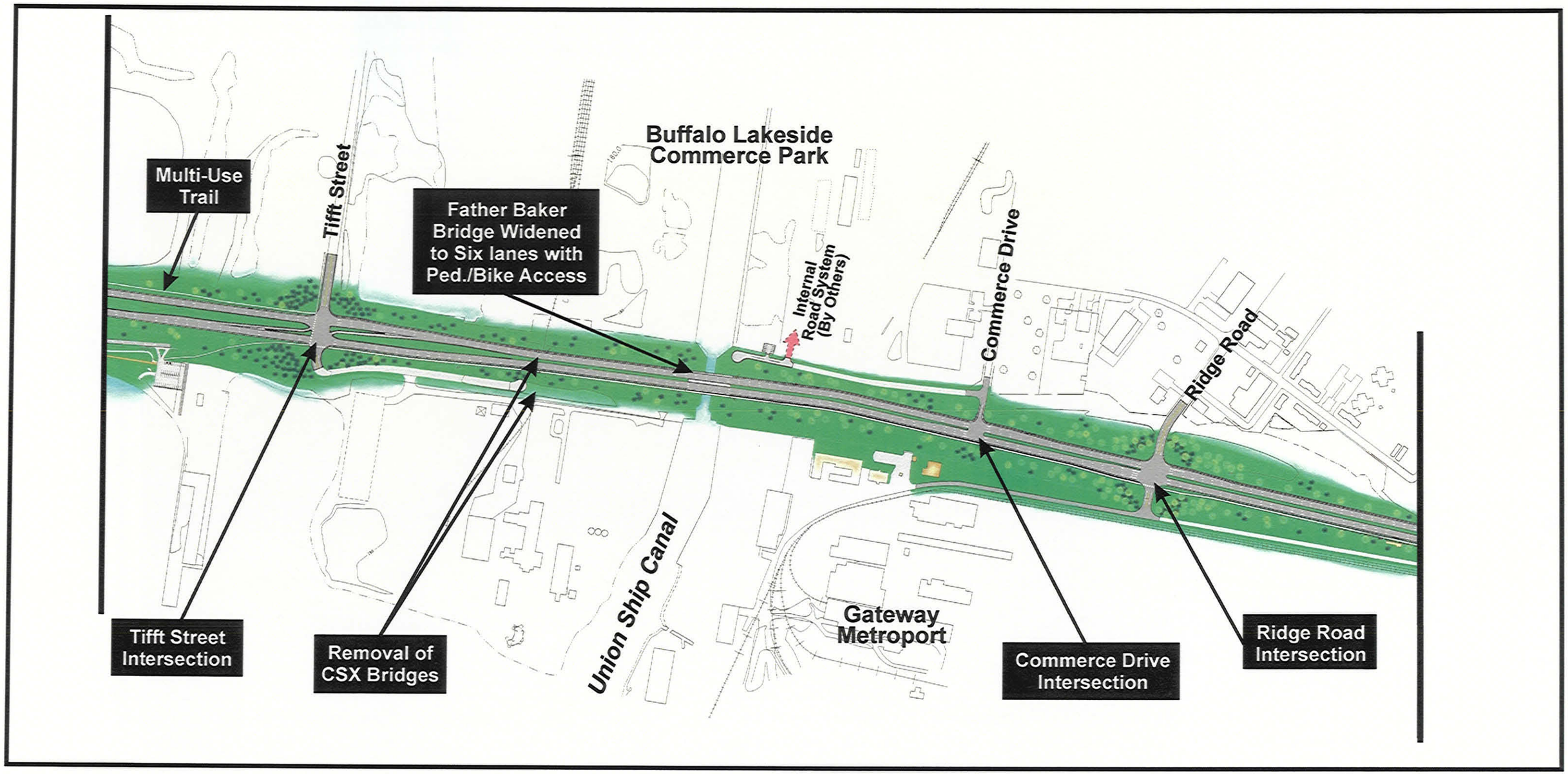
ES-2 (continued)
Boulevard Alternative -
North of Tifft Street

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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ES-2 (continued)
Boulevard Alternative -
North of Ridge Road

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project

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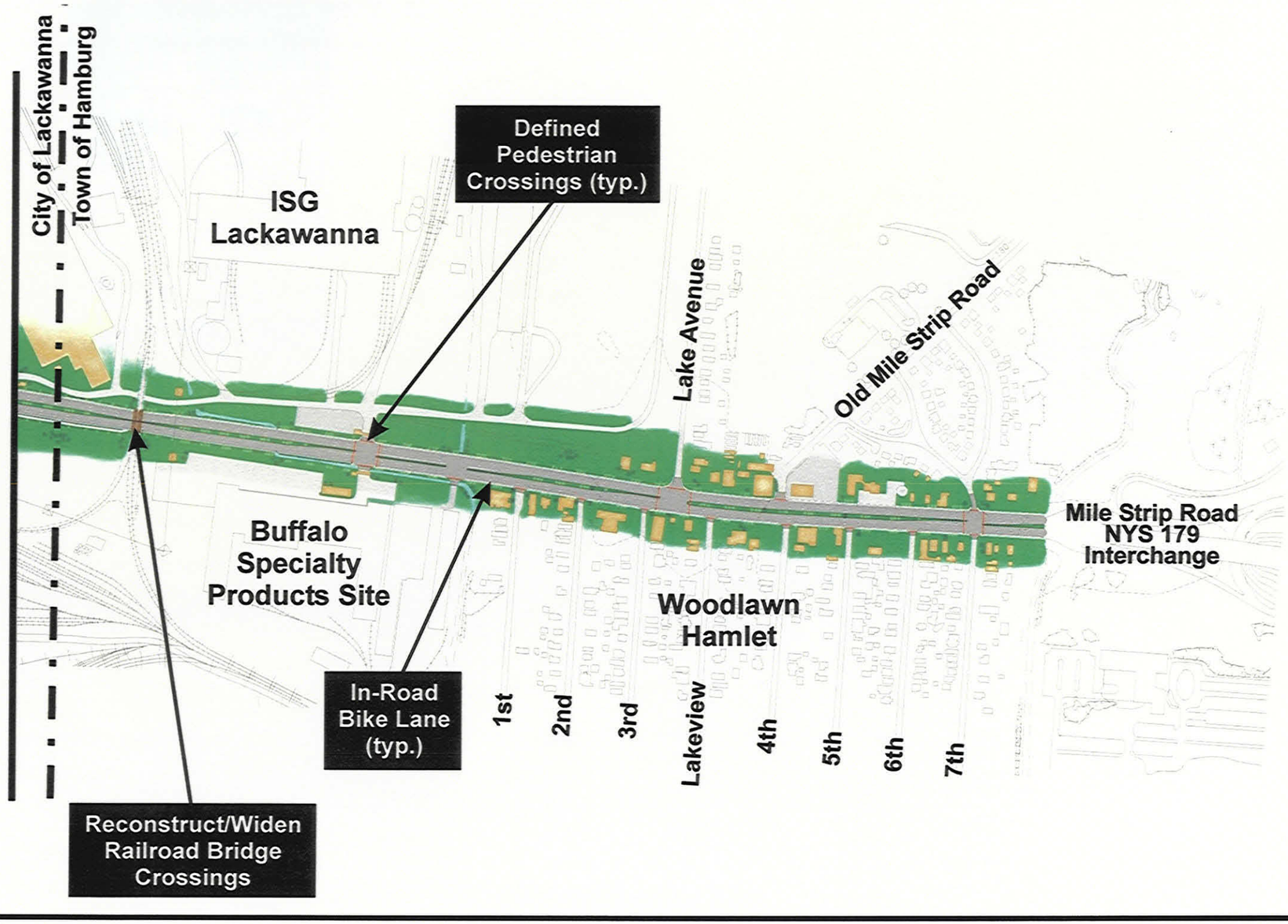
ES-2 (continued)
Boulevard Alternative -
North of Town of Hamburg Line

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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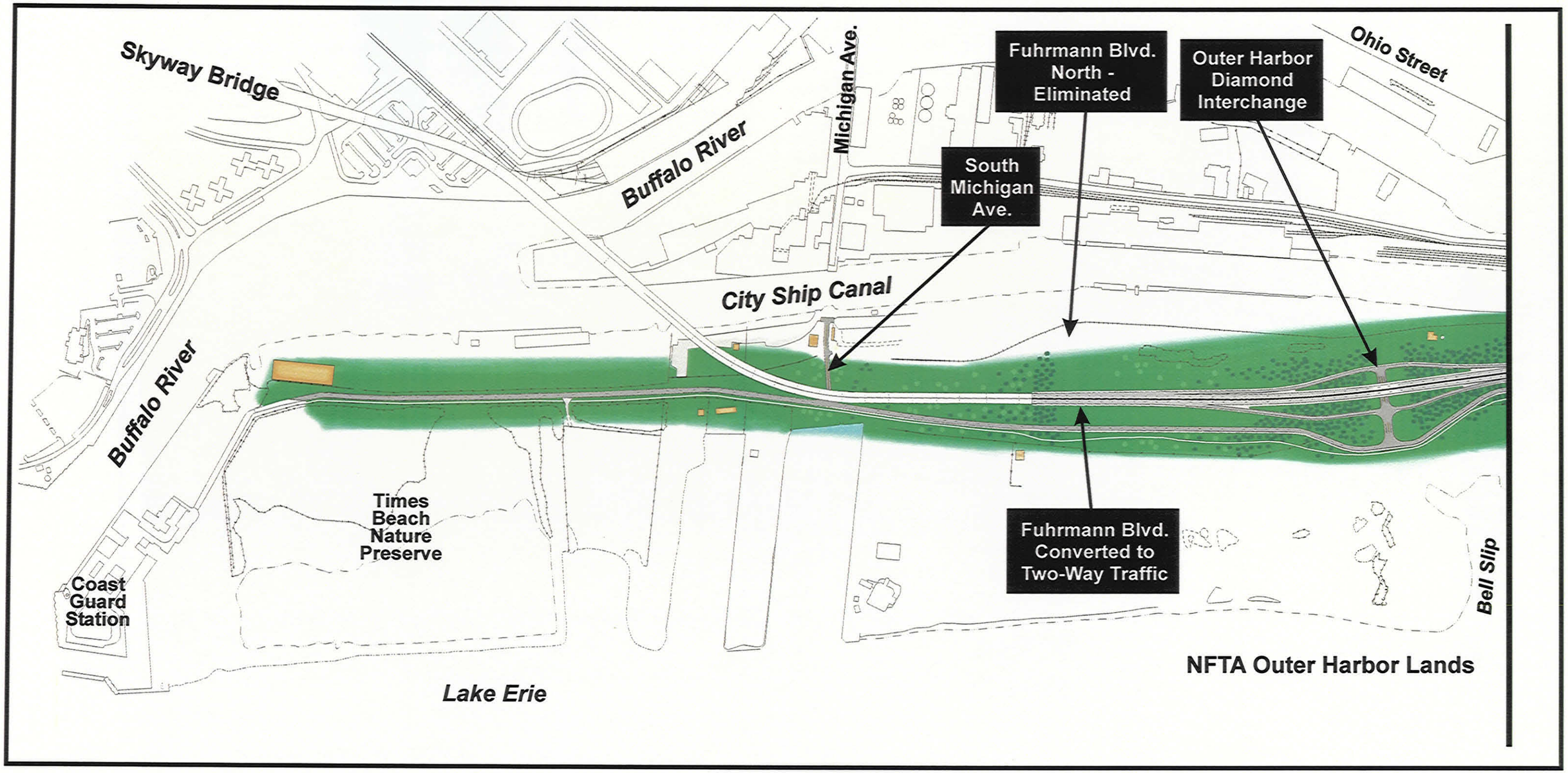
ES-2 (continued)
Boulevard Alternative -
North of NYS 179

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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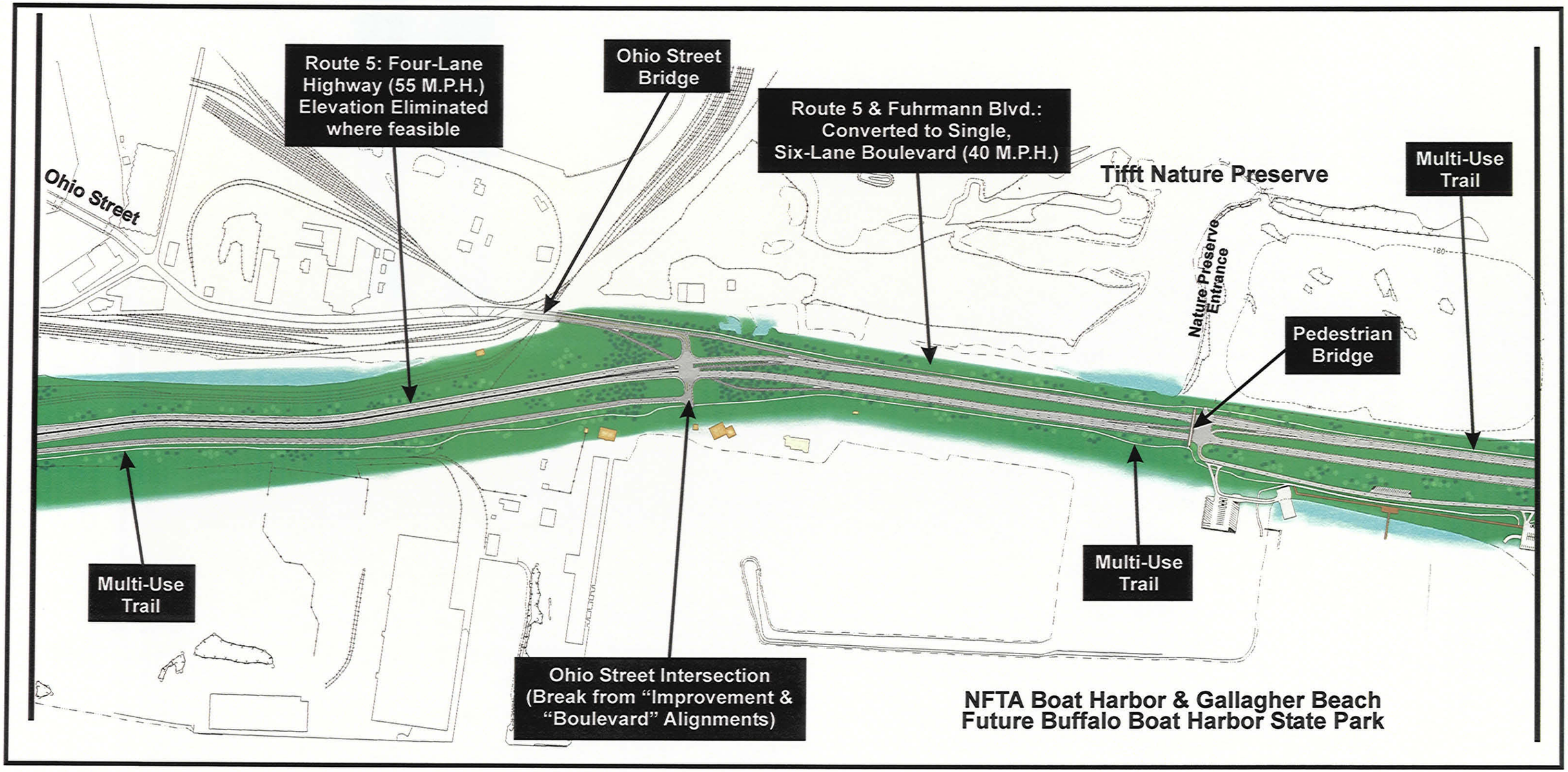
ES-3
Hybrid Alternative -
North of Ohio Street

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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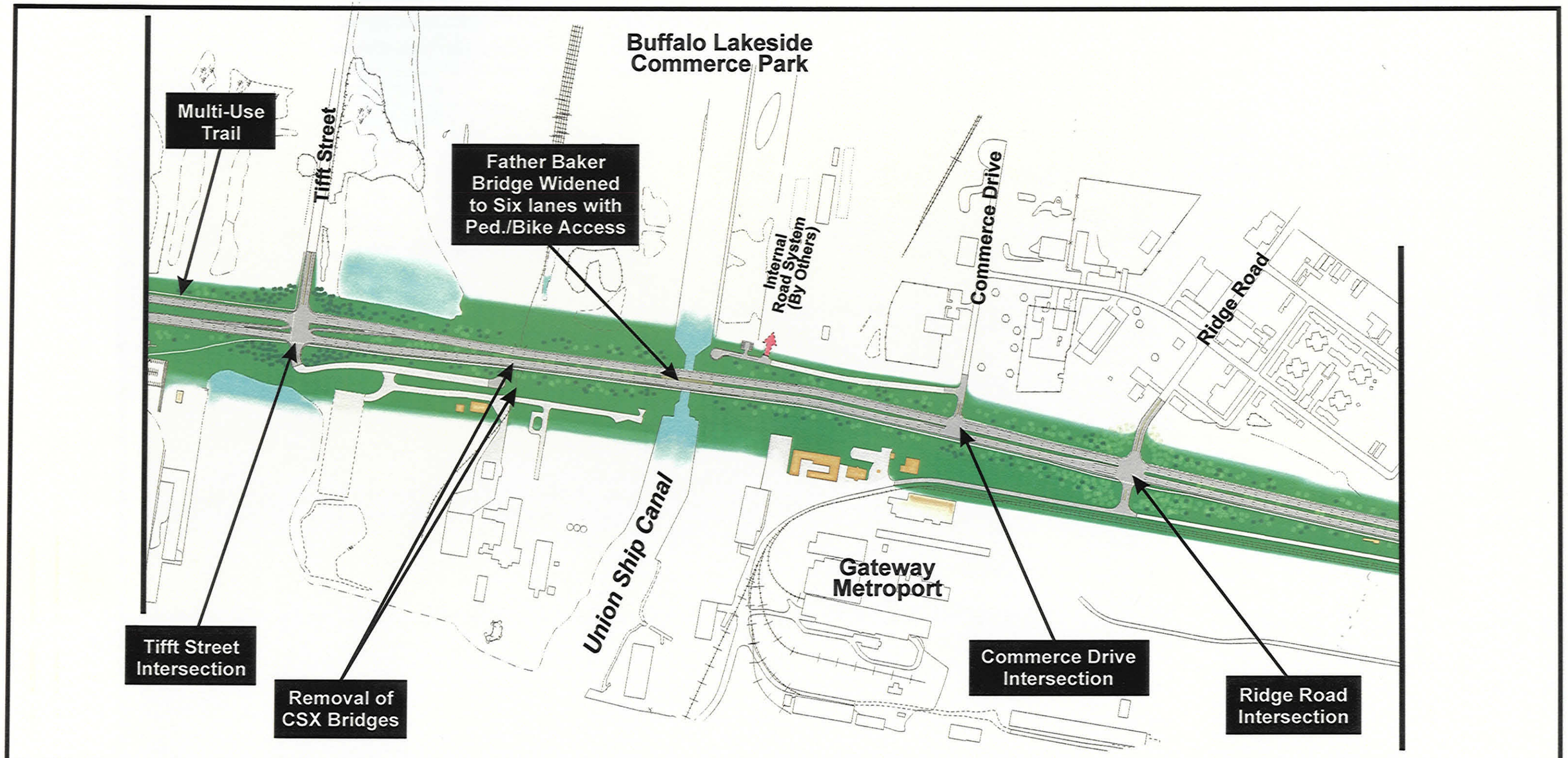
ES-3 (continued)
Hybrid Alternative -
North of Tifft Street

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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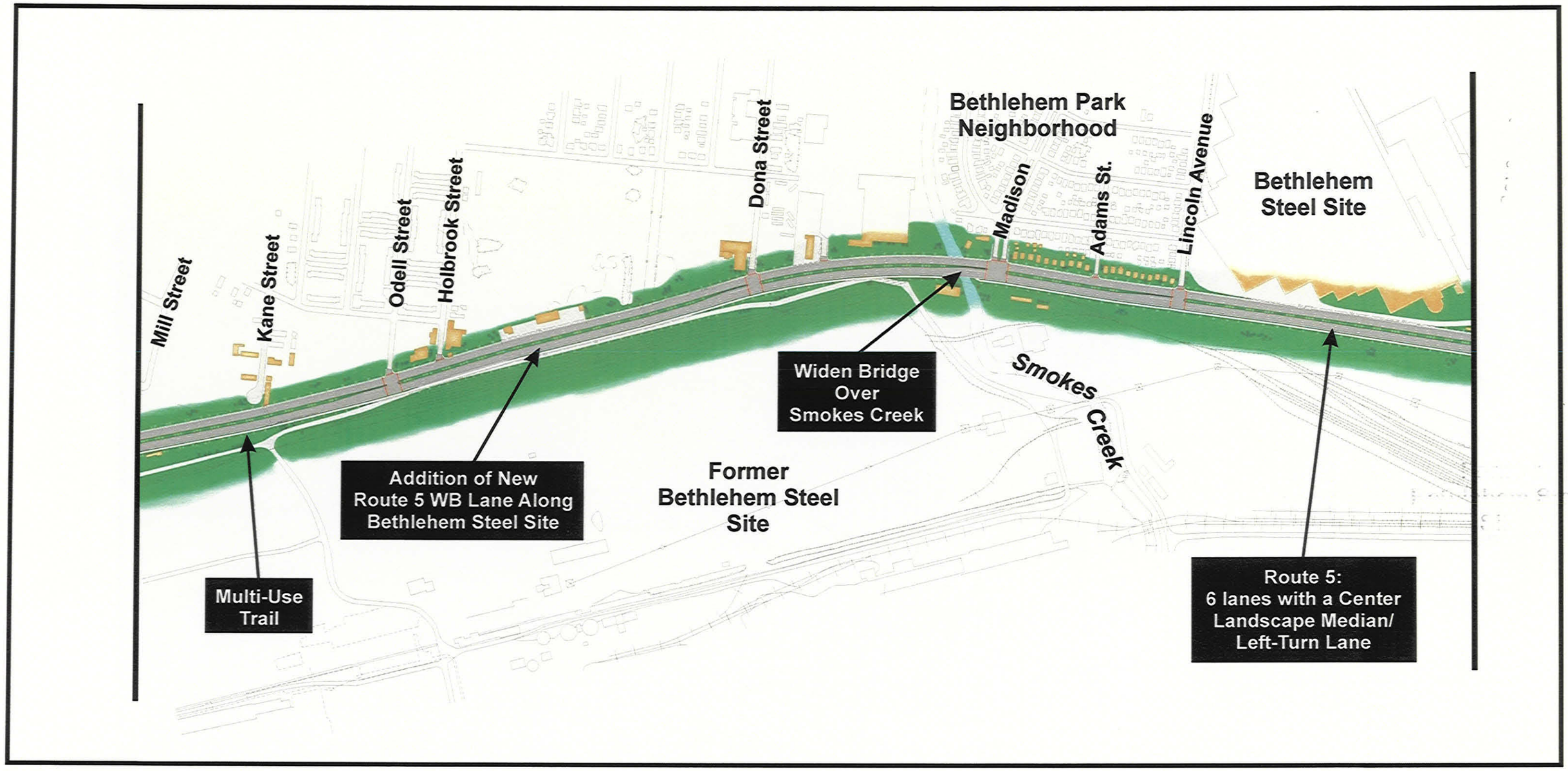
ES-3 (continued)
Hybrid Alternative -
North of Ridge Road

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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ES-3 (continued)
Hybrid Alternative -
North of Town of Hamburg Line

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project

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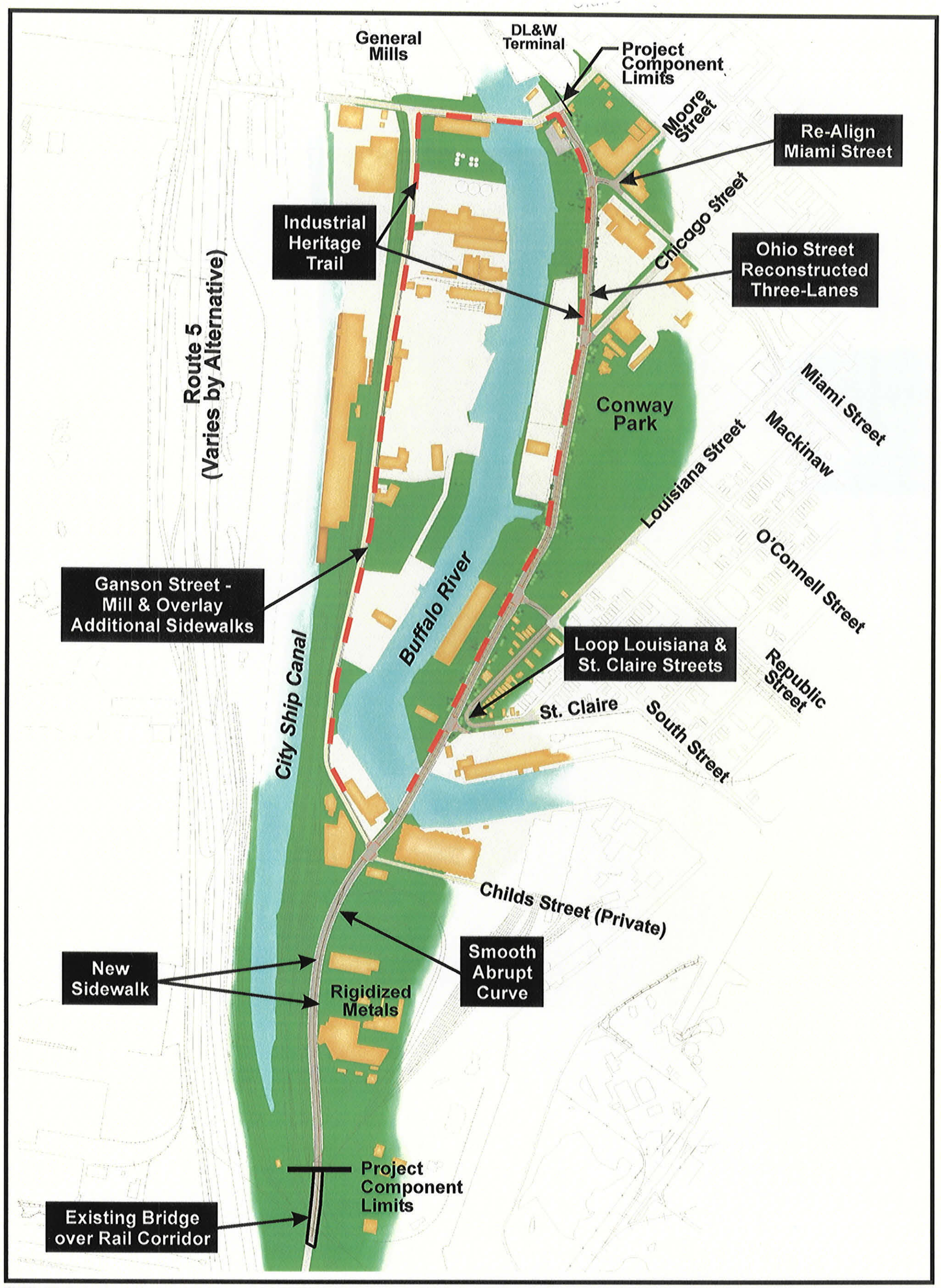
ES-3 (continued)
Hybrid Alternative -
North of NYS 179

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



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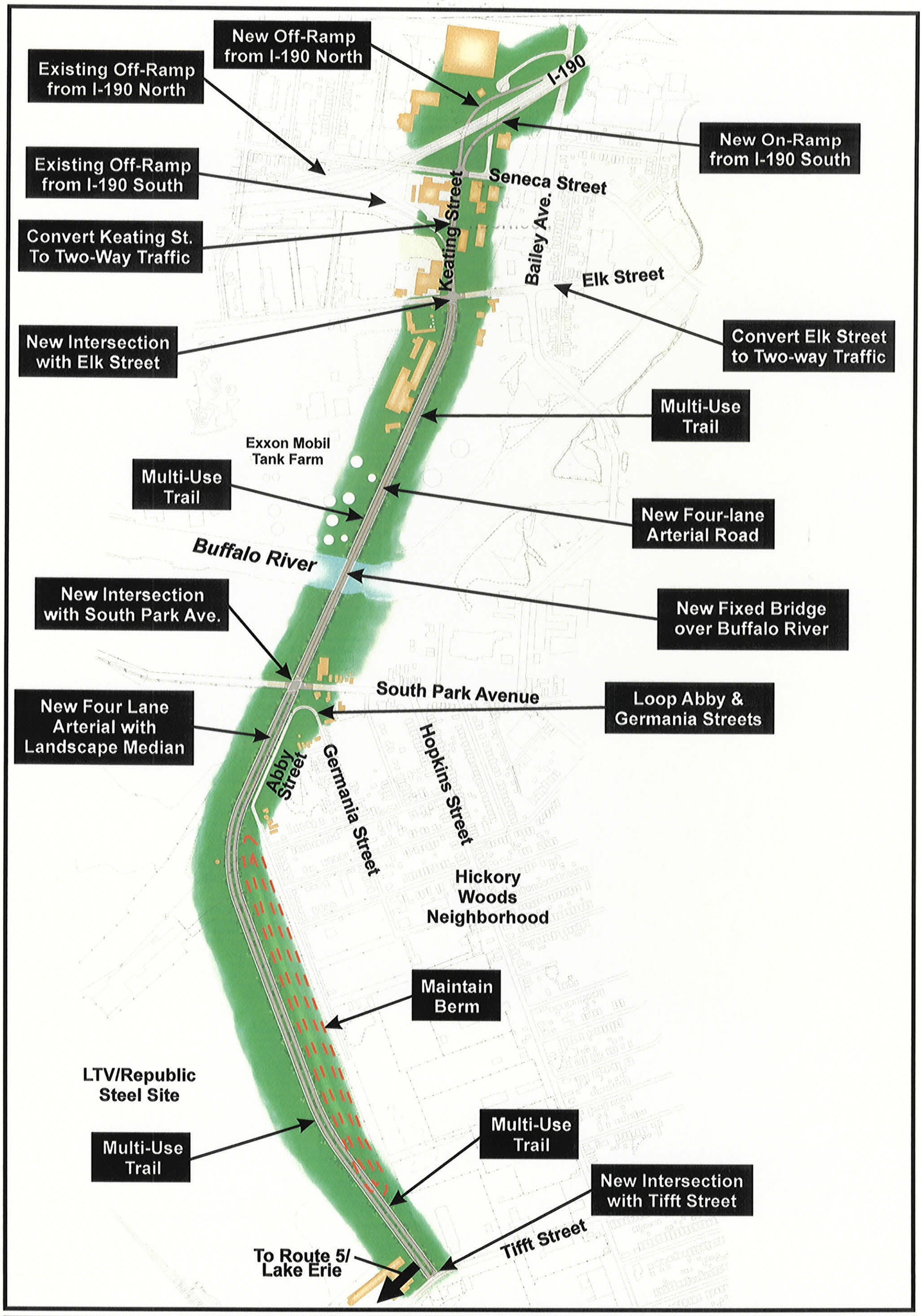
ES-4
Ohio Street Reconstruction
(All Alternatives)

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project



ES-5

New I-190/Tifft Street Arterial (All Alternatives)

Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor Project

Table ES-1 Comparison of Alternatives					
	FDR/FEIS/ 4(f) Reference Section	**Null Alternative**	**Modified Improvement Alternative (Preferred Alternative)**	**Boulevard Alternative**	**Hybrid Alternative**
Project Goals/Objectives					
1. Support Economic Development and Redevelopment					
New/improved access to brownfields redevelopment sites	Section 4.3.3	None	Yes – new access to Union Ship and LTV/Republic Steel sites; simplified access to NFTA Outer Harbor and Bethlehem Steel sites	Yes – new access to Union Ship and LTV/Republic Steel sites; simplified access to NFTA Outer Harbor and Bethlehem Steel sites	Yes – new access to Union Ship and LTV/Republic Steel sites; simplified access to NFTA Outer Harbor and Bethlehem Steel sites
Facilitate future development of waterfront areas by simplifying local access for multiple modes	Section 4.3.3	No	Yes – direct access from Route 5 to Union Ship Canal site; two-way Fuhrmann Boulevard for local access to NFTA Outer Harbor Lands	Yes - access from Route 5 to Union Ship Canal site; somewhat for Outer Harbor Lands – shared local/through access along Route 5	Yes – direct access from Route 5 to Union Ship Canal site; two-way Fuhrmann Boulevard for local access to NFTA Outer Harbor Lands
Promote private investment through improvement in local/regional "quality of life" aspects or amenities	Section 4.3.2	No	Yes – creation of waterfront pedestrian bicycle network. Somewhat reduces physical/ psychological barrier created by Route 5/ Fuhrmann complex	Yes – creation of waterfront pedestrian bicycle network. Totally removes physical/ psychological barrier created by Route 5/ Fuhrmann complex	Yes – creation of waterfront pedestrian bicycle network. Totally removes barrier created by Route 5/ Fuhrmann complex south of Ohio Street

Table ES-1 Comparison of Alternatives					
	FDR/FEIS/ 4(f) Reference Section	**Null Alternative**	**Modified Improvement Alternative (Preferred Alternative)**	**Boulevard Alternative**	**Hybrid Alternative**
2. Improve Regional and Local Transportation Service, Performance, and Efficiency					
Maximize choice for movements among various existing/future activities centers	Section 4.2.2	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maintain adequate service for commuter/ commercial traffic	Section 3.3.3.2; Section 4.2.2 Appendix C	Route 5 traffic growth would continue; reaching peak-hour capacity on expressway segments and intersections by 2030	Provides acceptable traffic operations along Route 5 through the signalized intersections with the exception of Route 5 @ Ridge Road (new at-grade intersection) in 2030)	Route 5 traffic would be maintained at roughly existing (2001) conditions; no significant capacity impacts	Some growth on Route 5 through 2030; no significant capacity impacts
Avoid significant redistribution of peak-hour traffic to other roads or corridors	Section 3.3.3.2; Section 4.2.2 Appendix C	No significant diversion to other roads	Diversion of some traffic to the interstate system (I-90 and I-190); slightly more than null alternative but less than the boulevard and hybrid alternatives	Diversion of most of projected traffic growth in the corridor to the interstate system (I-90 and I-190); capacity impacts along all segments	Diversion of a portion of projected traffic growth in the corridor to the interstate system; capacity impacts along a portion of segments
Provide safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users	Section 3.3.3	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minimize impact to existing active rail lines	Section 3.3.3	No effect	No effect	Potential removal of Beach Line spur to NFTA Outer Harbor Lands	Potential removal of Beach Line spur to NFTA Outer Harbor Lands

Table ES-1 Comparison of Alternatives					
	FDR/FEIS/ 4(f) Reference Section	**Null Alternative**	**Modified Improvement Alternative (Preferred Alternative)**	**Boulevard Alternative**	**Hybrid Alternative**
3. Improve Mobility, Access, and Safety in a Cost-Effective Manner					
Promote use of flexible funding mechanisms and phasing	Section 3.4.2	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minimize right-of-way acquisition costs	*See cost/benefit comparisons below.*				
Reasonable cost to benefit comparison	*See cost/benefit comparisons below.*				
4. Support Local and Regional Planning Policies and Strategies					
Promote ongoing development and redevelopment projects	Section 4.3.7; Appendix L	Null Alternative would not facilitate several on-going projects	Improves access to all redevelopment projects; does not fully take advantage of potential linkage between Tifft Nature Preserve and planned State Park at Gallagher Beach	Removes barrier between Tifft Nature Preserve and planned State Park at Gallagher Beach; could impede development at NFTA Outer Harbor Lands, due to internal road network requirements	Promotes all on-going efforts
Consistency with local and regional plans, policies, or programs	Section 4.2.7; Appendix L	Null Alternative would not advance objectives of several plans and policies	Consistent with all adopted plans and policies	Potentially inconsistent with NFTA Outer Harbor Development Plan	Consistent with all adopted plans and policies
5. Minimize Adverse Impacts on Communities and the Environment					
See social, economic & environmental impacts below.					
Cost/Benefit Ratio					
Total Construction Cost - 2005 $ Millions	Section 3.3; Appendix B	_	$95.1	$124.0	$131.9
Annual transportation user benefits compared to 2030 Null Alternative $ Millions	Appendix L	_	$0	($3.48)	$1.54

Table ES-1 Comparison of Alternatives

	FDR/FEIS/ 4(f) Reference Section	Null Alternative	Modified Improvement Alternative (Preferred Alternative)	Boulevard Alternative	Hybrid Alternative
Quantitative Benefits					
Short term economic benefits (Construction impact to region based on January 2006 construction cost estimate) Construction jobs created	Section 4.3.8; Table 4.3-4, 4.3-5, 4.3-6	None 0	$99 Million in business sales; $44 Million in household income; and $1 million in local tax receipts 755	$130 Million in business sales; $61 Million in household income; and $1.3 million in local tax receipts 1,085	$138 Million in business sales; $65 Million in household income; and $1.4 million in local tax receipts 1,155
Non-standard geometric features retained	Section 3.3.3	1	1	1	1
Non-standard geometric features created	Section 3.3.3	N/A	3	3	3
2030 Expressway segments with deficient level of service (E or F)	Section 3.3.3	- Route 5 (I-190 to Ohio St); - I-90 (I-190 to Ridge Rd.)	- Route 5 (Ohio St. to Tifft St.) - I-90 (I-190 to Ridge Rd.)	- I-190 (Hamburg St. to I-90); - I-90 (I-190 to Ridge Rd.)	- I-190 (Hamburg St. to Smith St. - I-190 (Ogden St. to I-90) - I-90 (I-190 to Ridge Rd.)
2030 Intersections with deficient level of service (E or F) (Note: Overall intersection level of service)	Section 3.3.3 Appendix C	6 intersections: - Route 5 @ Lake, Madison, Dona, and Odell Streets - Ohio St. @ Michigan Ave. - South Park Ave. @ Michigan Ave.	3 intersections: - Route 5 @ Ridge Road - Michigan Ave. @ South Park Ave. - Michigan Ave. @ Ohio St.	2 intersections: - Ohio St. @ Michigan Ave. - South Park Ave. @ Michigan Ave.	2 intersections: - Ohio St. @ Michigan Ave. - South Park Ave. @ Michigan Ave.
Change in total travel time – for all road segments compared to Null (in minutes)	Section 4.3.2	–	No significant change from Null	+3.22 (peak) +1.31 (off peak)	+2.04 (peak) -0.21 (off peak)

Table ES-1 Comparison of Alternatives					
	FDR/FEIS/ 4(f) Reference Section	**Null Alternative**	**Modified Improvement Alternative (Preferred Alternative)**	**Boulevard Alternative**	**Hybrid Alternative**
Total travel cost change (vs. Null) (daily = d & annual = a)	Section 4.3.2	_	$0 (d) $0 (a)	$24,749 (d) $3,482,699 (a)	-$6,144 (d) -$1,535,931 (a)
Qualitative Benefits					
Improved Physical Access	Section 4.2.2	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Positive impact on businesses and residences	Section 4.3.3-4.3.5	None	Expanded market; regional quality-of-life improvements as a site selection asset; better settings for neighborhood redevelopment	Expanded market; regional quality-of-life improvements as a site selection asset; better settings for neighborhood redevelopment	Expanded market; regional quality-of-life improvements as a site selection asset; better settings for neighborhood redevelopment
Social, Economic & Environmental Impacts					
Right of Way Impacts:					
Number of Parcels Affected/Required	4.3.6	0	77 (take) 3 (easements)	74	77
Land Area Required hectares (acres)	4.3.6	0	9.71 (23.99) (take) 0.43 (1.06) (easements)	9.17 (22.66)	10.55 (26.07)
Residential Structures Displaced	4.3.6	0	3	3	3
Commercial Buildings Displaced	4.3.6	0	3	3	3
Mixed Residential/ Commercial Buildings Displaced	4.3.6	0	1	1	1
Businesses Relocated	4.3.5	0	1	1	1
Wetland Impacts	4.4.1	None	None	None	None

Table ES-1 Comparison of Alternatives

	FDR/FEIS/ 4(f) Reference Section	Null Alternative	Modified Improvement Alternative (Preferred Alternative)	Boulevard Alternative	Hybrid Alternative
Surface Water and Groundwater Quality Impacts	4.4.2	None	Localized minor increases in pollutant loads associated with the I-190/Tifft Street Arterial; no impact to groundwater	Localized minor increases in pollutant loads associated with the I-190/Tifft Street Arterial; no impact to groundwater	Localized minor increases in pollutant loads associated with the I-190/Tifft Street Arterial; no impact to groundwater
Floodplain Impacts	4.4.2.10	None	No significant effects	No significant effects	No significant effects
General Ecology Impacts	4.4.3	None	No significant effects	No significant effects	No significant effects
Cultural Resources	4.4.4	None	Adverse effect to one building (630 Ohio Street) that is eligible for inclusion on the National Register; would be mitigated by HABS recording and implementation of interpretative program along Ohio Street for Industrial Heritage Trail	Adverse effect to one building (630 Ohio Street) that is eligible for inclusion on the National Register; would be mitigated by HABS recording and implementation of interpretative program along Ohio Street for Industrial Heritage Trail	Adverse effect to one building (630 Ohio Street) that is eligible for inclusion on the National Register; would be mitigated by HABS recording and implementation of interpretative program along Ohio Street for Industrial Heritage Trail
Visual Impacts:					
Average rating of visual simulations	4.4.5	None	Moderate Impacts (Positive)	Moderate to Major Impacts (Positive)	Moderate Impacts (Positive)
Scenic opportunities of unimpeded view of lake	4.4.5	Maintains views of Lake Erie via elevated roadway	Maintains views of Lake Erie via elevated roadway	Decreased from Route 5; Increased significantly from points east of Route 5	Decreased from Route 5; Increased somewhat from points east of Route 5

Table ES-1 Comparison of Alternatives					
	FDR/FEIS/ 4(f) Reference Section	**Null Alternative**	**Modified Improvement Alternative (Preferred Alternative)**	**Boulevard Alternative**	**Hybrid Alternative**
Parks and Recreational Facilities	4.4.6	No significant improvements. Recreational facilities would be substantially separated by Route 5/ Fuhrmann Blvd. complex.	Would result in new system of pedestrian and bicycle linkages among existing/planned facilities. Somewhat improves physical access between Tifft Nature Preserve and Gallagher Beach.	Would result in new system of pedestrian and bicycle linkages among existing/planned facilities. Creates visual/physical connection between Tifft Nature Preserve and Gallagher Beach.	Would result in new system of pedestrian and bicycle linkages among existing/planned facilities. Creates visual/physical connection between Tifft Nature Preserve and Gallagher Beach.
Air Quality Impacts:					
Microscale Impacts (2010 Max.1-hour Carbon Monoxide [CO] Concentrations – parts per million [ppm])	4.4.8	6.8 ppm (AM) 6.0 ppm (PM)	6.1 ppm (AM) 5.7 ppm (PM)	8.6 ppm (AM) 8.6 ppm (PM)	5.8 ppm (AM) 5.6 ppm (PM)
Mesoscale Impacts (CO, Volatile Organic Compounds [VOCs], Nitrogen Oxides [NOx])	4.4.8	No change	Minor decrease of CO and NOx; Minor changes in VOCs	Minor increase of CO and VOCs; Minor decrease of NOx.	Minor increase of VOCs; Minor decreases of CO and NOx.
Conformity with 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments	4.4.8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Noise Impacts (16 sites monitored):					
Number of sites projected to reach FHWA "approach" level (66 dBA)	4.4.9	133 (AM) 134 (PM)	171 (AM) 196 (PM)	136 (AM) 133 (PM)	134 (AM) 161 (PM)
Number of sites with projected "substantial" increase (6 dBA higher than existing)	4.4.9	0	22 (AM) 23 (PM)	23 (AM) 13 (PM)	19 (AM) 14 (PM)

Table ES-1 Comparison of Alternatives					
	FDR/FEIS/ 4(f) Reference Section	**Null Alternative**	**Modified Improvement Alternative (Preferred Alternative)**	**Boulevard Alternative**	**Hybrid Alternative**
Hazardous Waste/ Contaminated Materials	4.4.10	No impact	Would involve use of new right-of-way through LTV/Republic Steel site and near ExxonMobil facility, as well as portions of the Buffalo Outer Harbor site and Bethlehem Steel sites.	Would involve use of new right-of-way through LTV/Republic Steel site and near ExxonMobil facility, as well as portions of the Buffalo Outer Harbor site and Bethlehem Steel sites.	Would involve use of new right-of-way through LTV/Republic Steel site and near ExxonMobil facility, as well as portions of the Buffalo Outer Harbor site and Bethlehem Steel sites.
Asbestos Impacts (Suspect ACM)	4.4.11	None	17 bridges 4 buildings	17 bridges 4 buildings	17 bridges 4 buildings
Coastal Zone Management Consistency	4.4.12	Inconsistent with waterfront access policies	Consistent with policies in Buffalo, Lackawanna, and Hamburg	Consistent with policies in Buffalo, Lackawanna, and Hamburg	Consistent with policies in Buffalo, Lackawanna, and Hamburg
Total Energy Consumed (Btu)	4.4.13	1.076×10^{10}	1.076×10^{10}	1.08×10^{10}	1.073×10^{10}
Section 4(f) Impacts	Chapter 6	None	Direct taking (use) of one Section 4(f) property (630 Ohio Street). Would be mitigated by HABS recording and implementation of interpretative program along Ohio Street for Industrial Heritage Trail.	Direct taking (use) of one Section 4(f) property (630 Ohio Street). Would be mitigated by HABS recording and implementation of interpretative program along Ohio Street for Industrial Heritage Trail.	Direct taking (use) of one Section 4(f) property (630 Ohio Street). Would be mitigated by HABS recording and implementation of interpretative program along Ohio Street for Industrial Heritage Trail.

ES.7 Areas of Controversy

The primary areas of controversy would involve identification of a final phasing/implementation strategy for the Preferred Alternative.

ES.8 Major Unresolved Issues with Other Agencies

State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) Consultation/Section 4(f) Findings

As part of this FDR/FEIS/4(f), a Phase IA Cultural Resources Assessment was prepared in accordance with Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act. The assessment indicated one structure that is eligible for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (NRHP) would be affected by the preferred alternative – a truck/train transfer station located at 630 Ohio Street. A non-standard curve currently exists at this location. To correct this feature as part of the Ohio Street reconstruction, the structure would have to be removed or relocated.

As a NRHP-eligible property, the structure is also considered an historic resource under Section 4(f) Department of Transportation Act of 1966 – requiring an examination of possible alternatives to avoid the direct taking of the structure for the curve realignment.

A series of measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the adverse effect to or taking of 630 Ohio Street were reviewed for feasibility. In consultation with the SHPO, NYSDOT has determined that impact to the structure cannot be avoided and will undertake specific measures to mitigate this adverse effect as part of the final design and implementation of the Ohio Street reconstruction. NYSDOT, FHWA, and the SHPO will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to facilitate the undertaking of the mitigation measures.

The mitigation measures would involve subsequent documentation efforts and incorporation of the project to enhance overall interpretation of the industrial heritage of the City of Buffalo and specifically the historic features along the Buffalo River in the Old First Ward:

- Historic American Building Survey (HABS)/Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) recordation of the Truck/Train Transfer Building at 630 Ohio Street prior to its removal for the realignment of Ohio Street.

- Coordination with the SHPO, City of Buffalo, and the Industrial Heritage Committee, Inc. to implement a portion of the interpretative program associated with the proposed Industrial Heritage Trail. This would involve development and installation of up to five interpretative stations along Ohio Street and/or Ganson Street providing information on features along the trail and trailblazing signage along portions of the proposed trail coinciding with road segments proposed for improvements.

Final execution of the MOA will be required to complete the Section 106 consultation. Completion of this process will also facilitate FHWA in issuing final Section 4(f) findings on the project.

Coastal Zone Consistency Determination

As part of this FDR/FEIS/4(f), a Coastal Zone Assessment was prepared and concluded that the preferred alternative would be consistent with State coastal policies and local policies contained with Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans (LWRPs) in Lackawanna and Hamburg (Note: Buffalo does not have an approved LWRP). Further coordination with the New York State Department of State and municipalities will be required for concurrence on this assessment.

Transportation Conformity Determination

The Interagency Consultation Group (ICG), at its March 16, 2006 meeting, concurred that the Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor project as coded and analyzed for the most recent Conformity Determination was not materially different from that described in the Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor project FDR/FEIS. Therefore, the Southtowns Connector project was modeled for its regional air quality impacts in the 2025 Plan and 2006-2010 TIP.

The regional test showed that the 2025 Plan and 2006-2010 TIP, including the Southtowns Connector project, conform to the New York State Implementation Plan for Air Quality. FHWA and FTA issued a finding of conformity on June 14, 2005 in coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency.

ES.9 Other Actions Required

The following permits and approvals typically apply to projects of this type.

Permits

Section 404 Nationwide Permit – USACE – for discharges of dredged material into the waters of the United States (including wetlands).

Section 401 Permit – Water Quality Certification – NYSDEC – for the disposal of dredged material into the waters of the United States and adjacent wetlands.

Section 10 Permit – USACE – to regulate construction within water bodies under federal jurisdiction under the Harbors and Rivers Act (e.g., Buffalo River).

Section 9 Permit – This permit, issued by the US Coast Guard, is to regulate navigation within water bodies under federal jurisdiction under the Harbors and Rivers Act. Because the new bridge over the Buffalo River (as part of the I-190/Tifft Street Arterial) would be located outside, but near the west edge of the navigation channel, it is possible that this permit would be required.

State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit – This permit is issued by the NYSDEC for stormwater discharges from construction activity. This will be required for the construction of the new arterial, including the bridge over the Buffalo River, as well as for construction of the Route 5 improvements.

Other Approvals Required

State Historic Preservation Officer Consultation – as noted above.

Section 4(f) – FHWA – as noted above.

Coastal Area Consistency Determination – as noted above.

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CERTIFICATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 23 UNITED STATES CODE 128
SOUTHTOWNS CONNECTOR/BUFFALO OUTER HARBOR PROJECT
ERIE COUNTY
PROJECT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER 5044.01

Notice was published in the following newspapers on the dates indicated announcing the availability of the Draft Design Report/Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation and NEPA/SEQRA Public Hearing for the above project.

Newspaper	First Date	Second Date
The Buffalo News	July 10, 2005	August 7, 2005

The notice stated that a public hearing would be held from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the following dates and at these locations:

Wednesday, August 10, 2005
Erie Community College City Campus
121 Ellicott Street
Buffalo, New York 14203

Thursday, August 11, 2005
Lackawanna Senior Center
230 Martin Road
Lackawanna, New York 14218

The material presented and format followed were the same for each public hearing. The format was structured as described below.

Open House:	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Formal Presentation:	7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Formal Comments:	7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

The Department also hung meeting notice flyers on all properties within the proposed project right-of-way; hearing notices and project reports were mailed to 65 project stakeholders groups; mailed meeting notices to all property owners within the project area and sent a press release to 18 area newspapers; radio stations; and television stations to notify of the public hearings.

I hereby certify that the hearing was held at the location indicated, all material presented was duly recorded and full reconsideration has been given to the economic and social effects of the location, its impact on the environment and its consistency with the goals and objectives of such urban planning as has been promulgated by the community.

This hearing followed the "open-forum" format. Copies of the transcripts, brochures and pamphlets, photos and/or depictions of displays, presentation summaries, etc. that document that this public hearing conformed with the regulations are attached to the copy of this certification being transmitted to FHWA.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION
REGION 5, BUFFALO, NEW YORK

4-6-06
DATE

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations Used

4(f)	Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966
AADT	Average Annual Daily Traffic
AAQS	Ambient Air Quality Standards
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ACMs	Asbestos Containing Materials
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AMSL	Above Mean Sea Level
APE	Area of Potential Effect
AST	Aboveground Storage Tank
BIN	Bridge Identification Number
Btu	British Thermal Units
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental, Response & Compensation Liability Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLC	Community Liaison Committee
CMP	Coastal Management Program
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CO_2	Carbon Dioxide
dBA	Decibels, A-weighted
DDHV	Directional Design Hour Volume
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DHV	Design Hour Volume
DOS	New York State Department of State **
DPM	Design Procedure Manual*
DR	Design Report
EAP	Environmental Action Plan*
EI	Engineering Instruction*
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
EPM	Environmental Procedures Manual*
ETC	Estimated Time of Completion (of construction)
FEC	Federal Enterprise Community
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
GBNRTC	Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council
ha	hectares
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
IHWS	Inactive Hazardous Waste Site

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations Used

ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
ITE	Institute of Traffic Engineers
ITS	Intelligent Transportation System
km	Kilometer
kph	Kilometers per hour
LaMPs	Lake-wide Management Plans
LCCA	Life cycle cost analysis
LOS	Level of Service
LWRP	Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
m	meter
mg/L	milligrams per liter
mm	millimeter
mph	Miles per Hour
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
MIS	Major Investment Study
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MOSF	Major oil storage facility
NYS	New York State
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAC	Noise Abatement Criteria
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFTA	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
NHS	National Highway System
NOAA	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOx	Nitrogen oxides
NPL	National Priorities List
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NPS	National Parks Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation**
NYSDOL	New York State Department of Labor**
NYSDOT	New York State Department of Transportation**
OPRHP	Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation**
PAH	Polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons
PCB	Polychlorinated byphenyl
P/CBS	Petroleum/chemical bulk storage
PCS	Permit Compliance System
PEM	Palustrine Emergent

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations Used

PIO	Public Information Office
PIL	Priority Investigation Location
PM_{10}	Inhalable Particulate
ppm	parts per million
PWL	Priority Waterbodies List
RAP	Remedial Action Plan
RCRA	Resource Conservation Recovery Act
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right-of-Way
SAFETEA	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act
SEQRA	State Environmental Quality Review Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office**
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SPDES	State Pollution Discharge Elimination System
STC/BOH	Southtowns Connector/Buffalo Outer Harbor
TAZ	Traffic Assessment Zone
TIP	Transportation Improvement Plan
TNM	Traffic Noise Modeling
TSM	Transportation System Management
TWG	Technical Working Group
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	Underground Storage Tank
VCA	Voluntary Cleanup Agreement
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound
VHT	Vehicle Hours Traveled
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled

* NYSDOT Manual, guideline or publication
** New York State Agency

Conversion of English to Metric Units

The federal government has designated the metric system as the preferred system of weights and measures in order to improve the competitiveness of American business and industry in the world marketplace. This project is being designed using metric units. The text of this report uses metric units.

The following table of approximate conversion factors provides the relationship between metric and inch-pound units for some of the more frequently used units in highway design:

	Metric Unit	=	English Unit	x	Factor
Length	kilometer (km)	=	miles (mi)	x	1.610
	meter (m)	=	feet (ft.)	x	0.305
Area	hectares (ha)	=	acres (a)	x	0.405
	sq. meters (m^2)	=	sq. yards (sy)	x	0.836
	sq. meters (m^2)	=	sq. feet (sf)	x	0.093
Volume	cubic meter (m^3)	=	cubic yards (cy)	x	0.765
	cubic meter (m^3)	=	cubic feet (cf)	x	0.028
Speed	kilometers per hour (kph)	=	miles per hour (mph)	x	1.610
	meters per second (m/s)	=	feet per second (ft/s)	x	0.305

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