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Public Fools Most of the \$1.4 Billion for a Stadium. Buffalo Fans Cheer.

Critics have savaged the deal, which would use \$850 million in state and local funds. But many in the city say keeping the Bills in Buffalo is good for civic pride.

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Just like the Buffalo Bills themselves, who famously lost four straight Super Bowls, there is no question that the team's new \$1.4 billion stadium proposal has its doubters.

The stadium, to be built across the street from the Bills' current home in this Buffalo suburb, is expected to receive the most generous outlay of public funds for a pro football facility ever, an extension of a decades-long trend in which local and state governments pay big money to keep or lure for-profit, and privately held, sports franchises.

Critics have already savaged the deal — which will cost the state \$600 million and Erie County an additional \$250 million — as an egregious example of corporate welfare. Others view it as a blatant example of election-year largess, orchestrated by a governor, Kathy Hochul, whose upstate bona fides do not necessarily translate to support downstate, where New York elections are won and lost.

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The New York Times

By Jesse McKinley

April 16, 2022