

# CRT News

## CRT Monthly Meeting

**Wednesday, January 18, 2012**

**12:00-1:00 pm**

### Annual Meeting of CRT

including election of officers, annual reports,  
and letter-writing to NYS to support increased  
transit assistance

**Citizens for Regional Transit meets at:**

**617 Main Street, Market Arcade Building, Buffalo**



Meeting space available courtesy Preservation  
Buffalo-Niagara

**CRT meetings are free and open to  
the public**

### *A Billion for Buffalo*

*by Gladys Gifford*

Gov. Cuomo made an out-sized offer in his State of the State address, Jan. 4.

He offered a billion dollars for Buffalo, citing economic need for investment in WNY. Subsequent comments in the media indicated that the intended focus of this effort was to attract more businesses to Buffalo.

But wait!

Businesses already operate in WNY, and attract employees and customers. Many of these businesses are served by public transit. But NFTA's Metro is facing drastic service cuts in order to close their 2012-2013 budget gap, resulting from decreased NYS transit assistance in recent years.

Governor, here's an offer Buffalo needs, right now--

How about \$10 million, for starters, to close the NFTA budget gap? Then a few million more-- to extend Metro Rail to the suburbs.

Governor, make us a real offer we can appreciate!

### *Recent analysis of Metro's economic impact on Western New York shows...*

Spending \$10 million of taxpayer dollars to maintain current service prevents disruption of more than \$200 million economic impact that Metro brings to our economy. Put positively, spending \$10 million each year on Metro provides an economic impact return of 20X the investment for the taxpayer.

## Congress Fails Transit Users

The monthly limit of the transit portion of the commuter benefit was reduced from \$230 per month to \$125 per month on January 1, 2012 because Congress failed to enact legislation to extend the higher level. In the meantime, the monthly limit for the parking portion of the commuter benefit increased from \$230 per month to \$240 per month due to an automatic cost of living increase. Congress missed a critical opportunity to maintain parity between the transit portion and the parking portions of the commuter benefit when it extended other tax benefits at the end of 2011.

For many commuters who use public transportation, Congress' failure to maintain parity between the transit and parking benefits results in a significant increase in their commuting costs and their annual payroll taxes – up to \$500 per year. Participating employers will also experience an increase in their payroll taxes.

To take action, see [www.commuterbenefitsworkforus.com/](http://www.commuterbenefitsworkforus.com/)

## Metro Ridership Rises 8% in 2011

Statistics reported to the American Public Transit Association by the NFTA show that overall ridership for Buffalo's Metro Bus and Rail increased 8.73% over 2010.

Metro Rail ridership increased 19.5%, compared to Salt Lake City, UT (21.0%) and Philadelphia, PA (10.0%).

Total annual rides are projected to exceed 30 million in 2011. This figure matches the greatest ridership in the post-World War II years, according to NFTA Executive Director Kim Minkel.

**“Increased public transportation ridership may prove to be a sign of strengthening economies in several regions around the country. As more Americans return to work, public transportation serves as an economical part of their daily lives.”**  
 ---APTA, 3rd Quarter report, 2011

## Pressing Issues in New York State from Tri-State Transportation Campaign

- ...on the Tappan Zee Bridge project: insist on transit feature for re-built bridge
- ...on funding the MTA (public transit in metro New York City): funding mechanisms are complicated, illogical
- ...on the effort to reform gas tax lockbox: passed by legislature but stalled by political maneuvers
- ...on the need for upstate transit funding: support on-line petition drive, advocacy in Albany, Feb. 13-14

for all the details, see [tstc.org](http://tstc.org)

## State-Wide On-Line Petition to Gov. Cuomo

***Sign the on-line petition!***  
***Stand Up for Public Transportation!***

[http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5443/p/dia/action/public/?action\\_KEY=8769](http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5443/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=8769)

We urge you, Governor Cuomo and our representatives in the NYS Senate and Assembly, to stand up for transit riders and assure that our state budget provides adequate dollars to run our transit systems. No more service cuts and fare increases! Riders can no longer bear the brunt of Albany underfunding transit in our communities.



Citizens *for* Regional Transit invites You...

**Join us!**

Mission: CRT seeks to improve bus transit and to expand rail transit for all of Western New York through citizen involvement and education.



Membership dues are fully tax-deductible!

corporate \$150.

household \$35.

individual \$25.

student \$5.

Membership payable by check or via PayPal.

Send check to:

Citizens Regional Transit

c/o John K. Howell, treasurer

289 Ashford Avenue

Tonawanda, NY 14150-8563

## Public Hearings Schedule NFTA Service Cuts

### **Jan. 30 ECC North Campus**

Bldg. B, Bretschger Hall, Room 401 - 6 p.m.

### **Jan. 31 Niagara Falls City Hall**

Chambers - 6 p.m.

### **Feb. 1 Buffalo & Erie County Public Library**

Auditorium - Noon and 6 p.m.

### **Feb. 2 ECC South Campus**

Building #5 Cafeteria - 6 p.m.

### **Written comments due Feb. 2nd!!**

e-mail to [planning@nfta.com](mailto:planning@nfta.com) or write to:

Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority  
181 Ellicott Street  
Buffalo, NY 14203  
Attention: Service Planning Department.

#### *Calendar*

#### **Jan. 18, 2012, 12-1 pm**

CRT Annual Meeting, 617 Main St., Buffalo --elect officers, receive Annual Report, plan 2012

#### **Jan. 30-Feb. 2**

NFTA hearings on proposed service cuts (p. 4)

#### **Feb. 1, 2012, 9:30 am**

Planning Coordinating Committee of GBNRTC, City Hall, Buffalo

#### **Feb. 13-14, 2012**

Public Transit Advocacy Days, Albany, NY

#### **Feb. 15, 2012, 12-1 pm**

CRT monthly meeting, 617 Main St., Buffalo

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Citizens Regional Transit Corporation  
617 Main Street  
Buffalo, NY 14203

*return service requested*