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# CRT News

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**Next CRT Quarterly Public Meeting:  
Wednesday, April 17  
12:00-1:00 pm**

**Theater Station is dead!**

**Theater Station will be demolished!**

**No more Theater Station after February 17!**

**Say farewell to the Theater Station!**

**CRT mourns the loss of the Theater Station,  
on behalf of 1,200 daily riders.**

**R.I.P.**

**Citizens for Regional Transit meets at:**



**237 Main Street at Seneca Street,  
Buffalo, NY**

Follow signs, to the second floor  
Mezzanine conference room

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

## *Metro Rail and Climate Change*

As CRT advocates for Metro Rail extensions to the suburbs, our advocacy has been focused primarily on the economic benefits of light rail. However, Gov. Cuomo's comment, "climate change is real," highlights the environmental benefits of light rail extensions.

Climate change is known to be the result of excessive carbon dioxide emissions. Transportation is a major source of these emissions. But Metro Rail runs on electricity generated by hydropower, so extending the line does not add to air pollution.

Buffalo's single six-mile light rail line boasts the fourth most heavily used light rail in the country. The NFTA's study in 2001 showed that extending Metro Rail to the suburbs would increase ridership significantly, allowing commuters and visitors to access the region without using cars. Reduced auto use equals reduced emissions and reduced congestion on highways-- and improved air quality for all.

CRT sent a letter to the NFTA Board, joined by the local Sierra Club and Clean Air Coalition, urging the NFTA to take steps now to prepare for Metro Rail extensions, in view of climate change.

Extend Metro Rail, for the sake of our climate...for the sake of our health!

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## **CRT is on Facebook!**

**Friend us! and visit our website, [citizenstransit.org](http://citizenstransit.org)**

## Continuing the Journey at Citizens for Regional Transit

CRT elected a new president, Douglas J. Funke, at the January 16, 2013, annual meeting. The CRT Board also welcomed Betsy Giles and Carl Skompinski as new board members. Past president, Gladys Gifford will continue to serve on the Board and to edit the CRT newsletter. Dick Olday retired from the Board, with thanks from CRT for his years of service.



Doug is a long-time transit advocate and user. He has been on the CRT Board for 3 years and a CRT member for more than 5 years.

He has already served as CRT representative at the Transportation / Complete Streets Working Group of the Environmental Alliance, the Transportation Equity Alliance WNY Coalition, and the Partnership for the Public Good.

Doug worked for over 30 years as a research engineer at Calspan, Veridian Engineering, and General Dynamics. Most recently he worked on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS); an example was Mayday systems to assist emergency response to highway crashes.

Since retiring from General Dynamics, Doug has developed a part-time consulting practice.

Welcome, Doug!

## Citizens for Regional Transit invites You...

### Join us!

CRT mission is 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!

group      \$50.  
 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



## Transit news and issues, NYS and Federal

by Gladys Gifford

At the **Federal** level,

**Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood** will continue to serve in the Cabinet, advising President Obama. LaHood is a consistent supporter of rail travel. Plus, the new chairman of the House Highways and Transit Subcommittee is **Rep. Tom Petri**, (R-WI), known as a bicycling enthusiast.

The **pre-tax transit allowance** is back!

The legislation which the U.S. Congress passed on 1-1-13 to avoid the fiscal cliff included an increase in the transit commuter tax benefit, to \$240 per month, on a par with the parking pre-tax benefit. Transit riders can arrange for this benefit through their employers, or simply set that amount aside as a pre-tax benefit for commuting on public transit.

And, the delayed funding for restoring damage done by Hurricane Sandy to transit infrastructure was finally passed in Congress.

The picture at the **State** level is static for transit in upstate.

The proposed Executive Budget offers increased operations aid for downstate, particularly in areas hit hard by **Hurricane Sandy**. Nassau County gets added revenues for its buses.

Upstate transit operating assistance remains at 2012-2013 levels. However, Gov. Cuomo proposes to continue the distribution of the Transmission Tax according to population, which provides an additional source of revenue for upstate. This change was begun by the governor last year, and should be made permanent through a proposed Article VII in the budget.

The budget includes \$100 million for transportation projects, all modes, to be competitively selected by the **Regional Economic Development Councils**.

The enormous cost of the **Tappan Zee Bridge** project continues to hover over all funding for transportation in NYS, but is not directly addressed in the budget.

Assemblyman **Jim Brennan** (Brooklyn) has introduced the **Transportation Infrastructure Bond Act of 2013** (A200-2013), which would authorize NYS to create state debt in the amount of \$4.5 billion to improve, enhance, preserve and restore the state's transportation infrastructure. Text of the bill has a heavy emphasis on the MTA, as well as bridges and highways. If passed by the legislature, the bond act would go to the voters in November, 2013. Would this bond act fund the Tappan Zee?

Stay tuned....

*material gleaned from Tri-State Transportation Campaign, New York Public Transit Ass'n, National Ass'n of Railroad Passengers*



## ***One Region Forward***

***brings together  
163 plans--64 local communities--2 counties  
in one region  
to seek one vision***

### **Community Congress Meeting: Our Regional Vision and Values**

Come together for our first Community Congress Meeting and let us know what you think about the core values for our region. Attend one of two meetings:

Tuesday, January 29, 2013, 7-9pm, Asbury Hall at "Babeville" - City of Buffalo

OR

Saturday, February 2, 2013, 2-4pm, Conference and Event Center Niagara Falls - City of Niagara Falls

#### *Calendar*

**Jan. 29, 7-9 pm**

One Region Forward community meeting, Asbury Hall, Buffalo

**Jan. 30, 6:30-7:30 pm**

Ohio Street Public Meeting, First Ward Community Center, 62 Republic St., Buffalo

[www.eriecanalharbor.com/press/01-23-13OhioStreet.asp](http://www.eriecanalharbor.com/press/01-23-13OhioStreet.asp)

**Feb. 2, 2-4 pm** One Region Forward community meeting, Conference Center, Niagara Falls

**Feb. 6, 9:30 am**

Planning & Coordinating Comm., GBNRTC, City Hall, Bflo.

**March 4-5, 2013**

Transit Awareness Day, Albany New York Public Transit Association [www.nytransit.org/events-and-training/2013-transit-awareness-day](http://www.nytransit.org/events-and-training/2013-transit-awareness-day)

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