



CRT News

One Region Forward— Next “Community Congress”

At the last [Community Congress](#), One Region Forward asked residents from across Erie and Niagara counties to map what they want Buffalo Niagara to look like in 40 years. Over 770 citizens participated to create [115 maps at 27 workshops](#). These maps were the basis for creating three alternative scenarios for how our region might develop in the future.

At this next Community Congress, we will review these three different alternative scenarios along with a “Business-as-usual” scenario to find out what each could mean for the region’s fiscal health, housing stock, agriculture productivity, transportation systems and more. Our feedback will establish a shared vision for the future of Buffalo Niagara – a new way to move One Region Forward.

Participation will involve less than an hour of your time, but be sure to get there by 5:30 or 7PM to view the presentation of findings and learn how to provide additional feedback.

Monday, July 21st, 5PM

Palace Theater
2 East Ave, Lockport, NY 14094
Presentations at 5:30 and 7:00 PM

Tuesday, July 22nd, 5PM

ECC City Campus
121 Ellicott Street Buffalo, NY 14203
Presentations at 5:30 and 7:00 PM

Public Input shapes Vision

Did you participate in these workshops? They were great fun, and an opportunity to share our passions about our region with neighbors.



Next steps promise to create real guidelines for our future together. Come along and bring your vision!



Save the Date...

October 15, 2014

CRT Quarterly Public Meeting— watch for details...



CNU22 Reflections

by Douglas Funke, President

The 22nd Annual Congress for New Urbanism (CNU22) was held in Buffalo during June. This is an international conference that brings together urban design experts from around the world to discuss emerging trends and best practices in urban design. CRT Board Members Doug Funke, Betsy Giles, and Gladys Gifford attended. Doug and Gladys both presented papers highlighting the importance of public transit for making cities successful.

The central focus of new urbanism is remaking our cities as places where people want to live and be. This means making them people-friendly rather than car-friendly. It means refitting urban centers with walkable streets and green spaces while de-emphasizing traffic flow and parking. It means mixed-use neighborhoods where people can live, shop and work.

Many sessions highlighted new urbanism successes achieved. One example in Europe featured a city street where people and cars completely share the space. Pedestrians have free-reign; there are no crosswalks. Cars must avoid people wherever they decide to walk. The arrangement, shown on video, works remarkably well and is claimed to be safer since it forces drivers to go slow and use caution.

We went into the CNU22 concerned that transit would not receive prominent attention. We were pleased that the CNU22 had significant emphasis on transit as an element needed for making new urbanism work.

The importance of transit was prominently highlighted by John Norquist, outgoing CNU President and former Mayor of Milwaukee, who directly called on Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown to extend the light rail during one of the large plenary sessions. The Mayor was seen giving a thumbs-up signal following the comment. We hope other political leaders also heard the message.

Over 500 signatures received in just 3 days!

A petition calling for **extending Buffalo's light rail to the airport** was distributed at the Juneteenth Festival and at our "Dump the Pump Day" table at Church Street Station. The petition received over 500 signatures!

The petition summarized the goals of the extension:

- Provide better transit options for work, shopping, reaching educational opportunities, and satisfying personal needs
- Facilitate economic development and job opportunities
- Help revitalize the Broadway-Fillmore area

Clearly, there is public support for this extension.



CRT in the Community

by Gladys Gifford, editor

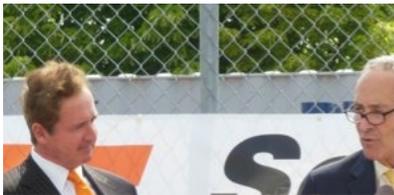
June 9,

Doug Funke and Gladys Gifford attended the groundbreaking for



the new **Amtrak station in Niagara Falls.**

Speakers included Sen. Schumer and Rep. Higgins, who each congratulated the city on this accomplishment.



Grateful appreciation was offered to Rep. Slaughter, for her efforts while representing Niagara Falls.

Mayor Dyster expressed appreciation for CRT support during long years of effort leading up to this event.

May 17,

CRT participated in **Hands Across Ferry**, organized by the Homeless Alliance to demonstrate city-wide solidarity.



At 11:00 am, people reached out and clasped hands all across the city.

Since public transit serves everyone, CRT found the day to be inspiring as we teamed up with the diversity of people who call the city of Buffalo home.

June 14-15,

CRT staffed a table at the local Juneteenth Festival, held at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. The weekend was windy and cold, but the crowd was lively and interested in the CRT table.



CRT collected signatures in support of the proposed extension of Metro Rail to the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport.

CRT educates the public concerning public transit in Western New York: see citizenstransit.org.

Please support our efforts with your dues and donations. Send your payment by [Paypal](https://www.paypal.com), or mail to CRT, 617 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14203



Federal Transportation Funding in Crisis

“Investment in transportation is more than just a physical investment in infrastructure; it is a commitment to our children's and our nation's future. Federal leadership is essential. It is foundational. Substantial and sustained federal investment in transportation is an expression of the national will and leadership for this new century as the U.S. economy competes on a worldwide stage.

Public transportation systems across the country form an interconnected system of national significance that links our regions, urban and suburban centers, and rural communities. The integrated network of public transportation services is an essential component of our nation's overall transportation system. As such, increased federal investment should be authorized for public transportation and highway programs in a way that considers the needs and benefits of balanced investment in all modes.” — *from American Public Transportation Association (APTA), “Statement of National Purpose” in APTA Recommendations on Federal Public Transportation Authorizing Law,*

Federal Gas Tax Runs Dry

“Now, here is the problem. Here is the reason we're here in the heat. If this Congress does not act by the end of the summer, the **Highway Trust Fund** will run out. There won't be any money there. All told, nearly 700,000 jobs could be at risk next year. That would be like Congress threatening to lay off the entire population of Denver, or Seattle, or Boston.” — **President Obama**, 7-1-14, speaking at Lee Bridge, Washington, DC.

Don't Be Misled by the “Highway” Name

The name “Highway Trust Fund” seems to imply that the fund is solely focused on building roads. In fact, the HTF includes three accounts—one focused on roads and related infrastructure, one on environmental remediation,

and one called the “**Mass Transit Account.**” Created in 1982, the Mass Transit Account has funded billions of dollars of public transportation improvements over the last three decades.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has estimated that the nation has an \$87 billion backlog of bus and rail projects. Public transportation systems are overdue for expansion or replacement of buses and trains. In addition, buses and paratransit vehicles depend on roads and bridges that are maintained by the Highway Account.

How Did We Reach this Crisis?

The HTF is funded by federal fuel and related excise taxes. The costs of construction, equipment, and labor for road building and public transit have increased over the past two decades, but the federal gasoline tax has remained at 18.4 cents per gallon since 1994. In addition, Americans

are driving less and cars have become more fuel efficient. In other words, current fuel taxes can no longer support the HTF.

From 2008 to 2010, to make up for a shortfall in the HTF, Congress transferred \$35 billion directly from the General Fund of the U.S. Treasury. Now the HTF is on the brink of insolvency again, and Congress is considering several alternatives to keep it afloat. While there are pros and cons to various proposals, Congress must make a decision soon—for the benefit and safety of all Americans.

Once this crisis is averted, Congress will need to fund a longer-term transportation bill. This fall, ... Congress [must] invest in a multi-year public transit bill so that Americans can have mobility options and we can create a better future and grow our communities.

- from Voices for Public Transit, <http://voicesforpublictransit.org/blog.aspx?id=6-24-2014>

Dump the Pump Day—WNY Style

by Lynn Magdol, CRT Secretary

CRT participated in the Ninth Annual “Dump the Pump Day” on June 19, working with the Sierra Club Niagara Group and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority.

Sponsored nationally by the American Public Transportation Association, Dump the Pump Day encourages commuters to try transit and save money. In addition to the financial advantages of using transit, the environmental benefits were promoted locally with the help of the Sierra Club.



*Doug Funke, Mayor Brown, Kim Minkel
photo courtesy NFTA*

The week of Dump the Pump Day was filled with local activities to call attention to the event. On Monday, June 16, Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown issued a proclamation declaring June 19 as Dump the Pump Day in Buffalo. Douglas Funke, CRT President, appeared at the mayoral proclamation ceremony, along with Kim Minkel and Doug Hartmayer of the NFTA.

Through connections with the NFTA, text about Dump the Pump was flashed on highway boards (observed on the Kensington!).

On Tuesday, June 17, CRT was featured on the Public Good radio show, a production of the Partnership for the Public Good. PPG director Sam Magavern interviewed Doug Funke and Lynn Magdol for the half-hour broadcast. A brief post-broadcast video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GGMdQELAdE&feature=youtu.be>.

On June 19th, Dump the Pump Day, the NFTA held a press conference which featured several testimonials from Metro riders, including Board member Lynn Magdol. Throughout the day, CRT and Sierra Club members staffed an information table at the Church Street Rail Station, displaying transit and environmental information. In addition to transit and environmental information, the table also featured materials from the NFTA: their Riders’ Guide, free copies of USA Today (which were also given out all day on all buses and trains), and a Metro Extra card offering discounts at local businesses (also given out all day).



“Dump the Pump” events raised awareness of public transit as an alternative to car travel. In future years, CRT will seek more partners, more financial sponsors, and more extensive publicity.

This year’s efforts were a promising start.



What shall be done with the Outer Harbor?

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation has hired consultants Perkins+Will to create a plan for the Outer Harbor.

Shall the Outer Harbor feature a public park? commercial buildings? housing? How will public access be designed?

Three public planning sessions are offered, listed below.

Wednesday, July 9

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
WNED Studios
140 Lower Terrace
Buffalo, NY 14203

Thursday, July 10

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Makowski Early Childhood Center
1095 Jefferson Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14208

Saturday, July 12

9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Old First Ward Community Center
62 Republic Street
Buffalo, NY 14204

Follow-up sessions to be held in August/September.

Calendar

July 9, 10, 12 Outer Harbor
public planning (p. 6)

July 21 and July 22, 5:00 pm
Community Congress of One
Region Forward (p. 1)

Aug. 6, 9:30 am
GBNRTC Planning & Coordinating
Comm., NFTA Board Rm, 181
Ellicott, Bflo;
Sept. 3, 9:30 am, Buffalo City Hall;
Oct. 1, 9:30 am, NYS Thruway
Authority

Oct. 15, 5:30-7:00 pm
CRT Quarterly Public Meeting,
location TBA

Ed. note: CRT News is now offered
quarterly, in tandem with the
quarterly public meetings of CRT.
No public meeting of CRT in the
summer...