

Community Support for Better Transit in Buffalo-Niagara

December 2017

**By Douglas Funke
President, Citizens for Regional Transit**



CITIZENS *for* REGIONAL TRANSIT

Petition Demanding a Transit Revolution!

Provide comprehensive, sustainable public transportation service

- Extend Metro Rail along highest demand corridors
- Provide inter-modal connectivity
- Establish long-term sustainable transit funding



Community Leaders Who Have Signed

City of Niagara Falls
- Mayor Paul Dyster
- NF City Council



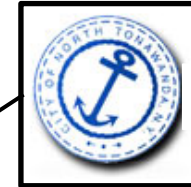
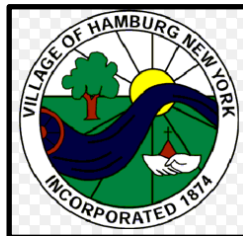
City of Tonawanda
- Mayor Rick Davis



City of Buffalo
- The Buffalo
Common Council



Village of Hamburg
- Village Council



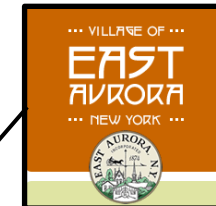
City of North
Tonawanda
- Mayor Arthur Pappas



Town of Cheektowaga
- Town Council



Town of Lancaster
- Town Council



Village of East Aurora -
- Mayor Jo Ann Litwin
Clinton



Village of Orchard Park
- Mayor Alan Kasprzak



CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT

Organizations That Have Signed

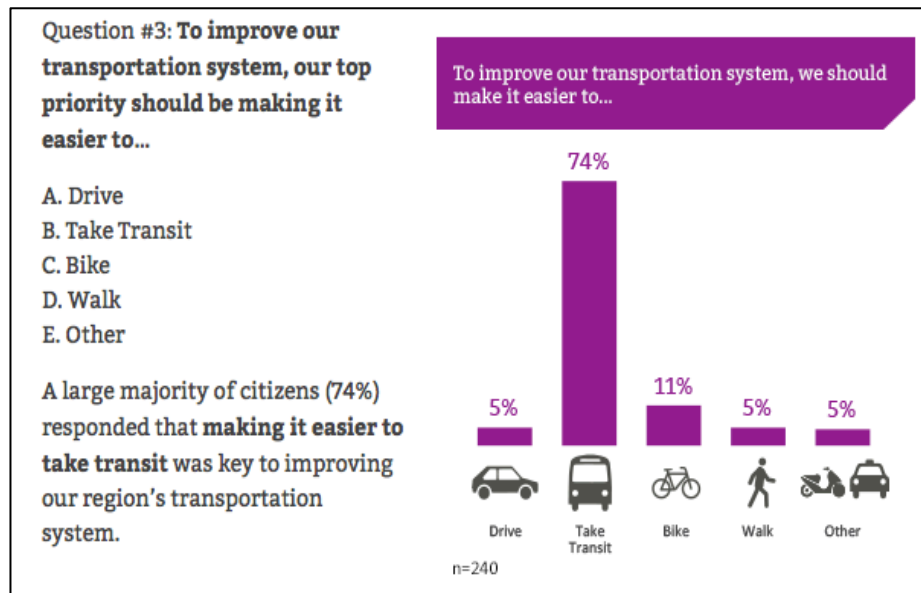
1. Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) 1342
2. Alpha Kappa Chi
3. BBN Homes LLC
4. Bijou Grill
5. Buffalo Computer Graphics
6. Buffalo First, Inc.
7. Buffalo Urban League
8. Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens
9. Buffalo Transit Central
10. Campaign for Greater Buffalo
11. Catholic Charities
12. Carmina Wood Morris
13. Cazenovia Community Resource Center
14. Central Terminal Restoration Corporation
15. Challenger Community News
16. Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation
17. Citizens 4 the Beautification of Lovejoy
18. Coalition for Economic Justice (CEJ)
19. Communications Workers of America (CWA 1133)
20. Concerned Ecumenical Ministry
21. Courtland Avenue Block Club
22. Daemon College Center for Sustainable Communications and Civic Engagement
23. Douglas Development Corporation
24. Eco_Logix Studio, Architecture & Engineering, PLLC
25. Earth Spirit Educational Services Inc.
26. Fillmore Corridor Neighborhood Coalition
27. Fillmore Forward
28. Friends of Times Beach
29. The Fruitbelt Coalition
30. Go Buffalo Niagara
31. Geo Operative
32. Global Villages Coalition
33. GoBike Buffalo
34. Greater Eastside – Field of Dreams Block Club
35. Hostel Buffalo-Niagara
36. Housing Opportunities Made Equal
37. Human First Ergonomics
38. Interfaith Peace Network of WNY
39. iT Garden
40. Journey's End Refuge Service
41. Latin American Cultural Association
42. League of Women Voters (Buffalo Niagara)
43. Lincoln Memorial Church (UMC)
44. Masten Block Club Coalition
45. The Merry-Wood Block Club Association
46. NAACP Buffalo Branch
47. Network of Religious Communities
48. Partners for a Livable Western NY
49. Partnership for the Public Good (PPG)
50. Prisoners Are People Too
51. PUSH Buffalo (People United for Sustainable Housing)
52. Re-Energize Buffalo
53. Restore Our Community Coalition (ROCC)
54. Riverside Salem UCC / DOC
55. Roebling Avenue Block Club
56. Sail Buffalo
57. Sierra Club (Niagara Group)
58. South Fillmore Block Club
59. University District Community Development Association
60. University Park Historic Block Club
61. VOICE Buffalo
62. Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo
63. Westside Stories
64. WNY Law Center
65. WNY Peace Center
66. Young and Wright Architectural
67. 21st Century Park on the Outer Harbor



Prior CRT Petitions

- CRT Petition Drive. Dedicate ½ Penny of county sales tax to public transit
 - 1995-99. Over 10,000 signatures
- CRT Petition Drive. Extend light rail to airport and Park & Ride at Transit Rd
 - 2003-04. Over 10,000 signatures
 - 2014. Over 1,000 signatures

And Broad Community Support for Transit Reflected in One Region Forward Outreach



How should we move forward?

- “106 out of 115 (92%) maps said that increasing ways we can get around without a car was a guiding principle”
- “On average participants added 59 miles of transit lines”

How do our choices play out?

- “A larger percentage of jobs and homes would be served by transit”
- “We would depend less on cars for our daily trips, conserve more energy, and emit less carbon”

What could we do differently?

- “Connect land use to transportation, especially public transit”
- “The region should make transit funding and system improvement a top priority for advocacy and action”

Amherst Supports the Amherst Extension

NFTA Survey Conducted by Siena
College Research Institute

Approach: Telephone survey

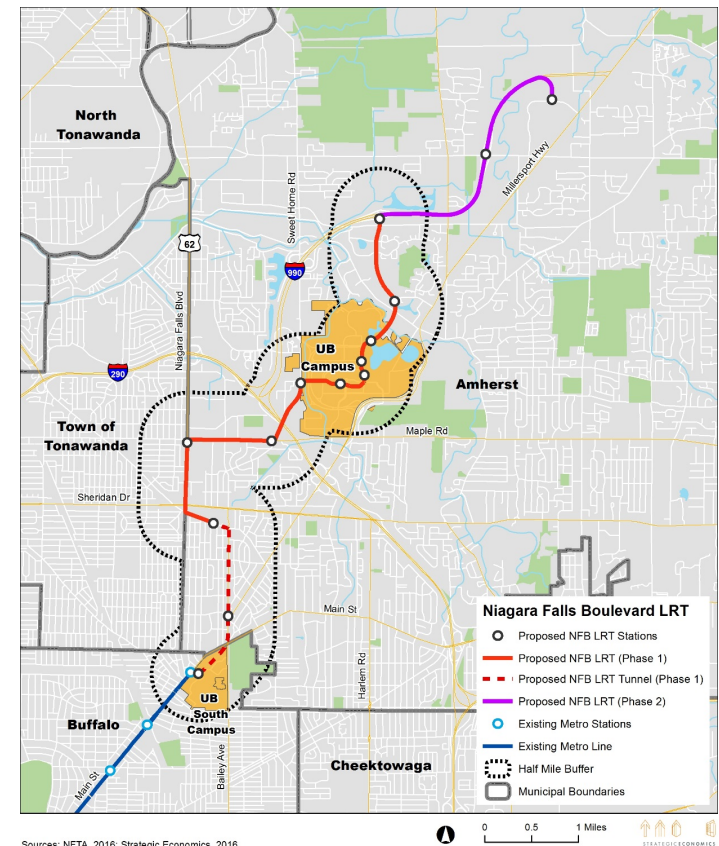
Conducted: March 9 – April 7, 2016

Sample size: 1,619

Q15. Expanding light rail service						
		County		City/Town		
	Total	Niagara	Erie	Buffalo	Amherst	Tonawanda
Strongly in favor	40%	33%	42%	46%	47%	43%
Somewhat in favor	26%	24%	27%	24%	27%	31%
Neither in favor nor against	20%	23%	19%	21%	25%	17%
Somewhat against	5%	7%	5%	4%	5%	3%
Strongly against	5%	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%
Don't know/Refused	3%	10%	2%	1%	2%	3%

Amherst Residents:

- 47% strongly in favor
- 27% somewhat in favor
- 74% total



Amherst Supports the Amherst Extension (cont.)

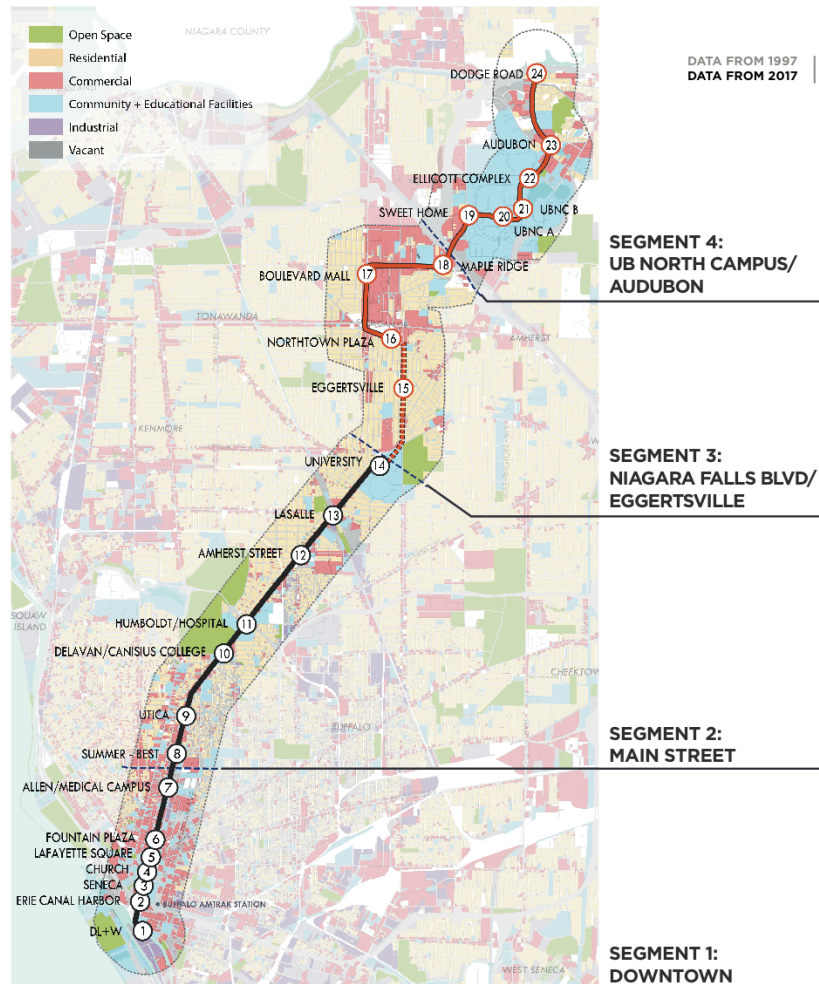
“The Amherst Chamber of Commerce ... strongly **supports Gov. Cuomo’s proposal to extend Metro Rail to Amherst** ...”

“This capital investment in our region **would have significant economic, environmental and social benefits...**”

“... the extension would reduce vehicular traffic and reduce air emissions”

“... perhaps most importantly ..., the proposed extension would bring communities in Amherst and Buffalo even closer together. **We are, after all, one region**”

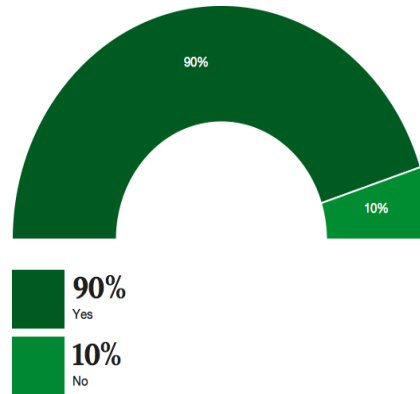
- Colleen DiPirro, President and CEO
Amherst Chamber of Commerce



Informal Poll By Business First Reflects Similar Levels of Support

BUSINESS PULSE

Results: Do you think it would make sense to extend Metro Rail to Buffalo Niagara International Airport?



Total number of responses: **1032**

This poll is not a scientific sampling. It offers a quick view of what readers are thinking.

Buffalo Business First Survey,
May 13, 2015



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What Our Leaders Are Saying

Empire State
Development
(ESD) Chairman
Howard Zemsky

“At the end of the day, we will only succeed in creating more opportunity through connecting people with transit, through connecting people by putting the jobs where they are accessible and by not continuing to spread and sprawl them out all over”

Mayor
Byron Brown

“It means jobs will be created as we build our rail line to Amherst. It also means **city residents will be able to get to jobs in our largest suburb**”

County Executive
Mark Poloncarz

Cuomo’s support for more miles of Metro Rail is “huge”. “How many years have we seen pushback on that? We don’t see that anymore.”
The extension to Amherst will address the “transportation night mere commuters face on a daily basis.”

Governor
Andrew Cuomo

“We will support the extension of the light rail, providing a direct connection for tens of thousands of jobs.”



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As Well As Support from the Pope



Photoshopped image from
BILLYPENN, September 18, 2015

“The quality of life in cities has much to do with systems of transport, which are often a source of much suffering for those who use them. Many cars, used by one of more people, circulate in cities, causing congestion, raising the level of pollution, and consuming enormous quantities of non-renewable energy . This makes it necessary to build more roads and parking areas which spoil the urban landscape. **Many specialists agree on the need to give priority to public transportation.** Yet some measures needed will not prove easily acceptable to society unless substantial improvements are made in the systems themselves, which in many cities force people to put up with undignified conditions due to crowding, inconvenience, infrequent service and lack of safety.”

Pope Francis,
Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father
on Care for Our Common Home,
Paragraph 153



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