



# CRT News

## Citizens for Regional Transit Next Quarterly Public Meeting:

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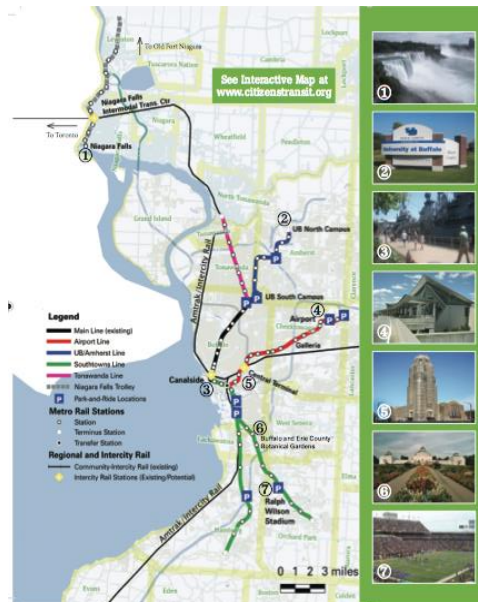
**Wednesday, October 21, 2015, 5:30-6:30 pm  
(doors open at 5:00 pm)  
United Way, 742 Delaware Ave., Buffalo**

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**New York State Funding for Public Transportation in the Buffalo-Niagara Region**

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**Featuring  
NY State Assemblyman Sean Ryan  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign's New York & Federal Policy  
Coordinator Nadine Lemmon**



**A Downtown Amtrak / Commuter Rail Station May Finally Become a Reality**  
**By Douglas Funke**  
**President, Citizens for Regional Transit**



**(X) = Site of proposed Intermodal Transportation Center**

The recent shaming of Buffalo’s Exchange Street Amtrak Station in the Atlantic Citylab Magazine, together with the reality of several new Amtrak stations in various stages of development across New York State (for example the new station under construction in Niagara Falls) have reinvigorated calls for a new Multimodal Station in downtown Buffalo near Canalside: <http://www.citylab.com/commute/2015/07/these-are-the-saddest-amtrak-stations-in-america/397817/>

We are very pleased that ECHDC and long-time supporter, Empire State Development’s WNY Regional President, Sam Hoyt, are leading efforts try to make this happen. With its close proximity to Buffalo’s Metro Rail, Canalside is an ideal location for a new station as described in recent Buffalo News articles: <http://www.buffalonews.com/opinion/buffalo-news-editorials/new-amtrak-station-at-canalside-has-too-many-advantages-to-ignore-20150726>, <http://www.buffalonews.com/city-region/erie-county/buffalo-left-behind-as-other-cities-get-new-train-stations-20150723>

We are also pleased to see that the Buffalo Niagara Partnership has called for the implementation of a “WNY Passenger Rail Infrastructure Action Plan to advance high speed & intercity rail implementation throughout the region” and that the GBNRTC is now leading a study of how to make this happen.

In addition to serving Niagara Falls and Toronto bound Amtrak trains, a station at Canalside could serve commuter trains connecting Buffalo’s waterfront with Niagara Falls. This is one of the most valuable advantages. A convenient transit connection between Buffalo and Niagara Falls would connect our regional waterfront – the “World’s Greatest Waterfront.” It would encourage visitors to Buffalo and Niagara Falls alike, to stay in our region longer. Niagara Falls tourists would once again be able to “shuffle off to Buffalo” by rail. The station could also serve people attending events at the First Niagara Arena.

There are some difficulties that a Canalside station will have to overcome. The curvature of the tracks at the old Aud site will make it more difficult to meet current ADA requirements. Also, since the tracks are owned by CSX – who does not use them – CSX will have to agree to the building of the station. These problems are not insurmountable, especially with strong



## New York State Legislative Update Gladys Gifford, CRT Legislative Chair

A significant bill to change how transit infrastructure and operations are funded by NYS was introduced in June, 2015, by Senator DeFrancisco (Syracuse) and Assemblyman Brennan (Brooklyn), bill S5967/A8242. The major feature of the bill offers a steady and increasing stream of revenue for the capital needs of transit and transportation infrastructure. The source of this revenue is a small percentage of the NYS personal income tax.

The bill will not in any way change the personal income tax rate. Rather, a small portion of the existing tax revenues would be redistributed to the transportation systems all across the state, for use in transit and transportation agencies. Revenue would stay in the area where generated, i.e., downstate revenues would benefit the MTA and its suburbs; upstate revenues would benefit transit agencies and the DOT.

NYS is in a full recovery from the recession, and enjoys a robust revenue from the personal income tax. Now is the time for residents to reap the rewards, through investment in transit and transportation infrastructure that benefits all of us.

The bill has a handful of co-sponsors in each house. The Senate version now sits in the Finance committee; the Assembly version sits at Ways and Means. This bill will be in the stack of legislation that greets the Legislature in January, 2016.

What can we do now to move this bill forward? The best way is to convince our legislators to be co-sponsors. At Citizens for Regional Transit, we have succeeded with two legislators (Senator Kennedy,

Assemblyman Schimminger) and are happy that Senator Gullivan was an original sponsor. In cooperation with the League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara, CRT will be visiting our WNY state delegation this fall, to ensure support for this important bill.

CRT encourages all supporters and members to visit and/or call their NYS legislators before the end of December and urge them to sign on as co-sponsors for Bill S5967/A8242.

To view the legislation, go to:

<http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/A8242-2015>

More info on this bill is available at New York Public Transit Association (NYPTA) website, [www.nytransit.org](http://www.nytransit.org)

### ... and on the Federal front: a brief summary of the transportation funding outlook in Congress

Lynn Magdol, Newsletter Editor

Not much has changed since our last (Summer 2015) Newsletter report on Federal funding while Congress has been on vacation. In July, the Senate passed a six year transportation bill and a three month extension. The House passed only the three month extension, delaying consideration of the six-year bill until the Fall session. The compromise bill is expected to authorize transportation spending for three years. In the short-term, it appears likely that yet another extension of a few months will be needed while the House works on its version of a long-term bill.

Although interest in increasing the gas tax fund is growing, there has been no concrete action.

Based on posts

at [www.usa.streetsblog.org](http://www.usa.streetsblog.org) and [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com).



**CRT at work for Western New York**  
**Compiled by Doug Funke, CRT President**

**CRT Brochure.** A new CRT Brochure was completed and is now being used to promote better public transportation and expansion of Metro Rail. The new brochure includes several improvements. It updates the map of proposed Metro Rail extensions to reflect the remaining rights-of-way and new developments at Canalside, Larkinville, Riverbend, and the Outer Harbor (see page 1 and [www.citizenstransit.org/corridors](http://www.citizenstransit.org/corridors)) . It also adds connections between Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

**Petition for sustainable public transportation.** A petition calling for an “Integrated Sustainable Public Transportation System” has been developed and is being distributed to organizations and municipalities throughout the region. The petition calls for extension of Metro Rail along high-demand corridors, Intermodal connectivity to air and inter-city rail, and most importantly the establishment of long-term sustainable transit funding.

CRT continued to support the **WNY Environmental Alliance** plank calling for non-polluting public transportation along the Niagara River Greenway between Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Fort Niagara. We attended regular meetings of the **Niagara River Greenway Commission (NRGC)** and will serve on the NRGC Transportation Committee finally being formed. We received inputs from Creative Urban Projects recommending next steps for exploring a **possible gondola study** that could connect Buffalo’s Inner and Outer harbors.

We continued to support the **Partnership for the Public Good (PPG)** plank to improve local and state funding for public transit. We met with several political leaders including Congressman Higgins’ Office and Erie County Commissioner Maria Whyte.

CRT continues to serve on the **NFTA Buffalo-Amherst Alternatives Analysis** Project Advisory Committee (PAC). We attended the project consultant’s presentation of deployment alternatives recommended for further study, submitting comments to NFTA with recommendations for preferred alignments and important design features. We also met with the Amherst Planning Board to hear their concerns.

We met with **NFTA’s Consultant, Bob Gower**, to review initial results of the ongoing NFTA-led study to extend Buffalo Metro past the First Niagara Arena into the old DL&W Terminal and beyond. CRT will participate in review of final recommendations.

CRT representatives attended numerous **public information meetings** on transit-related projects. These included meetings on the Scajaquada Corridor redesign, Outer Harbor development plans, and the Niagara River Gorge Project that is planning the removal of the Robert Moses Parkway in Niagara Falls. We continued to participate with the NFTA Citizens Advisory Committee.

Finally, CRT participated in several **community events** including the Fruitbelt/McCarley Gardens/PUSH meeting at the Innovation Center, CNU-sponsored “Rethinking Metrics, Rethinking Roads” conference In Rochester, NY on June 26<sup>th</sup>, the Climate Justice Rally in Niagara Square on September 24<sup>th</sup> and the Environmental Summit at Daemen College.

**Remembrance: Lew Harriman**  
**By Gladys Gifford, CRT Past President**

Lewis (“Lew”) G. Harriman, Jr. was a founder of the group that became Citizens for Regional Transit. Lew continued to lead the group until 1998, when he left Buffalo after the death of his wife. Lew died on April 1, 2015, at age 99, living in New Hampshire near his son, Lewis G. Harriman, III.

Lew was born and raised in Buffalo, served in the army during World War II, and became vice president for community development at M & T Bank. He participated in the discussions concerning where to locate the new UB campus. When the decision was to build in Amherst, he led the effort to build the light rail rapid transit, to connect the two campuses directly. After the shortened line was built, he convened a group to continue to advocate for completing the light rail system. That group, the Citizens Rapid Transit Committee, evolved into the current organization: Citizens for Regional Transit.

Lew’s energy and enthusiasm kept the CRTC motivated throughout our formative years. We honor his legacy and continue the work, to see better public transit and expanded light rail in metro Buffalo.

Joan Bozer, CRT Board emeritus, commented: “Lew was a strong, persistent and visionary leader who was an inspiration to all who knew him. He clearly saw the need for excellent public transportation in order to sustain the economic revitalization of our region.”

Gladys Gifford, past-president of CRT, recalled: “I met Lew through a talk he gave at the local League of Women Voters, in the early ‘90’s. He led a group of transit enthusiasts that met weekly for lunch at a restaurant near Main and Minnesota, and soon he recruited my husband and me to join the Citizens Rapid Transit Committee (CRTC). His forceful and vital personality motivated everyone in the group to keep the vision alive.”

Ed Stachura, colleague, remembered: “Lew was always enthusiastic and encouraged new ideas. Although he came from a privileged background, he was sensitive to the challenges faced by others. He never lost his focus that the expansion of the ‘subway’ was important to the region’s economic vitality and growth. Lew was always a true gentleman, never overbearing, arrogant or obnoxious.”

Citizens for Regional Transit seeks to educate the public, public officials, their authorities and agencies in the Buffalo–Niagara region about the benefits of a comprehensive transportation system including an expanded Metro Rail.

[www.citizenstransit.org](http://www.citizenstransit.org)

Facebook: Citizens for Regional Transit

Twitter: @WNYTransit

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Please support our efforts with your dues and donations. Send your payment by [Paypal](#), or mail to CRTTC, 617 Main St., Suite #201, Buffalo, NY 14203

*Calendar*

October 21, 2015 - CRT Quarterly Public Meeting, 5:30 – 6:30 pm (doors open at 5:00), United Way, 742 Delaware Ave., Buffalo. New York State Funding for Public Transportation in the Buffalo Niagara Region Featuring NY State Assemblyman Sean Ryan and TSTC Legislative Advocate Nadine Lemmon.

January 20, 2016 - CRT Annual Meeting, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Business meeting with possible speaker, details to be announced.

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation  
617 Main Street, Suite #201  
Buffalo, NY 14203

*return service requested*