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# CRT News

A Quarterly Publication of Citizens for Regional Transit

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## **Citizens for Regional Transit Next Public Meeting**

### **Alternative Energy Sources and Transit:**

**A discussion of electric and hydrogen vehicle fuels and local hydroelectric power from the New York Power Authority**

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**Thursday, April 18, 2019**

**5:30 - 7:00 p.m. (doors open at 5:00)**

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**Central Library, 1 Lafayette Square**

**West Room (1<sup>st</sup> floor)**

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### **Speakers:**

**Charley Bowman, Sierra Club Buffalo Niagara**

**David Stout, NYSDEC (retired)**

**Charlotte Keith, Investigative Post**

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**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

While research has identified transportation as a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, transit can help to reduce carbon emissions by improving the ratio of vehicles to passengers, carrying many more people per trip than private automobiles and car sharing services. Recently, some have advocated for further enhancements to the environmental benefits of transit by upgrading their fuel types. The Sierra Club has been working with the NFTA on purchasing electric buses, as has been done by many other transit agencies in North America and around the world. Advocates of hydrogen fuel believe it is an even better improvement over electric power for buses. CRT has always advocated for light rail as the greenest alternative because of its use of electric power. Locally, the supply of electricity from the New York Power Authority is greatly underutilized, leading to the question of how our transit services in Buffalo Niagara could take advantage of this available resource.

The meeting will be held at the Central Library in downtown Buffalo, easily accessible by transit via park-and-ride lots at the northern end of the Metro Rail line and a one-block walk, or via any number of Metro buses that stop within 1-2 blocks of the library.



## President's Column: Doug Funke's Recent Testimony to New York State

*CRT President Doug Funke presented oral and written testimony at a Joint Public Hearing of the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Corporations, Authorities & Commissions; Senate Standing Committee on Transportation; and Assembly Standing Committee on Transportation. The stated subject/purpose of the hearing was "to examine the effectiveness of New York State's transit networks." This hearing, one of several held in various location around the state, was held at Buffalo City Hall on Friday March 15th, 2019. Below is the opening segment of CRT's testimony with a link to the entire document.*

The world is changing in ways that demand a bold new vision for mobility based on clean, reliable public transportation. The 20th century dream of a car in every driveway has become unsustainable. Our cities have been turned into parking lots, our "freeways" are clogged with stop-and-go traffic, our air is polluted with gases and particulates that cause cancer and asthma, and our climate – planet-wide – is changing in ways that increase the frequency of dangerous weather events and threaten our coastlines and economies. The largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Erie County is not electrical energy generation or industry, but rather transportation (at 40%, primarily from cars). If we expect people to drive less, alternatives must be provided.

This is also a matter of equal access to jobs, food, healthcare, education, recreation, and cultural amenities. Thirty percent of Buffalo households do not own cars. This includes seniors, the disabled, and those who cannot afford cars. The annual cost of car ownership (\$10,000) and road maintenance (\$25,000 per lane mile) puts a strain on family and municipal budgets alike. Millennials with the option to drive are increasingly choosing not to – and are attracted to cities that provide other mobility options. For all of the above reasons, a solid commitment to expanded, efficient public transportation must undergird our plans for a just, successful, and sustainable future.

A growing number of cities and regions across the US have recognized this imperative by investing in better public transit, including light rail, which can move more people more efficiently, quickly, and sustainably than any non-rail mode. Buffalo-Niagara needs to keep pace, to remain competitive and serve our community's needs. Recognizing this imperative, a growing list of Buffalo-Niagara municipal leaders (including city mayors and town councils, and Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz) and over 68 community organizations and business have endorsed the Citizens for Regional Transit petition calling for: extending Buffalo's light rail along highest demand corridors, providing inter-modal connectivity and, most importantly, establishing long-term sustainable transit funding. Our petition and a list of signers are attached ...

Read the full text of the statement [here](#).



**CRT at Work for Western NY: January - March 2019**  
**Compiled by Lynn Magdol, Newsletter Editor**

**We held our annual/quarterly public meeting.** President Doug Funke presented his [annual report](#), reviewing 2018 and projecting forward into 2019. Elections were held and two [new Board members](#) were selected. Hal Morse, Executive Director of the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), summarized the funding outlook for transit following the national mid-term elections.

**We met with elected officials.** Board members Doug Funke, Betsy Giles, and Maddie McCauley attended Transit Awareness Day in Albany, an annual event sponsored by the New York Public Transit Association (NYPTA). They met with eight Western New York representatives and/or their staff, and left information packets for several others. CRT Board members also met with Supervisor Joe Emminger (Tonawanda), Assemblywoman Karen McMahon (Amherst), and Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes (Buffalo, East Side).

**We presented our plank** at the Partnership for the Public Good's rollout of their [Community Agenda](#)



**We prepared public statements.** Board members submitted comments about the NFTA's Amherst light rail expansion project. Doug spoke at a press conference sponsored by the Sierra Club endorsing electric buses. Doug presented a lengthy testimony at the joint NYS hearing on transit (see President's column, this issue).



**We attended meetings of transportation and community organizations,** including Buffalo Place, Buffalo Transit Riders United, Erie County Climate Change Task Force, GBNRTC, NFTA, and Niagara River Greenway Commission.



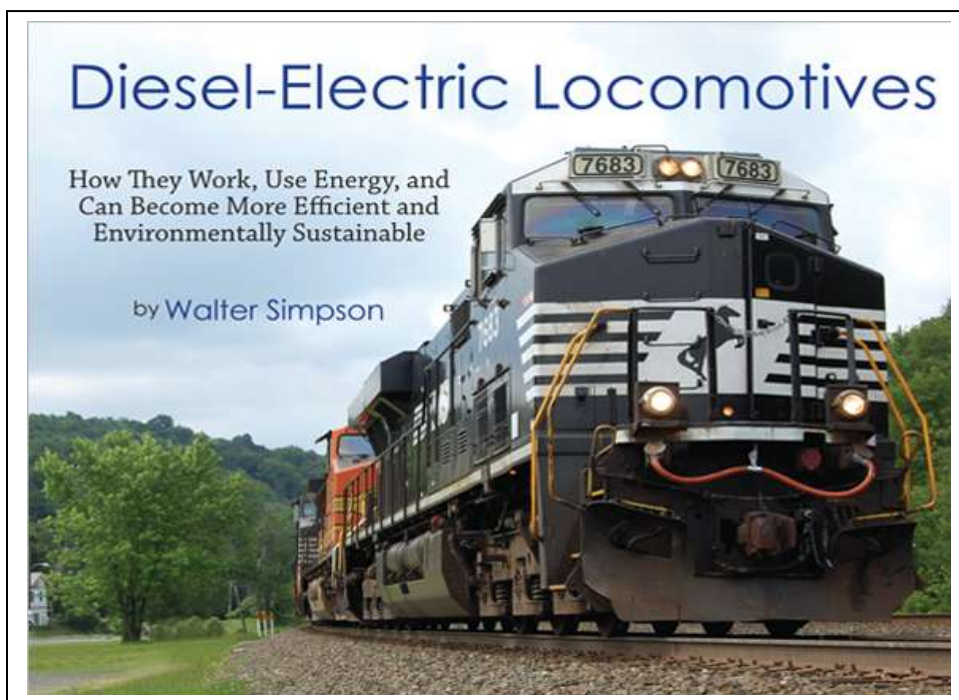
**Earth Day Train Talk**  
**Wednesday, April 17, 6-8 p.m.**

**The Buffalo History Museum**  
**One Museum Court, Buffalo**



Nottingham Terrace and Elmwood Avenue

(Can be reached via #20 Elmwood or #32 Amherst bus, lots of free parking too)



Environmentalist and life-long rail fan Walter Simpson will present his new information-packed, beautifully illustrated book which explains in detail:

- How all energy-related components of a contemporary diesel-electric locomotive work
- Locomotive fuel economy measures shrouded in secrecy by the railroad industry
- Emissions regulation and technology
- Railroad motive power options to address the threat of climate change

The Museum's model railroad layout will be open and running 5-6 pm and the Singing Brakemen will sing train songs beginning at 5:30. Walter's book will be available at special event discount price. Admission: Museum members free; others \$5. Refreshments!

Sponsored by The Buffalo History Museum. Co-sponsored by the Citizens for Regional Transit, Niagara Frontier Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, Partnership for the Public Good, Sierra Club Niagara Group, WNY Environmental Alliance, WNY Peace Center, WNY Railway Historical Society.

For more information about Walter's book see, [www.diesel-electric-locomotives.com](http://www.diesel-electric-locomotives.com). For more information about this event, [enconser@buffalo.edu](mailto:enconser@buffalo.edu).



## Another Way to Donate: Amazon Smile

When you shop online at Amazon, you can donate to CRT using a special log-in for Amazon Smile. Log in to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and specify “Citizens Regional Transit Corporation” for your donations ***before selecting your purchases.***

### Calendar

April 2 – CRT Executive Board monthly meeting, 12-1:30 p.m., PPG small conference room.

April 18 - CRT Quarterly Public Meeting, 5:30-7:00 p.m., West Room, Central Library.

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Citizens for Regional Transit (CRT) seeks to educate the region about the benefits of a comprehensive transportation system including an expanded Metro Rail.

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

[crtc@citizenstransit.org](mailto:crtc@citizenstransit.org)



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Please support our efforts with your dues and donations. Send your payment by [PayPal](https://www.paypal.com), or mail to Citizens for Regional Transit, 617 Main St., Suite #201, Buffalo, NY 14203.

Suggested donation levels:

Corporate: \$250.+ (name/logo will be on our website)

Group/organization: \$50.

Household: \$35.

Individual: \$25.

Student, senior, unemployed, etc.: \$5.

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CRT is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all contributions are tax deductible.