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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**  
**CRT Annual Meeting**

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**Thursday, January 16, 2020**  
**5:30 - 7:00 p.m. (doors open at 5:00)**

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**West Room, Central Library, 1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo**  
**Easily Accessible via Metro Rail and Bus**

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**Featuring:**  
**CRT Annual Report, Pres. Doug Funke**  
**Update on One Region Forward, Kelly Dixon, GBNRTC**  
**Annual business meeting (brief) to elect officers for 2020**

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**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**



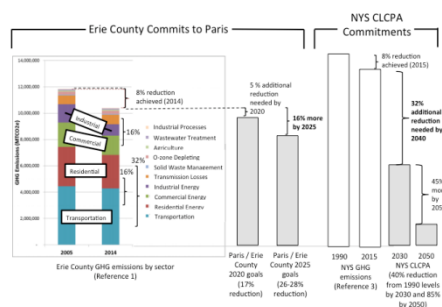
Construction begins at Exchange Street Amtrak Station



## Transit Will Be The Key for Meeting Governor Cuomo’s CLCPA GHG Goals By CRT President Doug Funke

New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) was signed into law this summer, committing New York State to responsible action against climate change. The law's goals of reducing carbon emissions 40% by 2030 and 85% by 2050 are formidable, but within our reach if we are willing to act boldly. Public transportation will be pivotal for achieving this success.

Transportation is the largest greenhouse gas (GHG) contributing sector, at 40%, compared to just 20% for the residential sector, the next largest (Ref.1, p.17). Within the transportation sector light duty vehicles (LDVs), including taxis and car share vehicles, contribute the biggest portion (60%) with public transit the smallest (3%) (Ref.2, p.1&2). This together with the slow projected growth of electric vehicle (EV) sales, (with EVs only reaching 10% of LDVs on the road by 2025 and 25% by 2030 (Ref.2, p.3), makes the need to transition people from cars to public transit, where the pollution per passenger mile is a small fraction of that from driving, obvious. The daily congestion and gridlock experienced on New York’s highways, and the acres of environmentally damaging parking that LDVs demand, further illustrate the importance of moving to public transit. The chart below graphically shows the additional GHG reductions needed to meet the 2025 and 2030 goals (16% and 32%, respectively). It is obvious that substantial reductions from the transportation sector, and therefore from LDV vehicle miles travelled (VMT), are essential.



Clearly, the path to meeting the NYS GHG reduction goals must include substantially reducing vehicle miles traveled by car. This means more people choosing transit. Disincentives for driving and incentives for using energy efficient public transit are needed to achieve the shift to transit. And investments to improve public transportation infrastructure will be critical for: (1) attracting car commuters to public transit; and (2) handling increased ridership on transit as more people leave their cars at home.

We therefore recommend that the CLCPA’s Cap & Invest program be structured in a way that discourages driving (especially in urban areas) and uses the CLCPA Cap & Invest revenues along with NYS general budget funds, to make public transportation a viable alternative to driving. Much needs to be done, especially capital investments for expanding high capacity transit (e.g., Buffalo’s hydro-powered light rail) and making improvements to urban transit operations (e.g., increasing the frequency of buses). Improvements to public transportation are a precondition for meeting the carbon reduction goals of the CLCPA.

The catastrophic impacts of climate change are fast approaching, made worse if we do nothing or act too slowly. It is therefore imperative that we move quickly to mitigate the climate crisis. Since the transportation sector is the biggest source of the problem, it needs to be prioritized immediately!

### References:

- (1) "Erie County Commits to Paris: How Erie Can Meet US Target Reductions for Greenhouse Gas Emissions", Jan 2018.
- (2) "Transforming Transportation in New York: Roadmaps to a Transportation Climate Target for 2035", Sept. 2019.

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

**We held our quarterly public meeting.** The topic was “East Side Development and Transit.” CRT President Doug Funke presented a proposal for a light rail line through the East Side to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, with responses from local experts Paul Tronolone, Empire State Development, and David Franczyk, Buffalo Common Council.

**We worked on policy issues.** We drafted and submitted a plank proposal for the 2020 Community Agenda of the Partnership for the Public Good. The plank will be presented at our annual/quarterly public meeting on January 16.

**We wrote letters.**

We co-authored a letter to Governor Cuomo with the local Sierra Club about transportation priorities for the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) . See President’s Column on page 2 in this issue for a synopsis of the letter. The full letter will be available on the CRT website at [www.citizenstransit.com](http://www.citizenstransit.com) .

We presented written and verbal comments at the annual budget hearing of the NFTA. We sent a detailed letter to the NFTA regarding their development plan, including our recommendations for a comprehensive light rail extension program beyond the Amherst extension. We wrote to the NFTA to request a public participation period at their monthly Board of Commissioners’ meetings.

CRT Board member Betsy Giles sent a letter to the Buffalo News about future plans for the Skyway.

**We were present at transit-related community events.**

We attended an update on the Humboldt Parkway restoration campaign (<https://roccebuffalo.org/>).

CRT President Doug Funke spoke as a panelist at a Sierra Club meeting about New York State’s CLCPA. See his column, page 2 in this issue.



**We attended meetings of transportation and community organizations,** including Buffalo Place, Buffalo Transit Riders United, Erie County Community Climate Change Task Force, GBNRTC, NFTA (Board of Commissioners and Citizens Advisory Committee), and the Niagara River Greenway Commission.



## Remembering Ed Deutschman: Tributes from Members

Note: Ed was President of CRT for many years. He passed away in October after a long period of intermittent health struggles.

From former CRT President and current Board member Gladys Gifford:

He was our chairman, then president, for many years. I served as secretary during that time, and I credit him with keeping the group going and focused on our goals.

From Vice President Seth Triggs:

This is very sad news ... Ed was really wonderful and instrumental to our organization.

From long-time supporter John Weiksna on Facebook:

We lost a spectacular former CRT executive director. Solace to Marian and family. May Ed rest in peace.



NFTA's new Customer Service Center



## KEEP CRT ON TRACK IN 2020

In 2019, Citizens for Regional Transit continued to shape and accelerate the conversation around improvement and expansion of bus and rail transit for all citizens of the Niagara Frontier.

### **We held public informational meetings to facilitate inclusive conversations on issues critical to expanding transit in the region.**

- We brought citizens, experts, and policymakers together to address issues including: the implications of midterm election results for transit funding; electricity and hydrogen as alternative energy sources for transit; and East Side development and transit access.

### **We worked with the Partnership for the Public Good on our plank to increase transit funding from Erie County.**

- We gained an understanding of the county sales tax structure and why it is politically challenging to change. We met with Deputy County Executive Maria Whyte, who encouraged us to work with the NFTA on new sources of funding. We obtained over 450 signatures on our petition supporting the PPG transportation plank.

### **We met with WNY elected officials at Transit Awareness Day in Albany.**

- We renewed old contacts and made valuable new contacts with elected officials who are influential in transit funding decisions at the State level. Follow-up meetings at district offices were held during the year to brief them on new developments and potential projects for transit.

Throughout the year, we have been busy with letters, opinion pieces, and interviews in local media; meetings with state and federal government representatives, presentations to community groups; information tables at events; attendance at meetings of transportation agencies and community organizations; written and oral comments on regional transportation plans; and more.

CRT relies on members for all ongoing expenses. We are entirely staffed by volunteers, so contributions go directly to promoting transit. Your membership fosters our continuing and expanded efforts. You can help to keep this momentum going in 2020. Join or renew now at [www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com) (payment to [crtc@citizenstransit.org](mailto:crtc@citizenstransit.org)) or mail a check to the address below.



### Another Way to Donate: Amazon Smile

When you shop online at Amazon, they will donate to CRT via Amazon Smile. Log in to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and specify "Citizens Regional Transit Corporation" for your donation **before selecting your purchases.**

### Calendar

- January 7 – CRT Executive Board monthly meeting, 12-1:30 p.m., PPG classroom.
- January 16 - CRT Quarterly Public Meeting, 5:30-7:00 p.m., Central Library, see p.1.
- February 4 - CRT Executive Board monthly meeting, 12-1:30 p.m., location TBD.

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, 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.