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# CRT News

A Quarterly publication of Citizens for Regional Transit.

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## Citizens for Regional Transit Public Meeting

**Transportation in Buffalo-Niagara:  
Review of 2017 and Looking Ahead**

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**Tuesday, January 16, 2017, 5:30-7:00 pm  
(Doors open at 5:00)**

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**United Way, 742 Delaware Ave., Buffalo**

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**Speakers:**

**TBA, Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council**

**Doug Funke, President, CRT**

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**Priorities for the upcoming year will be discussed. A representative from the GBNRTC will present a preview of the Buffalo-Niagara 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, providing the context and regional direction in which CRT's efforts will take root. We will conduct our annual business meeting: the 2017 CRT Annual Report will be presented and 2018 officers will be elected.**

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**Free and open to the public**



World's Largest Mega-City: See President's Column, next page



## President's Column: World's Longest Mega-City Doug Funke, CRT President

A glance at the satellite image on page 1 (courtesy of Dan Leonard, Buffalo Niagara Partnership's Director of Economic Development) makes it obvious that we live in a bi-national mega-region running from Toronto to Buffalo-Niagara and even to nearby Rochester. As Dan points out, this linear arrangement of urban centers has a population of 9 million people and a combined GDP of \$450 billion – in many ways a very long mega-city.

What's missing is transit connectivity. With only one Amtrak train per day (in each direction) travel between US cities and Toronto is largely limited to car. This creates recurring traffic congestion – especially at the international bridges and near Toronto. This impeded mobility restricts economic opportunities.

We can do better. We can connect our bi-national region with commuter rail making travel between Toronto, Canada's largest economic center, and WNY cities fast, efficient and routine. And with one of the most popular tourist destinations (Niagara Falls) in the middle, a transit-connected region here could serve as a model for bi-national success.

Many of the elements for making Toronto-Buffalo-Rochester connectivity a reality are already in place, or being put in place:

- Toronto is extending its GoTrain commuter rail to Niagara Falls, Ontario. The GoTrain will connect Toronto and Niagara Falls, Ontario with daily commuter rail by 2024.
- Niagara Falls, NY Amtrak Station and Multimodal Transportation Center is now operational. This new multi-modal facility is located at the border with Canada and designed to improve the efficiency of cross-border travel.
- Buffalo will soon have a new downtown train station. This new multi-modal center will serve rail passengers coming to downtown Buffalo and to Canalside.
- Rochester has just opened its new train station. The new Rochester multi-modal transportation center is already welcoming passengers to downtown Rochester.
- There is broad political support for expanding transit across Buffalo-Niagara. In addition to public commitment from Governor Cuomo for extending Buffalo's Metro Rail, a growing number of political leaders (5 mayors, 2 city councils, 3 town/village councils), over 60 community organizations and businesses have signed the CRT petition calling for a transit revolution! The CRT petition specifically calls for: (1) extensions of Metro Rail along highest-demand corridors, (2) intermodal connectivity to air and inter-city rail, and (3) establishment of long-term sustainable transit funding.

Just a few missing elements still need to be put in place. These are:

- Establishment of commuter rail between Niagara Falls and Buffalo building on the existing Amtrak service.
- Improvement of border-crossing operations to speed US-Canada travel leveraging the improved customs facilities of the new Niagara Falls, NY Amtrak Station.
- Extension of Buffalo's light rail along highest priority corridors, especially to the UB Amherst Campus and to the airport.

As noted above, most of the pieces for making the Toronto-Niagara Falls-Buffalo-Rochester corridor a reality are already either in place, or in development. If we can't build on this momentum for making our bi-national mega region a success, shame on us!

### CRT at Work for Western NY: October - December 2017

**We held our quarterly public meeting** in October, featuring a panel of speakers on the newly emerging issues facing transit systems as they interface with ride-hailing companies such as Uber and Lyft.



**We attended meetings.** CRT Board members met with State Assemblyman Sean Ryan to discuss current transit issues. We attended a public open house hosted by State Senator Chris Jacobs. We held an informal meeting with local staff of the Shared Use Mobility Center, a multimodal organization that promotes bike sharing, car sharing, ride hailing and transit, to discuss common interests and ways to work together. We presented oral and written comments at the NFTA public hearing on the proposed budget for fiscal year ending 2019. We attended meetings of **transportation agencies and community organizations**, including Buffalo Place, Buffalo Transit Riders United, Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC), Niagara Falls Ontario Go Train system, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (Board of Commissioners and Citizens Advisory Committee), Niagara River Greenway Commission, Partners for a Livable Western NY, and Partnership for the Public Good.

**We appeared in the media.** We were profiled by Rebecca Reilly for her Portrait in Sustainability series on her blog, Imaginomix (<https://imaginomix.wordpress.com/2017/10/13/profiles-in-sustainability-citizens-for-regional-transit/>). CRT Board members had their letters published in the Buffalo News about access to the Outer Harbor, pedestrian safety at transit stops, the Central Terminal, and aging without a car.

**We wrote letters.** We sent a thank you note to WNY representatives in Albany (Assembly representatives Kearns, Peoples-Stokes, and Ryan; Senator Kennedy) for their recently-rated excellent voting records on environmental issues, including wetlands, renewable energy, water quality, air quality, and health. We wrote to Congressman Brian Higgins and Senator Chuck Schumer, thanking them for their efforts on behalf of TIGER funding, a potential resource for Metro Rail Extension to the DL&W Terminal. We sent public comments to the GBNRTC about the proposed safety project on NY Rt. 5 (Main St.) at Kensington Avenue and Humboldt Parkway.

**We staffed information tables and/or presented talks** at Daemen College's Environmental Summit, Explore Buffalo's Metro Subway Art Tours, Partnership for the Public Good, Western NY Peace Center, and World on Your Plate.





### PICTURE PAGE



Dan Leonard and Dustin Earle at CRT meeting, October 2017



**CONTEST:** Can you guess what these are? Send your answer to us at [crtc@citizenstransit.org](mailto:crtc@citizenstransit.org) and your name will be entered in a drawing for a CRT grocery tote bag. A hint can be found in the last (October) issue of this newsletter. Progress!



The Elmwood Village Association and Councilmember Feroletto sponsored a holiday shuttle, taking riders up and down the Elmwood Avenue shopping district and avoiding traffic congestion. Bravo!



## NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

### **From New York Public Transit Association (NYPTA), Dec. 15:**

“Today, NYPTA President Bill Carpenter presented the attached testimony at the Assembly Standing Committee on Transportation's hearing on the Impact of the NYSDOT Capital Program. NYPTA's testimony highlighted the importance of the state capital funding from the 5-year transportation capital program and also presented NYPTA's message on the need for a multi-year transit investment plan to meet the growing demands for service and support the economy.”

More information about NYPTA can be found at <http://nytransit.org/>

**From State Senator Tim Kennedy:** A bill from the last session will be introduced again this year. If passed, it will give tax credits to employers who contribute to their employees' public transportation commuting costs.

### **From the Sierra Club Energy and Environment Committee:**

The Erie County Legislature passed a resolution on December 7<sup>th</sup> in support of electric buses. The resolution was supported by a bipartisan vote. It will be sent to the NFTA. More information about our local Sierra Club can be found at <https://niagarasierraclub.com/>

**From the NFTA:** The NFTA recently announced three at-large openings on their Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). One opening is specifically for a rider from the suburbs. This is a great opportunity for direct contact with NFTA staff and other community members with transit concerns. The application will be posted on their website after the first of the year at <http://metro.nfta.com/>

**From Amazon:** Do it all at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com). You shop, Amazon donates to your favorite charity. Please consider this as a way to donate to CRT. Shop via Amazon Smile and specify Citizens Regional Transit Corporation as the recipient.



**Calendar**

January 16 - CRT Quarterly Public Meeting -Transportation Plan for 2050, CRT Annual Report.

January 23 – Transit Awareness Day, Albany, New York Public Transportation Association (NYPTA).

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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](#), 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.