



CRT News

A Quarterly Publication of Citizens for Regional Transit

Citizens for Regional Transit Next Quarterly Public Meeting
**The Importance of Transit for Meeting US Target Greenhouse
Gas Reductions and Ongoing Efforts to Meet Those Targets**

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Thursday, October 18
5:30 - 7:00 p.m. (doors open at 5:00)

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Central Library
1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo
Central Meeting Room (upstairs)

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Presenters:

Bonnie Lawrence, Erie County Dept. of Environment & Planning
Doug Funke, Citizens for Regional Transit
TBD Representative from the NFTA

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FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



Bus Box Project



Let the Transit Revolution Begin!
Doug Funke, CRT President

Political leaders from across Buffalo Niagara (including mayors, city/town/village councils and the Erie County Executive), over 50 community organizations (including Coalition for Economic Justice, GoBike Buffalo, Housing Opportunities Made Equal, League of Women Voters, Network of Religious Communities, Partners of a Livable WNY, Partnership for the Public Good, PUSH Buffalo, Sierra Club, VOICE Buffalo), and a growing number of businesses (including Carmina Woods, Ciminelli Real Estate, Kaleida Health, Buffalo Computer Graphics and Douglas Development Corp.) have joined CRT in calling for a TRANSIT REVOLUTION in Buffalo Niagara. Specifically, these leaders and organizations have joined CRT in calling for (1) extending Metro Rail along the highest demand corridors; (2) providing inter-modal connectivity (including transit connections with air, rail, bicycle, taxi/rideshare and pedestrian modes); and most importantly (3) establishment of long-term sustainable transit funding.

The drive for improvements to our transit network is compelled by several factors including the following:

- With 40% of greenhouse gas emissions in WNY coming from the transportation sector, achieving NYS and Erie County's commitment to meeting the Paris Climate Accord goals will require moving from car-centered transportation to transit.
- Businesses considering locations for expansion are demanding regions that are well connected by transit. Cities across the US are responding with light rail deployments and expansions.
- Convention planners are increasingly looking for cities with airports that are connected by transit. Hotels in cities with direct access to airports raise 11% more revenue per room than hotels in cities without.
- Buffalo's airport right-of-way is available and publically owned making light rail extension to the airport one of the MOST AFFORDABLE in the country.
- Every \$1 invested in public transit generates \$4 in economic returns with over 70% of public funding for transit flowing to the private sector creating and supporting thousands of jobs.

With these compelling reasons to extend Buffalo's light rail and improve Buffalo's transit service more generally, CRT has initiated a new petition calling for:

1. Erie County to designate \$1M of the Erie County \$9M surplus immediately to initiate an alternatives analysis for extending Buffalo's light rail to the airport.
2. Erie County to designate an additional 1/8% (for a total of ¼%) of the county sales tax to NFTA operations in exchange for NFTA commitment to increase bus frequency (e.g., to 10 minute weekday headways on core downtown routes and priority corridors) and to make service improvements recommended in the 2016 NFTA-METRO Erie and Niagara County Service Plan study without reducing service in outlying areas.

Since we initiated this petition in August 2018, we have collected over 400 signers. We call on the Erie County legislators to fund a study of the airport extension and to designate an additional 1/8% of the sales tax to transit. We will follow up in the coming months.



CRT at Work for Western NY: July - September 2018

We met with government officials. CRT President Doug Funke met with Maggie Winship, Director of Strategic Planning for the Town of Amherst, to request support for our petition for a transit revolution (see President's Column, this issue) and to discuss pedestrian safety near bus stops in Amherst.

We appeared in the media. Doug was interviewed for a [segment](#) by Dan Telvock on WIVB (Channel 4) about pedestrian safety on Niagara Falls Boulevard. Board member Betsy Giles' [op-ed essay](#) about the Central Terminal appeared in the Buffalo News.

We wrote letters. We sent a letter to the Erie County Executive and Legislators, regarding the importance of transit in helping to meet their commitment to the Paris Climate Accord to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the use of the recently-announced sales tax surplus to contribute to local transit funding. We submitted public comments to the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) endorsing funding for rural transit. We submitted public comments to the GBNRTC in support of funding to the NFTA for rail car rebuilds, bus and rail fare collection system upgrades, bus maintenance facility rehabilitation, escalator rebuilding, and purchase of hybrid bus batteries.

We staffed information tables at community events. We attended and actively engaged with citizens at the Elmwood Festival of the Arts (Elmwood Avenue in Buffalo), Party for the Planet (Buffalo Zoo), Central Terminal, and the Environmental Summit (Daemen College).



We participated in the bus box project. Board member Maddie McCauley raised funds, obtained permissions, mobilized sponsors, organized work days to build and decorate the boxes, and publicized their existence. Kudos to Maggie for all the work she has done almost single-handedly to make this a reality! We hope to see boxes at bus stops soon.



We attended meetings of transportation and community organizations, including Buffalo Place, Buffalo Transit Riders United, GBNRTC, NFTA, Niagara River Greenway Commission, and Our Outer Harbor. We attended training/work sessions about the outer harbor, transit-oriented development, low-carbon emission vehicles, and tactics for nonprofit organizations.



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 and specify "Citizens Regional Transit Corporation" for your donations, or use this direct [login](#) *before selecting your purchases*.

Old Board, New Board

Executive Board member Stef McGraw recently resigned for an exciting new career opportunity. We thank her for all her hard work and wish her well. Nominations, including self-nominations, are being accepted for the 2019 Board. Contact us at crtc@citizenstransit.org with suggestions.

Calendar

- October 2 – CRT Executive Board monthly meeting, 12-1:30 p.m., Central Library West Room.
- October 18 - CRT Quarterly Public Meeting, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., Central Library.
- November 6 – CRT Executive Board monthly meeting, 12-1:30 p.m., location TBA.
- December 4 – CRT Executive Board monthly meeting, 12-1:30 p.m., location TBA.
- January - CRT Quarterly Public Meeting/Annual Business Meeting, 5:30-7:00 p.m., location TBA.

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
crtc@citizenstransit.org



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.

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