

# Citizens for Regional Transit Corporation

## Annual Report 2013

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## 2013 Annual Report

This report summarizes the accomplishments, milestones and activities of Citizens for Regional Transit Corporation during 2013. Citizens for Regional Transit Corporation is known as Citizens for Regional Transit (CRT). This shorter designation will be used in this report.

During 2013 Citizens for Regional Transit was led by the following Board of Directors and Officers: Doug Funke (President), Seth Triggs (Vice President), Elizabeth Howell (Secretary), and Jack Howell (Treasurer). In addition the following persons served as members of the Board of Directors: Joan Bozer, Gladys Gifford, Elizabeth Giles, Lynn Magdol, and Carl Skompinski. Also, former CRT President Ed Deutschman and former CRT VP Dick Olday served as Emeritus Board Members. Collectively these Members of the Board logged 1,785 hours of service.

CRT currently has 47 members. The names and addresses of CRT members are maintained by the CRT President and Secretary.

We continued to advocate for an integrated multi-modal public transportation that serves everyone fairly in WNY. We also continued to educate the public and leaders from the public and private sectors. We kept members and the public informed about transit issues and events via the CRT website and Facebook site and published 7 newsletters that are distributed to over 500 recipients. Seth Triggs has continued to manage the CRT website; Carl Skompinski manages our Facebook site, and Gladys Gifford is the CRT Newsletter Editor. We also held three membership meetings in 2013 featuring guest speakers on a timely topic relevant to public transit. These membership meetings were held at 237 Main Street at noon on the third Wednesday of January, April, and October.

### Highlights of the Year

- ***Loss of Theater Station.*** (2/14/13). On February 17<sup>th</sup> Theater Station closed to make way for returning cars-on-Main Street. CRT members memorialized the event on the February 14<sup>th</sup> with flowers and a memorial statement attached to the station. Channel 4 News interviewed CRT VP Seth Triggs following the event. CRT also had a letter to the editor published in the Buffalo News. The NFTA supported the action by attaching our flowers and message to the station.
- ***Transit Advocacy Days.*** (3/4/13 – 3/5/13). Several CRT Members joined other WNY community groups to attend the annual Transit Advocacy Days in Albany. The CRT Members who attended were: Doug Funke, Gladys Gifford, Lynn Magdol, and Al Schuster. The NY Public Transit Association (NYPTA) and NYS Transportation Equity Alliance (NYSTEA) sponsored the event. NYSTEA provided a partial subsidy for CRT attendees. We met with several Members of the State Assembly and Senate during the visit.
- ***Buffalo Common Council Resolution.*** (4/2/13). Doug Funke made a presentation to the Buffalo Common Council recommending extensions of the light rail. On the basis of this



appeal, the Common Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting both near-term and long-term extensions of the Buffalo light rail. This resolution was developed with inputs from CRT.

- **Center for Transportation Excellence (CTE) Conference.** (6/23/13 – 6/24/13). Lynn Magdol attended the CTE “Funding Public Transit; 2013 Transit Initiatives and Communities Conference” held in Atlanta, GA.
- **Buffalo Metro Art Tour.** (7/6/13, 7/17/13, and 8/1/13). CRT partnered with Preservation Buffalo-Niagara to conduct public tours of the public art on display in the Buffalo Metro stations.
- **Transit Conference.** (9/14/13). CRT co-sponsored a conference on transit with the Canisius College Environmental Studies Department. The conference was held at the Montante Center on the Canisius College campus. Speakers included: Keynote speaker Dr. Nadine Lemon (Legislative Advocate, Tri-State Transportation Campaign), Doug Funke (CRT President), Chris Sandvig (Regional Policy Manager, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group), and Tom George (NFTA Director of Surface Transportation). The conference also included a panel of key WNY leaders moderated by Gladys Gifford (CRT Board Member). Members of the panel were Mark Croce (Owner, Buffalo Development Corp.), Dr. Daniel Hess (Associate Professor, Dept. Urban and Regional Planning, UB), Hal Morse (Executive Director, GBNRTC), Patrick Whalen (Chief Operating Officer, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus), and Howard Zemsky (Chairman, NFTA Board of Commissioners) The conference received sponsorship from several area organizations (Canisius College, NFTA, Amalgamated Transit Union, Daemon College Center for Sustainable Communities and Civic Engagement, Perks Café Market, Watts Architecture and Engineering, Wendel Companies, and Westmatic Corp.).
- **Tour of possible airport light rail alignment, the DL&W terminal and Central Terminal.** (9/14/13). This tour was held following the above conference. The tour covered possible alignments of the airport light rail extension based on prior NFTA planning documents. The tour included stops at the DL&W and Central terminals and ended at a potential park and ride site on Transit Road. The NFTA provided a bus for the tour and led the DL&W visit. The Central Terminal Restoration Corporation led the Central Terminal part of the tour.
- **CNU New York Regional Summit in Syracuse.** (10/18/13 – 10/19/13). CRT Board Member Elizabeth Giles attended this regional summit in Syracuse, NY.

## CRT Quarterly Membership Meetings

The CRT Membership meetings were held on the third Wednesday of January, April, and October. These were open to the public and in addition to a short business meeting featured guest speaker. The table below is a summary of the guest speakers during 2013.



**Table 1. CRT Quarterly Membership Meetings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Wednesday, January 16, 2013	Randy Gustafson, VP Operations, Stone Consulting Joe Kocsis, President, WNY Railway Historical Society (WNYRHS)	Randy presented a summary of the cobblestone trolley study done by Stone Consulting under contract to WNYRHS and CRT. The 2.5 mile trolley would connect the Buffalo waterfront with the Heritage Museum on Lee Street. Trolley would cost \$30M including bridges.
Wednesday, April 17, 2013	Doug Funke, President, CRT	Doug's presentation looked at the past, present, and possible future of transit in Buffalo-Niagara. Lessons from transit expansions of light rail in other regions were also described.
Wednesday, October 16,2013	Lynn Magdol, CRT Board Member, and Darren Kempner, NFTA Grants Manager	Lynn and Darren reported on transit funding issues and approaches based on their attendance at the CTE Conference held in Atlanta in June.

**Educational Events**

- ***Forum / Town Hall on the Future of the Buffalo Skyway*** (5/15/13). CRT President Doug Funke served as invited member of a round table discussion chaired by NYS Senator Mark Grisanti. The discussion focused on whether the skyway should be taken down and how to accommodate commuters if the skyway were removed. The hearing was covered on local TV and radio.
- ***Presentation to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst (UUCA)*** (5/19/13). CRT President Doug Funke presented “the Case for Transit” to members of the UUCA. The presentation made the case for extending Buffalo’s light rail including linking Buffalo with Niagara Falls and its more than 8 million annual tourists.
- ***Presentation to Niagara Greenway Commission*** (11/26/13). CRT President Doug Funke presented proposals for connecting Buffalo and Niagara Falls with transit to the Board of the Niagara Greenway Commission.
- ***Hosted table at the WNY Environmental Summit***. (9/28/13). The WNY Environmental Summit was held at Daemon College. CRT attended and staffed a table to distribute CRT literature. Gladys Gifford, Doug Funke, and Bunny Malone participated.
- ***Hosted table at Central Terminal Mini-Fest***. (9/28/13). CRT attended and staffed a table at the Mini-Fest to distribute CRT literature and promote the airport light rail extension, which could serve the Terminal. Carl Skompinski and Elizabeth Giles participated.

**Participation on Committees and with Partner Organizations**

- ***NFTA Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)***. This committee meets monthly and includes membership from many community organizations. Plans and issues relevant to transit in the Buffalo-Niagara Region are discussed. Elizabeth Giles is CRT’s representative.



- ***NFTA Buffalo-Amherst Alternatives Analysis Project Advisory Committee (PAC)***. This committee is working under the leadership of the NFTA to analyze alternative alignment and design alternatives for providing efficient transit to the Amherst Campus. Doug Funke is CRT's representative.
- ***Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Commission (GBNRTC) – One Region Forward Program***. CRT served as member of One Region Forward Transportation Committee. This program performed strategic planning for the region targeting a 40 year timeframe (through 2050). This work included participation in public workshops. Gladys Gifford is CRT's representative.
- ***Environmental Alliance (EA)*** – Served as member of the Transportation Committee and the Energy and Climate Change Committee. We also participated in quarterly EA congresses. We authored a plank with the Energy and Climate Change Committee calling for efficient transit along the Niagara River Greenway. The plank was adopted by the larger EA program and will be the focus of work during 2014. Doug Funke, Elizabeth Giles, and Gladys Gifford have served as CRT's representatives.
- ***21<sup>st</sup> Century Park Committee*** – This committee is promoting a state-of-the-art park on the outer harbor. CRT worked with this committee to explore transportation alternatives. Doug Funke and Elizabeth Giles were CRT's representatives.
- ***Partners for the Public Good (PPG)*** – CRT has supported PPG for many years and continued our working relationship by participating in planning meetings and contributing to the plank selection process. We attended the PPG Community Based Participatory Research Workshop on 5/17/13 and applied to the PPG intern program (called The High Road Runs through the City Service Learning and Action Research Fellowships for Cornell ILR Students) for summer of 2014. We will learn if we will have an intern in early 2014. Lynn Magdol is CRT's representative.
- ***NYSTEAWNY Coalition***. During the early part of the year CRT worked with the NYSTEAWNY Coalition in identifying transit concerns and issues that were communicated to the NFTA via the CAC. The NYSTEAWNY Coalition was disbanded mid year. Elizabeth Giles was CRT's representative.

### Meetings with legislator's offices and area leaders

Category	Summary
City of Buffalo	Buffalo Common Council
Erie County Legislature	Democratic Caucus (Tim Hogues, Betty Jean Grant, Lynn Marinelli, Thomas Laughran, Terrence McCracken)
Erie County Commissioner	Maria Whyte (Commissioner of Environment and Planning)
NYS Assembly	Jane Corwin, Dennis Gabryszak, Mickey Kearns, Ray Walter
NYS Senate	Mark Grisanti, Tim Kennedy, Michael Ranzenhofer
US Congress	Brian Higgins
NFTA	Dr. Wesley Hicks (NFTA Commissioner)
ECHDC	Steven Ranalli



## Public Meetings and Workshops

Organization	Summary
NFTA	Niagara Street Gateway Project public meetings, budget public meeting, Buffalo-Amherst Alternatives Analysis workshops
GBNRTC	One-Region-Forward Community Workshops, TIP Public Meeting (planning budget review), speaker series - Economics of Sustainability – Curbside with Chuck Morohn
Community Organizations	Allentown Community Organization, Eggertsville Community Organization, Parkside Community Organization, North Buffalo Community Organization
City of Buffalo	Mayor’s Engaging Youth Forum
CNU22	CNU22 Preview Meeting
VOICE Buffalo	Transit rider representation on NFTA Board Forum
League of Women Voters	Panel on the future of Buffalo, Outer Harbor tour
Developers	Outer Harbor stadium proposal presentation
ULI	Sustainable Infrastructure – Spotlight on Leadership mini-conference
UB	Architecture and Regional Planning Seminar, Jamnal Lecture featuring speaker Qung Shen

## Miscellaneous

- ***CRT Board Retreat.*** (11/2/13 and 11/19/13). CRT Board retreat included team building and visioning exercises. Numerous ideas for improving the workings of the Board and for CRT initiatives were identified and will be pursued during 2014.
- ***Support for Central Terminal.*** Purchased roofing tile in the name of Citizens for Regional Transit in support of the Central Terminal restoration work.
- ***Support for community groups.*** Purchased ads in annual dinner programs of VOICE Buffalo and the Center for Economic Justice (CEJ).
- ***Donation of CRT archives.*** Began discussion with UB about the possibility of donating CRT archives to the University. We will also have discussions with the Buffalo Historical Society as a possible site for CRT archives. These discussions will continue.
- ***Syracuse commuter rail presentation.*** (12/18/13). Graduate Student Eric Ennis gave presentation to the CRT Board on the Syracuse commuter rail. The talk included lessons learned.
- ***WNY Railway Historical Society.*** Continued discussions on working together to promote trolley deployment.
- ***Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA).*** (11/18/13). Met with Bruce Becker, ESPA President, to review locations of regional rights-of-way that could possibly serve transit.
- ***Monitoring NFTA, GBNRTC, and Buffalo Place public meetings.*** CRT has continued to monitor monthly meetings of the NFTA, GBNRTC, and Buffalo Place. These meetings provide current information on transit initiatives and plans and provide an opportunity to network.



## Financial Summary

BUDGET ITEM	2013 ACTUAL
<b>INCOME</b>	
Dues	\$1,140
Donations	\$750
Events (Conference-2013, Dump the Pump-2014)	\$1,150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,040</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Website	\$48
Postage	\$102
Printing	\$200
Supplies & Misc,	\$492
Travel & Lodging	\$855
Events (Conference-2013, Dump the Pump-2014)	\$1,078
Dues (NYPTA, VOICE, UUCA Econ. Justice, Buffalo First)	\$325
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,100</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>(\$60)</b>
<b>CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE (12/31/13)</b>	<b>\$2,752</b>

