

Buffalo Needs A Transit Revolution!
*A Petition for an Integrated and Sustainable Public
Transportation System*

We the undersigned call on the NFTA and our business and community leaders to take action to ***provide more comprehensive and sustainable public transportation service*** for the Buffalo-Niagara Region. Specifically, we call for: (1) extensions of Metro Rail along the highest-demand corridors with (2) intermodal connectivity to air and inter-city rail and (3) establishment of long-term sustainable transit funding.

Please add _____ to the list of organizations supporting this petition.

Organization Authorizing Officer:

Name: _____ Position: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Comment: _____

Why We Need It:

Attracting & Keeping Population - Growing numbers of Americans, notably young adults and baby boomers approaching retirement, prefer to locate in regions that have efficient multimodal mobility systems, including the option to live free of car dependency. The demand is for walkable, bikeable, mixed-use neighborhoods efficiently connected by transit.

Parking & Congestion - Transit moves people safely and cost-effectively to work, shopping, and recreation without scarring our waterfront, parkland, and downtown streetscapes with acres of parking. Providing park-and-ride facilities for commuters and visitors outside the central city provides a hassle-free commuting option while decreasing traffic congestion, air pollution, and on-street parking shortages.

Equity - Over 1/3 of Buffalo households do not own cars (2000 US Census). Rapid transit expands mobility options for all socioeconomic groups, including those who rely on public transportation to get to suburban jobs, shopping, healthcare, educational institutions, and all other personal needs. A household can expect to save \$5,000 to \$9,000 a year for each car it can do without (ConsumerReports.com).

Economics - Investments in light rail and bus rapid transit are transforming cities across North America and stimulating commercial and residential development along the improved transit lines (Transit-Oriented Development). Buffalo is blessed with existing, publicly owned rail rights-of-way



along many heavily traveled corridors. These make expansion of our light rail system among the nation's most affordable. Comprehensive analysis of WNY's infrastructure needs and resources – and surveys of what our citizens want – led UB's Regional Institute and the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council to recommend “making transit funding and system improvement a top priority” (One Region Forward Final Draft Plan, 2014).

The Environment - Automobiles in NYS collectively emit 70 million metric tons of CO₂ per year, more than carbon emissions from industrial, residential, or commercial sources (2014 Draft NYS Energy Plan). Of all transportation-generated greenhouse gases, 61% come from passenger cars and light trucks (US EPA, 2013). We must offer car-free options to combat global warming. Buffalo's light rail trains already run partly on clean hydroelectric power - with the potential to run on 100% non-polluting Niagara Falls waterpower.

We call for the NFTA and Buffalo-Niagara leaders to:

Extend Metro Rail

- To the airport – Prioritize extension of the Metro Rail from Downtown Buffalo to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport along our existing publicly owned rail rights-of-way. This extension will intersect many East Side bus lines while connecting the central business district with Larkinville, Central Terminal, Galleria Mall, Thruway Mall, and a Park-&-Ride off the I-90 in Cheektowaga.
- To the UB Amherst campus – Build on the ongoing NFTA study to connect all three UB campuses and to facilitate access to suburban shopping and jobs.
- Through the DL&W Terminal to Larkinville – Extend Metro Rail through the DL&W Terminal to Larkinville, a first step in taking the existing line to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport while enabling car-free access to the First Niagara Arena, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, our Waterfront, the Cobblestone District, and Downtown.
- To the Bills Stadium – Any investment in a new or refurbished Buffalo Bills Stadium should ensure Metro Rail access, folding any necessary Metro Rail enhancements into its financing. This will satisfy the intense travel demand on Bills game days while improving the experience for those who choose to drive and tailgate. Any stadium parking facilities could double as Park-&-Ride lots for everyday commuting year-round.
- To the Southtowns and Tonawandas – Preserve existing rail rights-of-way, so the original vision for a comprehensive network of light rail serving the Buffalo-Niagara Region can ultimately be realized.

Create Multimodal Amtrak / Metro Rail Stations

- Eliminate the existing Depew and Exchange Street Amtrak Stations and replace them with Multimodal Transportation Centers suitable for 21st century passenger service and eventually high-speed rail. These must feature a rapid transit connection to the airport and include bicycle and car share facilities. One station should be near Buffalo's waterfront and a second located further east where it can serve all Amtrak destinations. A restored Central Terminal should be a candidate for the second site.

Establish long-term, sustainable dedicated funding

- Establish permanent, reliable and sufficient funding streams for comprehensive multimodal public transportation in Buffalo-Niagara. This funding must be able to sustain the operations and maintenance of Metro Rail and all connecting transit services and infrastructure.

