

Statement of
Bill Carpenter
Chief Executive Officer, Rochester-Genesee Regional
Transportation Authority (RGRTA)
President, New York Public Transit Association
(NYPTA)

At the Joint Hearing of the
Senate Standing Committee on Finance
&
Assembly Standing Committee on Ways and Means
Concerning the SFY 2019-20 Executive Budget Proposal
Relating to Transportation

Albany, NY

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

9:30 AM

Hearing Room B

Thank you, Chairwoman Weinstein and Chairwoman Krueger, for your support of public transportation and for giving the New York Public Transit Association (NYPTA) the opportunity to testify today. And thank you Chairmen Kennedy and Magnarelli and Chairwoman Paulin for your leadership on transit issues.

My name is Bill Carpenter; I am the Chief Executive Officer for the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority and the President of NYPTA.

Earlier you heard from MTA officials on their issues and needs, so I will concentrate on the issues and needs of transit systems in upstate New York and in the downstate suburbs.

Let me start by thanking the Governor for recognizing the importance of public transportation across the state in his Executive Budget and for proposing both an increase in state operating aid and a dedicated revenue source to pay for it.

This increase is appreciated and necessary to maintain essential transit services that serve customers in urban and rural areas throughout the State.

While significant, this increase does not afford the investment necessary for transit to provide the greater mobility that communities upstate and in the downstate suburbs need to support economic growth.

Demand for our services is growing; communities across the state want and expect more from public transit. They want better connections and travel options to work, education, shopping, and healthcare.

As the economic revival of our communities continues, more transit service and mobility choices are needed.

A 50% increase in funding over the next 5 years would provide a long-term state commitment to reimagined transit service that enables all communities to thrive.

Public transit drives the success of many important state programs, including downtown revitalization, economic development, access to jobs, reducing poverty, access to education and healthcare, sustainable communities, clean energy and environmental protection.

Greater investment in transit can accelerate the impact of all these initiatives.

For example, in Rochester, we would deliver more frequent, direct service to a larger percentage of our population, and better access to jobs for the 41% of households struggling to transition from poverty to prosperity. We would extend service for the increasing number of employees working non-traditional schedules and provide real-time information essential to grow ridership.

In Western New York, the NFTA would provide more frequent service, including on bus routes serving major transfer locations. Service hours would be extended, and bus shelters constructed at heavily used stops. Additional funding in the future would support expanded rail service.

In the Capital District, CDTA would increase bus frequencies and expand service hours on the majority of its network. Universal Access partnerships with employers would grow, more bike stations installed, and Bus Rapid Transit service expanded to cover 40 miles.

In Central New York, Centro would increase core service in Syracuse to cut waiting times in half, add bus coverage for second shift jobs, initiate service to Syracuse Airport, and increase bus frequencies in Utica. This will better serve growing employment centers and provide access to jobs in high poverty areas.

In Westchester County, Bee Line would increase frequencies on high volume routes and expand the span of service on weekends. Expanded bus service would provide better connectivity to the MTA system for one-quarter of Bee Line customers, and improve access to jobs, education and training opportunities for Westchester County residents.

In Nassau County, NICE Bus would increase frequencies and extend service hours to provide better access to 825,000 jobs in the County. New service would be provided to growing areas like Port Washington and connectivity to the LIRR would be improved. Over 1.3 million Nassau County residents would have high frequency bus service, an increase of 45%. Additionally, NICE would support the current ridership growth during weekends and late night by adding additional trips and expanding service throughout the system, making transit much more convenient and accessible.

Transit systems across the state are poised to transform their services and better help their communities to grow if more funding can be found.

Our submitted materials describe in greater detail the improvements that transit systems could make with more investment and the many benefits that result.

It is well known that the MTA needs long-term, sustainable funding to improve the subway, bus and commuter rail network, and the Executive Budget proposes actions to fund the MTA.

We believe it is time for **statewide** action – to address the long-term transit funding needs of communities across the state, so that no area is left behind.

The last state funding package in 2009 only addressed the MTA, ignoring transit riders in upstate and in the downstate suburbs. We should not make this mistake again.

Specific to the SFY 2019-20 state budget, NYPTA recommends a 10% increase in state operating aid for all upstate and downstate non-MTA transit systems, as part of a statewide plan to increase funding by 50% over the next 5 years.

We urge the Legislature to support the transit revenues proposed in the Executive Budget and enact the auto rental surcharge for upstate transit and the congestion tolling program for the MTA.

Maintaining the infrastructure is also a priority.

Transit systems have programmed available capital funding for projects that improve facilities, replace over-age buses, and soon will introduce electric vehicles.

Adding \$20 million in capital funds for non-MTA transit above the Executive Budget level (\$84.5 million) will continue the \$104.5 million funding level provided in the past two years (2017-18 and 2018-19).

The current state 5-year transportation capital program ends in 2020 and must be renewed next year. Upstate and suburban downstate transit systems have significant unfunded infrastructure needs which should be included in the next state capital program and in the Governor's \$150 billion infrastructure plan. We will provide details on these capital needs later this year.

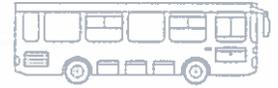
Our smallest transit systems are often the most vulnerable. Unfortunately, the Executive Budget does not continue Department of Health funding for rural transit systems impacted by changes in the state's Medicaid transportation policy, threatening the viability of transportation to those who need it most.

NYPTA recommends \$5 million in funding from the Department of Health to retain essential rural transit services.

New York benefits in many ways from the more than 100 transit systems throughout the State, who deliver greater access through safe and reliable service. New York also benefits from investments that support hundreds of transit manufacturers and suppliers who create and retain thousands of private sector jobs.

Now is the time to increase investment in transit services and provide long-term, sustainable funding to **all** transit systems, as greater mobility and access are critical to economic success.

Thank you for your support of public transportation and we look forward to working with you on these issues.



NYPTA 2019-2020 State Budget Recommendations

State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA)

Executive Budget: Proposes a 5.3% STOA increase for Upstate systems and a 7.2% increase for Downstate Non-MTA systems.

NYPTA Recommendation: Provide a 10% STOA increase for Upstate and Downstate Non-MTA systems above 2018-19 levels to support regional economic growth and improve mobility.

Long-Term Transit Funding/Congestion Pricing

Executive Budget:

- Includes legislation to create a congestion tolling program in Manhattan to help fund future MTA capital programs.
- Includes a 5% auto rental surcharge in upstate counties to fund upstate transit.

NYPTA Recommendation: Enact a Statewide Transit Funding Plan that includes the MTA congestion tolling program and the auto rental surcharge for upstate transit as part of long-term, sustainable funding for all upstate and downstate transit systems.

State Capital Aid

Executive Budget: Proposes \$84.5 m. in capital aid for Non-MTA systems.

NYPTA Recommendation: Provide \$104.5 m. for Non-MTA systems, the same amount as 2018-19, to maintain investment and continue to revitalize transit infrastructure.

Rural Transit Assistance

Executive Budget: The budget does not include special funding for rural transit systems impacted by the state's Medicaid changes.

NYPTA Recommendation: Provide \$5 m. in permanent state funding to small urban and rural transit systems to replace lost revenue from the state's Medicaid changes.

STATEWIDE TRANSIT ACTION PLAN



There is a transformation taking place in the world of transportation. New mobility options including car-sharing, bike-sharing, on-demand services, and transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft are increasing in availability and use. Technology is changing the way we travel, allowing us to request, track and pay for trips with a mobile device. Autonomous vehicles may be more prevalent in the future.

At the same time, businesses and the public are demanding more from public transit. They want new transit service, more frequency, more access to more destinations, and access to technology. Our communities want an array of travel options to improve livability and attract high-tech business and smart development. Revitalizing our urban downtowns is a statewide priority. Strong public transit is the backbone for success.

New York State should implement a **Statewide Transit Action Plan** to transform public transit by reimagining transit systems and how they are funded, to ensure a brighter future for all of New York's communities.

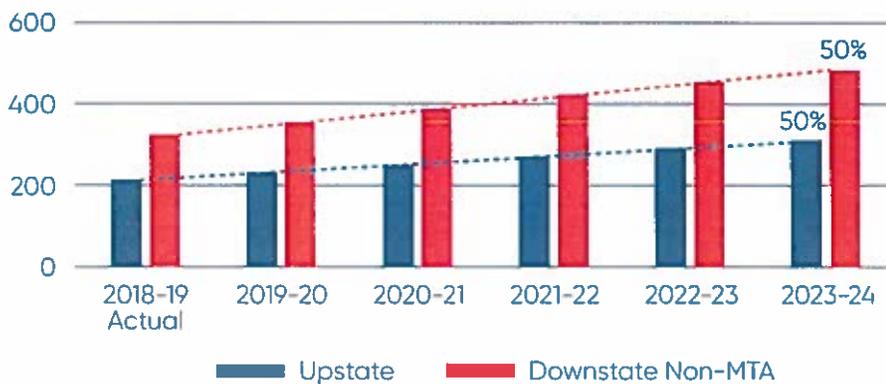
We are one state. All communities deserve adequate investment that provides sustainable transit service. A funding plan that invests in the MTA, suburban and upstate transit systems will drive increased mobility and growth in communities across the state, and not leave any area behind.

→ STATEWIDE TRANSIT ACTION PLAN PROPOSAL

- 1** Provide adequate, recurring funding for the MTA through Congestion Pricing and other dedicated funding sources to address long-term capital and operating needs.
- 2** Increase transit operating aid for non-MTA transit systems by 50% over the next 5 years, starting with a 10% increase in the 2019-20 state budget. The plan would add \$20.6 M. for upstate transit and \$32.4 M. for downstate non-MTA transit in 2019-20.

STATEWIDE TRANSIT ACTION PLAN

(Millions of Dollars)





A STATEWIDE TRANSIT ACTION PLAN ENSURES THE SUCCESS OF MANY STATE AND LOCAL PROGRAMS

Investment that transforms transit enhances the success of state programs and goals including:

- ➔ Economic development and job creation
- ➔ Growing tourism
- ➔ Downtown revitalization
- ➔ Clean energy
- ➔ Poverty to prosperity
- ➔ Climate change and protecting the environment
- ➔ Affordable housing
- ➔ Improving health and wellness
- ➔ Sustainability and smart growth



WHY A STATEWIDE PLAN?

The way New York funds transit no longer produces the results customers and communities expect and will not sustain current services:

- ➔ The MTA system needs increased resources to improve service reliability, add capacity and address an aging infrastructure.
- ➔ Businesses and New Yorkers across the state are demanding more service, connections and technology, far outpacing the State's current investment in transit.
- ➔ New mobility options are emerging, and a strong transit network is the backbone.
- ➔ Younger workers and growing high-tech businesses want to locate where there is robust transit.
- ➔ Status quo funding will result in less transit service and leave Upstate communities behind the economic resurgence.
- ➔ Implementing a Statewide Transit Action Plan will provide sustainable transit services, support economic growth and provide balance to increased investment needed by the MTA.



DESCRIBING THE ACTION PLAN

- ➔ A stronger economy due to improved access to jobs, job training, education, healthcare, retail and recreational destinations
- ➔ Additional capacity and improved reliability on MTA's subway, bus and commuter rail networks
- ➔ More/new/transformed transit service - expanded routes, more frequencies, BRT
- ➔ New technology - real-time information, mobile fare payment, integrated trip planning apps
- ➔ New mobility options/partnerships - bike-share, car-share, on-demand services TNC coordination, employee shuttles
- ➔ Expanded traffic signal priority for buses with NYSDOT and local governments
- ➔ Introduction of electric vehicles into transit fleets



OUTCOMES FROM INCREASED INVESTMENT

- ➔ More mobility and connections in communities across the state
- ➔ Shorter travel times, improved reliability and greater regional access
- ➔ Support for business growth and jobs, boosting local economies
- ➔ Reduced poverty in upstate cities by providing greater access to jobs and training
- ➔ Improved livability, transit-oriented development and smart growth
- ➔ Sustainable communities, revitalized downtowns, fewer cars, healthy lifestyle



WITHOUT STATEWIDE ACTION

Current funding constraints will lead to:

- ➔ Less transit service that serves a smaller local geography
- ➔ Increased auto use, traffic congestion and pollution
- ➔ Loss of younger workers, new development opportunities and jobs
- ➔ Less mobility for transit dependent population including seniors, those with low incomes and persons with disabilities
- ➔ More people left waiting at the curb

WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WITH A STATEWIDE TRANSIT ACTION PLAN



Transit systems across New York State have specific plans and projects that can be achieved with increased investment. Following are some improvements in transit service that are possible:



WESTERN NEW YORK: NFTA WILL:

- Add service to alleviate peak congestion on crowded routes, reduce pass-ups, and improve reliability;
- Increase weeknight access to more employment opportunities;
- Expand service to improve geographic coverage of job centers and destinations;
- Reduce reliance on capital funds to support operations and invest in capital projects that improve the convenience and dependability of the region's transit system through implementation of new technologies;
- Add internal capacity to support new technology maintenance, asset management, data analytics, transit-oriented development, and information technology.

Customer Benefits:

- Many bus routes would have their afternoon peak service extended past 6 p.m.
- Suburban activity centers, currently served only during traditional work hours, would get service extended into the evening;
- New bus shelters would be constructed throughout the system at heavily used bus stops;
- Bus routes serving major transfer locations would get more frequent service to shorten wait times;
- Provides funding to operate expanded rail service in the future.



ROCHESTER REGION: RGRTA WILL IMPLEMENT "REIMAGINE RTS" WHICH WILL:

- Improve route frequency on weekends to encourage week-long travel;
- Extend hours of service earlier in the morning and later at night;
- Expand the number of frequent routes by 50 percent to improve the entire system;
- Ensure mobility solutions in suburban and rural areas are more robust;
- Implement technologies that integrate various mobility solutions for travel planning and payment
- Make the necessary upgrades to our campus to add up to 20 electric buses to our fleet.

Customer Benefits:

- 95% of current customers will have faster, more direct service with shorter wait times;
- 64% of current customers and 23% of all Monroe County residents will have access to more routes with 15-minute service;
- Transit service will start earlier and end later each day so that customers in second- and third-shift jobs have better access;
- Better access to jobs for the 41% of households in Monroe County that are in poverty or struggling to afford basic needs;
- Ten new connection hubs with real-time information will provide customers with easy connections between fixed-route buses, microtransit, ride sharing, car sharing, bike sharing and vanpool options.



CENTRAL NEW YORK: CNYRTA WILL:

- Increase frequency of service in Syracuse and suburbs;
- Restore prior services in Utica;
- Reconfigure and expand service to new and growing employment centers to continue to address poverty issues in our community;
- Provide mobile ticketing;
- Provide dedicated airport service from downtown Syracuse.

Customer Benefits:

- More frequent service in Syracuse, every 20 minutes rather than 40 minutes, in the urban core during midday to get people to service industry jobs;
- New service to serve 2nd shift jobs located outside Syracuse's urban core;
- Greater frequencies on routes in Utica, from 30 minutes to 20 minutes, in the urban core during midday to get people to service industry jobs;
- New service targeting the Hancock Airpark corridor and Northern Boulevard – neither of which currently have existing public transit service;
- Express service initially supporting workers at the Syracuse Airport with potential to expand service for general population use;
- Allow customers to use smart phones to pay transit fares.



CAPITAL DISTRICT: CDTA WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THEIR TRANSIT SYSTEM TO BE MORE CONVENIENT FOR CUSTOMERS, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS INCLUDING:

- Increase frequencies and widen service spans on heavily used routes;
- Expand Universal Access fare arrangements with major regional employers;
- Expand downtown connector services to support the hospitality industry;
- Improve and expand the CDPHP regional bikeshare program which connects a new mode of transportation with CDTA transit services;
- Purchase and pilot 4 electric buses and charging technology in the next 12 months, provide for immediate expandability based on the results of the pilot;
- Expedite new Bus Rapid Transit services on the River Corridor and the Washington/Western Corridor that include intelligent transportation technologies;
- Expand signal priority, traffic calming, real time schedule information, mobile and smart card payment systems.

Customer Benefits:

- More frequent service on heavily used routes, every 10-15 minutes, impacting the majority of CDTA's route network and making it more attractive to more than 700,000 people;
- More Universal Access arrangements with employers with 250+ employees in locations with good transit service and access;
- Connect people with urban downtowns which are now home to 75% of the region's residents and many business start-ups;
- More bike stations and partnerships with colleges and major employers to bring the program closer to potential users;
- The new 40-mile Bus Rapid Transit network will serve close to 75% of the region's employment centers and provide more than 10 million trips annually;
- New technology that makes regional travel seamless for customers;
- Introduce CDTA's micro transit on-demand program designed to better serve customers and reduce operating costs in low volume locations.



WESTCHESTER COUNTY: THE BEE-LINE WILL:

- Increase service on high volume routes including service between the Bronx and Getty Square in Yonkers and the Bronx and White Plains;
- Increase the span and frequency of service on weekends;
- Add mid-day service to Westchester Community College;
- Modernize the bus dispatching and vehicle locator system.

Customer Benefits:

- Strengthen intermodal travel opportunities between Westchester County and the Bronx, comprising about 23% of Bee-Line Passengers;
- More opportunities for shift workers requiring transportation in the early morning and late-night hours to access places of employment for the 70% of Bee-Line passengers that do not have access to a personal vehicle;
- Increase opportunities and better connectivity to New York City and elsewhere in the MTA commuter shed for the nearly one third of Bee-Line riders who currently transfer to a Bee-Line Bus, MTA subway, MTA bus or MTA commuter rail line;
- More service will increase access to jobs and education for the approximately 80% of riders who use the Bee-Line system to travel to workplaces, schools, or workforce training;
- Real-time information and up-to-the-minute service alerts will become available to the public.



NASSAU COUNTY: NICE BUS WILL:

- Increase service frequency on heavily used routes increasing access to jobs;
- Extend afternoon and evening service to support shift workers, improve connectivity to LIRR;
- Extend paratransit service county-wide;
- Provide new service to growing areas like Port Washington;
- Initiate new demand responsive, crowd-sourced service.

Customer Benefits:

- Over 1.3 million Nassau County residents will have quick and easy access to frequent transit buses running every 10 minutes or better in peak periods and every 15 minutes or better in off-peak periods – an increase of 45% over today's frequent coverage;
- 25% more low income residents would have access to frequent routes;
- 45% of all residents would have access to frequent routes;
- Nearly 825,000 jobs will be accessible to Nassau County residents via buses running every 10 minutes or better in peak periods and every 15 minutes or better in off-peak periods, an increase of 31% over today's frequent coverage;
- 31% more residents would have better access to jobs.



SOUTHERN TIER: IN BROOME COUNTY, BC TRANSIT WILL:

- Expand work commuter service to underserved areas such as the Kirkwood/Conklin Industrial area, distribution hubs and area nursing facilities;
- Implement a modern fare collection system that allows prepayment, proximity card payment, and mobile ticketing and payment;
- Compensate for operating expenses that have exceeded inflationary increases, such as fuel cost, healthcare and employee benefits.



FINGER LAKES: IN TOMPKINS COUNTY, TCAT WILL:

- Increase bus fleet by 15-20% and address the maintenance needs of buses that are beyond their life-expectancy;
- Increase bus frequency and service span to meet increases in housing and employment;
- Install new fare collection system with mobile fare payment;
- Improve connectivity with various modes of transportation;
- Develop a community-based urban circulator system;
- Provide faster bus service by expanding traffic signal priority for buses;
- Begin transition to an electric bus fleet.

Customer Benefits:

- More service will reduce crowding on heavily traveled routes and provide access to jobs with non-traditional work hours;
- New buses will provide more comfortable rides to customers;
- Electric buses will reduce GHG emissions, fuel and maintenance costs and provide sustainable transportation in our community;
- First-mile, last-mile services will provide better access to jobs and essential services for transportation vulnerable households in areas without transit service;
- Mobile Fare Payment will attract more riders – especially a younger demographic who find the current fare options inconvenient;
- Faster, more reliable service, especially in areas with traffic congestion.

**NEW
YORKERS
FOR BETTER
PUBLIC
TRANSIT**

