



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

After Securing \$100 Million Commitment, Kennedy Outlines Planned Improvements to Metro Rail, Tours LaSalle Station With NFTA Executive Director

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY May 3, 2019

| ISSUE: [LIGHT RAIL](#), [MASS TRANSIT](#), [NFTA](#), [BUFFALO](#), [METRO RAIL](#)



Senate Transportation Chair Joined by Assembly Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes, Mayor Brown, NFTA Executive Director Minkel,

Metro Rail-dependent Rider to Discuss Improvements and Repairs That Riders Can Expect Over Next 5 Years

During Budget Process, Kennedy Secured Agreement From Governor Cuomo to Provide \$100 Million Five Year Plan for NFTA Metro Rail System's Capital Needs, Along With \$6 Million For Engineering Work on Amherst Extension

BUFFALO, N.Y. - Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) was joined by Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes, Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, NFTA Executive Director Kim Minkel, and Robin Tashjian, a Metro Rail-dependent rider, to discuss improvements to Metro Rail's Main Street line that riders can expect to see over the next five years. In this year's budget process, Kennedy secured a commitment from Governor Andrew Cuomo to provide \$100 million to the NFTA to fund a five year capital plan for maintenance and improvements of Metro Rail, along with \$6 million to fund preliminary design work for the planned Amherst extension. The funds, which will be appropriated in a supplemental capital budget bill expected to be introduced in the coming weeks, will represent the first time Metro Rail has had a dedicated funding stream from the state for capital needs, answering a call that advocates have long pushed for. The planned work will total roughly \$20 million per year over the next five years, beginning with FY 2019-20. While there are system-wide improvements and repairs planned, there are also more localized updates required, including the renovation of the badly-deteriorated ventilation rooms and corroded rail station panel liners throughout the system.

"Metro Rail is a critical part of our region's transportation network, connecting the University at Buffalo's South Campus to our downtown central business district," said Senate Transportation Committee Chair Tim Kennedy. "As we continue the process of securing federal funds and planning for the extension of Metro Rail up to UB's North Campus, we cannot take our eye off the ball and ignore badly-needed maintenance on the existing line. This \$100 million project will maintain the safety of the system, bring back the on-time performance riders expect, and make for a more enjoyable rider experience overall.

After years of neglect, we finally have the attention of state government and we are making the investments that our region deserves.”

“Thanks to the \$100 million commitment from the state secured by my colleague Sen. Kennedy the NFTA will finally get some long overdue upgrades. The money will go a long way towards much needed repairs and upgrades to our subway and above ground transit, as well as improving our deteriorating stations like the LaSalle Station,” said Majority Leader Crystal Peoples Stokes. “An additional \$6 million will go toward laying the groundwork for extending light rail service to Amherst. We commend the Senator and the state for making the public transportation needs of residents a top priority.”

"City of Buffalo residents rely on Metro Rail each and every day, making it imperative that we invest in maintaining this core piece of our transportation infrastructure," said Mayor Byron Brown. "This commitment of \$100 million over the next five years will help us to bring Metro Rail into the 21st Century, adding to the momentum created by the Cars Sharing Main Street project and historic investments in the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. I thank Governor Cuomo, Senator Kennedy, Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes, and the Western New York Delegation for their dedication to the City of Buffalo."

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Executive Director Kim Minkel said, “This funding will allow us to make significant and much needed improvements to our system and provide our community with vital connectivity that is important to the redevelopment of the city of Buffalo and Western New York. We are fortunate to have lawmakers like Senator Kennedy, Governor Cuomo, Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes, and the state delegation for making public transit a priority.”

The work is tentatively planned as follows:

Metro Rail Capital Projects

2019-2020	2021-2022	2023-2024
Track Replacement	Track Replacement	Track Replacement
Train Control System Replacement	Catenary & Insulator Replacement	Catenary & Insulator Replacement
Escalator Replacement	Station Panel Liner Replacement	Station Panel Liner Replacement
Catenary & Insulator Replacement	Station Ventilation Replacement	Station Electrical Rehabilitation
Station Panel Liner Replacement	Public Address System Replacement	Additional Above Ground Crossover
2020-2021	2022-2023	
Track Replacement	Track Replacement	
Escalator Replacement	Catenary & Insulator Replacement	
Catenary & Insulator Replacement	Station Panel Liner Replacement	

Station Panel Liner Replacement	Station Electrical Rehabilitation	
Video Surveillance Upgrade	Station Ventilation Replacement	

Light rail track in the system has rusted beyond repair, while concrete track bed has crumbled, surface rail has cracked, and the system's escalators and rusted interior panels are in need of replacement or repair. Additionally, replacement parts are no longer available for the communication and train control systems and the original public address and other systems built with the line 30 years ago are in need of replacement. Metro Rail accounts for over 90 percent of the capital needs of the bus and rail system, with an annual average replacement need of \$34 million, yet the rail system – until today – did not have a dedicated state transit capital allocation. The inclusion of this dedicated funding will position the NFTA to compete for Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grant program funding, which takes current capital financing into consideration when scoring funding applications.

###