

Connecting Our Community Since 1972



2022-23 YEAR IN REVIEW
2023-24 COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-24 FINANCIAL PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

About Centro	5
Our Mission	6
Our Values & Beliefs	7
Letter from the CEO and Chairman	8

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Board of Members	10
Relationship to New York State	11
Governance Structure	12
Public Benefit Subsidiary Corporations	13

2022-23: THE YEAR IN REVIEW	15
-----------------------------	----

STRATEGIC PLAN & OPERATIONAL INITIATIVES

Financial Sustainability	50
Service Performance & Ridership	51
Community Partnership	52
Workforce Engagement	53
Infrastructure Management	54

FINANCIAL PLAN & BUDGET

Planning & Policies	
Budget Process	57
Financial & Planning Challenges	58
Financial Policies	59
Operating Budget	
Operating Funding Sources	60
Operating Budget Overview	62
Fiscal Year 2023-20224 Operating Budget	63
Multi-Year Operating Budget Projections	69
Capital Budget	
Capital Funding Sources	70
Capital Budget Overview	72
Mult-Year Capital Budget Projections	73



Introduction



About Centro

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority ("CNYRTA" or "Authority"), through its various operating companies, is the public mass transportation provider in the Central New York region. CNYRTA deploys regular route, commuter, and paratransit service in Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego, and Oneida counties with a population of nearly 902,000 people.

Our service features 5,000 bus stops, 200 passenger shelters, 3 transfer hubs, 3 surface parking areas, and a Regional Transportation Center. We operate a fleet of 238 revenue vehicles, from five maintenance facilities, with the largest being our full-service maintenance facility and administrative headquarters located in Onondaga County (Syracuse). CNYRTA operates service on 90 routes traveling more than 6.1m miles annually, providing approximately 2,500+ bus trips each weekday of regular service.

Our paratransit program provided approximately 144,761 trips last year for people who cannot use our regular route system. Until the onset of the COVID19 pandemic in March of 2020, we had seen consistent ridership increases. Call-A-Bus is nearing pre-pandemic ridership levels and continues to see a steady increase in ridership month over month.

Since our formation in 1970, and the first day of publicly operated bus service in the Syracuse area on January 17, 1972, CNYRTA has made Central New York a better place in which to live and work. CNYRTA is a responsible citizen and a valued part of the public infrastructure of the region through its continuous efforts, which include:

- Providing paratransit services in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).
- Providing specialized services to the New York State Fair, and to and on the campuses of Syracuse University, Oswego State University, Onondaga Community College, and Cayuga Community College.
- Participation in dozens of events, services, and educational programs held throughout the year.
- Committing to cleaner air via its extensive fleet of clean-fueled compressed natural gas buses and clean diesel buses.
- Partnering with local police, fire, emergency responders, and the local chapter of the American Red Cross in emergency situations.



OUR MISSION

It is the mission of the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (Centro) to be responsive to the transportation needs of the Central New York community by providing services which are safe, convenient, reliable, and environmentally responsible with a goal of maximizing the taxpayers' return on investment.



www.centro.org

OUR VALUES & BELIEFS

For Centro to achieve its goals and execute its mission statement, we must manage well all resources. Our most important resource is our people. Therefore, we commit to a company environment where people are:

- *Trusted*
- *Kept informed on matters regarding work, the organization and our business*
- *Treated with fairness, respect and consistency*
- *Given opportunities to use their creative talents to grow and to take pride in their work and accomplishments*
- *Supplied the tools, conditions, and training necessary for achievement*
- *Given the opportunity to share in setting expectations for performance*
- *Provided open accessible communication throughout all levels of the organization*
- *Empowered to make decisions to improve customer relations and service*
- *Recognized and rewarded for their achievements*
- *Given a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the authority to carry them out*



www.centro.org

To Our Valued Customers

The past 12 months have had historical significance for Centro as we marked 50 years of providing public transportation services in Central New York. In five decades, we’ve seen many changes. Diesel buses have given way to clean burning Compressed Natural Gas vehicles. A service area that once focused on downtown areas has expanded into our suburbs. Bus tokens have given way to fare cards. Amenities that were once thought of as extras, like air conditioning, mobility lifts, and automatic bus stop annunciator are now the norm. Technology allows customers to access schedule information and follow the exact location of their bus on their devices. It’s remarkable when you think of all the advances in public transportation since we first hit the road on January 17, 1972 in Onondaga County. We then quickly expanded into Oswego and Cayuga Counties in 1973, and our further expansion into Oneida County in 2005 brings us to our current four county service area.

The evolution must continue. We are in a new space in public transportation now. Post-pandemic travel needs are different than they were just three years ago. There are many workers who’ve left the workforce and others who have found themselves working comfortably from home, without the need to travel to and from their job. But that’s not everyone. We’re seeing expanding job opportunities outside our urban core – locations that need workers on-site to be successful. Amazon is a great example. Ridership along the Morgan Road corridor - home to the giant Amazon fulfillment center - has exploded. Since we altered our bus schedule to meet their work shifts, weekday ridership along the SY48 Morgan Road bus route has increased 35% and a whopping 70% increase on weekends. It’s an example of how public transportation still plays a critical role in our community. The announcement of Micron’s development in Clay is another potential game changer – we will work closely with Micron and community leaders to ensure that location is served by public transportation.

While we see potential growth areas for public transportation, we must better serve our core. The recent human resource shortage that has affected nearly all businesses still hinders our ability to serve our communities. We are working hard to attract more Centro bus drivers and mechanics to our authority. These will be the people that allow us to make transformational changes for our communities. We have plans for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and On-Demand bus service. The high frequency limited stop BRT service is what many customers desire to solve their transportation needs. Others need a service that meets their schedule, rather than altering their life around a bus schedule. That’s what On-Demand bus service can provide for them. These are just two of the projects on our horizon. We know there will be others in the future as our transportation needs continue to evolve.

And while we eagerly await the next generation of Centro employees, we cannot celebrate 50 years of service without acknowledging all the individuals who have made the wheels go round and round all these years. To all our current and former employees, we say “thank you for a job well done”. We appreciate your hard work and dedication. You have helped the lives of many and have made our communities a better place to live.



Brian M. Schultz
Chief Executive Officer



Nicholas F. Laino
Chairman



Organizational Overview



Nicholas F. Laino
Chairman - Oneida County



Robert F. Cuculich
Vice Chairman - Onondaga County



Darlene D. Lattimore
Secretary - Cayuga County



Tina Fitzgerald
Treasurer - Onondaga County



Neil Milcarek-Burke
Member - Onondaga County



Anthony Q. Davis, Sr.
Member - Onondaga County



Monty R. Flynn
Member - Oswego County



Joseph A. Hardick
Member - Onondaga County



Julius L. Lawrence, Jr.
Member - Onondaga County



Louella Williams
Member - Onondaga County



RELATIONSHIP TO NEW YORK STATE

Background

The CNYRTA was created in 1970 by the New York State Legislature at a time when economic, demographic, and land use realities around the United States caused private bus companies offering public transit service to shut down or go bankrupt. Many bus companies were unable to sustain their operations and capital equipment replacements with fares, which were considered reasonable at the time. As a result, public transportation authorities were created in the late 1960s and early 1970s in major cities across New York State and in most other urbanized areas across the country.

Public transportation helps maintain local economic vitality in many ways. It creates mobility opportunities for people who choose not to drive or cannot drive; it helps reduce traffic congestion, oil consumption and air pollution; it provides opportunities for people by creating pathways to jobs; and provides an alternative means of getting to work, school, commercial enterprises, medical appointments, and to social and entertainment venues. Like roads and bridges, public transit is a critical part of the country's surface transportation network.

Legal Status

The CNYRTA is a public authority and a public benefit corporation of New York State, created in 1970 by Title 11 D of Public Authorities Law. It can be thought of as an "agent" of the State, but not the State itself. Its legislated purpose is to continue, further develop, and improve transportation and related services in the Central New York Regional Transportation District. The legislation states that the CNYRTA's mission is in all respects for the benefit of the people of the State of New York, and that the CNYRTA shall be regarded as performing "an essential governmental function."

The Central New York Regional Transportation District originally included, by law, Onondaga County. The law also allowed participation in the CNYRTA by the counties of Cayuga, Cortland, Jefferson, Madison, Oneida, and Oswego, by specific election of their respective legislative bodies. To date, Oswego and Cayuga counties (1972, 1973) and Oneida County (2005) have elected to join the required original participant Onondaga County (1970) as members of the District, and hence, are member counties of the CNYRTA.

As noted above, the CNYRTA and each of its operating subsidiaries are considered governmental entities created for the public benefit, providing "an essential governmental function" under state law. As such, the CNYRTA and each of its subsidiaries are tax exempt (sales, excise, property, income, etc.).

For financial reporting purposes, the CNYRTA is a Component Unit of the State of New York, and its independently audited financial statements, including the audited financial statements of its subsidiaries, are incorporated into the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) of the State of New York. The CNYRTA is a "specified" transit system in the annual appropriations contained in the New York State Budget.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Governance Structure

The Authority is governed by a Board of Members, currently made up of thirteen positions including one non-voting member representing the collective bargaining units. The current member breakdown is as follows: Onondaga County 5 seats, City of Syracuse 3 seats, Oswego, Cayuga, and Oneida Counties all have 1 seat each, the City of Rome and the Bargaining unit also have 1 seat each.

The Board of Members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the New York State Senate. Terms are for fixed but staggered seven-year periods, each beginning July 1, with members continuing to serve until their successors are appointed. Members may be reappointed for subsequent terms by the same process. The Board of Members elect Officers of the Board (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer).

The Board of Members are not compensated but are entitled to reimbursement for necessary and actual expenses incurred in the performance of official duties.

The Board of Members schedule at least one meeting each month, generally on the 4th Friday, which is open to the public. All public meetings are recorded and streamed live for viewing on the Authority’s website: www.centro.org.

Committees

The CNYRTA has six standing committees that assist in carrying out the duties of the Board of Members. Committees are established via a resolution or by-law.

COMMITTEE	FREQUENCY	DESCRIPTION
Audit & Finance	Monthly	Established by the By-Laws to comply with Public Authorities Law. Includes independent audit discussion, financial statements and related financial information.
Governance	Semi-Annually	Established by the By-Laws to comply with the Authorities Budget Office. Includes best governance practices, internal control and related governance items.
Pension	Quarterly	Established by Board Resolution to oversee and review items relating to management of the CNYRTA pension funds.
Personnel	As Needed	Established by Board Resolution to discuss items relating to personnel, including personnel work history and salary information. Typically held in executive session.
Legal	As Needed	Established by Board Resolution to discuss any legal items. Typically held in executive session.
Nominating	Annually	Established by Board Resolution to nominate Board of Members officers. Typically held in executive session.

PUBLIC BENEFIT SUBSIDIARY CORPORATIONS

To fulfill its legislated purpose, the CNYRTA has created several public benefit subsidiary corporations over the past 50 years. The CNYRTA provides extensive public transit services through its five “Centro” bus subsidiary operations in Onondaga, Oswego, Cayuga and Oneida counties; three smaller subsidiaries were created to perform special functions or operations as follows:

CNY Centro, Inc. provides fixed route public transit services in Onondaga County utilizing approximately 146 heavy-duty transit vehicles, 131 of these are powered by compressed natural gas (“CNG”) and another 15 are diesel. CNY Centro is by far the largest Centro subsidiary, performing the broad spectrum of operational and support services for all subsidiaries, such as heavy vehicle maintenance, technical route planning, scheduling, training, accounting, procurement, grant administration, payroll, all human resources and benefits functions, management information systems, marketing, and other administrative and support functions.

Centro Call-A-Bus, Inc. provides demand response paratransit services in Onondaga County, which complement CNY Centro’s fixed route services as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed in 1990. Call-A-Bus was originally created by the CNYRTA in the mid-1970s, and had been in place for nearly two decades when the ADA mandated it for all transit operations in the country. Call-A-Bus provides service to its clients using a combination of its own vehicles, CNY Centro fixed route vehicles, and private van operators and taxis. Its offices and approximately 24 buses, mostly small vehicles, are housed within the main CNY Centro facility in Syracuse.

Centro of Oneida, Inc. provides fixed route public transit services and ADA mandated disabled services in Oneida County utilizing approximately 29 large and 9 small buses. The Utica division operates in the City of Utica and surrounding towns of Kirkland, New Hartford, and Whitesboro and leases a garage/office facility from Oneida County. The Rome division operates in the City of Rome. Prior to the CNYRTA takeover in 2005, these municipal operations faced severe financial and operational challenges. The State of New York was a key financial partner in the successful regionalization of these operations by the CNYRTA through the Centro of Oneida subsidiary, which was created to serve Oneida County.

Centro of Oswego, Inc. provides fixed route public transit services and ADA mandated disabled services in Oswego utilizing approximately 13 large and 3 small buses. It provides extensive service to and within the SUNY Oswego Campus, service within the Cities of Oswego and Fulton, service between Mexico, Fulton, and Oswego, and regional service to and from Syracuse and the CNYRTA’s Regional Transportation Center (described below). Centro of Oswego operates out of a light maintenance/office facility in the City of Oswego, which it owns.

Centro of Cayuga, Inc. provides fixed route public transit services and ADA mandated disabled services utilizing approximately 13 large vehicles and 1 small vehicle. It provides service within the City of Auburn, and commuter services between Auburn, Weedsport, Port Byron, and Syracuse to the CNYRTA’s Regional Transportation Center via several different routes. It also offers extensive service to the New York State Fair. It operates from a light maintenance/office facility located in the City of Auburn, which it owns.

Centro Parking, Inc. was created by the CNYRTA in the 1970s to generate revenues to help offset the deficits of its public transit operations. Under contract, this subsidiary leases nearby surface lots to SUNY Upstate Hospital. Centro Parking also operates monthly permit parking lots located under Interstate Route 81 in the City of Syracuse, which are leased from the State of New York.

Intermodal Transportation Center, Inc. (ITC, Inc.) was created in 1995 to build, own, and operate the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center (RTC) located near the Destiny USA shopping mall in the City of Syracuse. This intermodal transportation facility, which opened in 1998, provides a direct link between Centro's local and regional transit services, intercity bus carriers (Greyhound and Megabus), and intercity passenger rail provider (Amtrak). Prior to the creation of this facility, there was no simple way for an intercity traveler to move between these modes of transportation, which had terminals dispersed throughout the Syracuse area and surrounding suburbs. This facility operates on a 24/7 basis, and has benefitted from several significant capital improvements made by the CNYRTA over the past 21 years.



**2022-23:
The Year In Review**

Centro Celebrates 50 Years of Providing Transportation Services to Central New York

It is hard to believe, but in 2022, Centro turned 50 years old! Back on January 17, 1972, the first Centro bus hit the road, transitioning from its predecessor, the privately owned and operated Syracuse Transit Corporation. Now, 50 years later, there is a lot to look back on and even more to look forward to.

From its first day of service in Syracuse, to beginning its Call-A-Bus system serving individuals with disabilities, creating the "Syracuse Standard" kneeling bus, introducing environmentally sound Compressed Natural Gas buses in the early 1990s, installing bike racks on its transit vehicles, building two transit hubs in Syracuse and Utica, and an intermodal transportation center in Syracuse – Centro has evolved with the customer in mind.

"We've undergone many changes over the last 50 years, but one thing remains unchanged the community's expectation that we provide them with safe, convenient, reliable transportation," said Centro's Chief Executive Officer, Brian Schultz. "I want to thank all our employees, both past and present, who have played an integral part

in the growth of this organization. To all of you who have driven buses and fixed buses, answered customer calls, responded to community needs, and made sure that Centro runs efficiently each day. Thank you."

To mark its Golden Anniversary, Centro rolled out a celebratory gold bus featuring Centro's anniversary logo and slogan – Connecting our Community since 1972, along with a message thanking the community for five decades of support.

The celebration kicked off a series of events marking Centro's 50th anniversary. Centro marked key milestones in its history throughout 2022 on its social media accounts, featuring stories about Centro's impactful past and the people who have helped move Centro New Yorkers over the past 50 years.

"We understand the significant role our service plays in the economic development of our community. It's a mission that we take very seriously," said Schultz.

"We're planning significant changes to our system in

coming years, and expansion into new non-traditional transportation services to keep up with the needs of our community for the near future and beyond."

On May 12, 1970, the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) was founded by New York State legislature to enhance and improve public transportation in the region. Onondaga County joined the CNYRTA and CNY Centro, Inc. was founded. Quickly thereafter, Oswego and Cayuga counties joined the Authority and bus services were established in those communities. Years later, in 2005, Oneida County chose to join the Authority and Centro assumed the operations of the Utica Transit Authority and the bus system serving the City of Rome.

"We're continuing to expand and evolve our transportation solutions to meet the changing landscape," said Centro Board of Members Chairman, Nick Laino. "We expect transportation to look different in coming years and we are already planning new ways to move people in the future."



Centro to Reshape Public Transit Systems

In 2022, Centro kicked off a project reshaping its public transit systems and diversifying transit options for its customers. The goal is to look at more effective ways to serve the communities in the Centro bus system. “The commuting habits within the communities we serve are rapidly evolving, and we need to evaluate and respond accordingly,” said Centro Chief Executive Officer, Brian Schultz. “Part of our assessment will be the most comprehensive review of our Syracuse route system in more than 20 years and the implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.”



Centro's system retooling began in January 2023 with a series of public outreach sessions centered on the Syracuse bus system entitled Exploring Tomorrow's Transit (ETT) - a cooperative effort between Centro

and the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC). Community members are being asked to fill out a survey on transit concepts. A series of public meetings will be held later in 2023 to gather additional information. “We'll be reaching out to Centro customers, as well as those that don't currently use our system, to see what types of services and bus routes might be attractive in the future,” said Schultz. “There's a lot to consider. We're seeing significant changes since the pandemic. More people are working remotely, but at the same time we're seeing a growing demand to reach employment centers in non-traditional locations. As we look to the future, we must also consider the I-81 plan and the addition of Micron to our community.”

Centro will also assess its bus routes in the other cities and communities it serves. In all locations, Centro will continue its commitment to providing transportation services within the thriving downtown employment centers served by its transit hubs.

In addition to BRT, Centro will also explore on-demand transportation and bike / scooter share services. Centro has hired a transportation consultant, IBI Group, to assist with the design and implementation of BRT, system reshaping, and new transportation options. IBI Group performed the SMTC Smart1 study that outlined the framework for a BRT network in Syracuse.

“We want to be more than a bus company,” said Schultz. “We want to be a transportation solution company that can provide services outside of traditional fixed-route bus operations.”

Here is an overview of three specific mobility concepts being studied by Centro.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Centro is collaborating with planning consultant, IBI Group, to update the SMART1 study, completed by SMTC in 2018. The effort focuses on updating key demographic and ridership figures and working through the planning and analysis phases required to move the project forward. Centro is currently focusing its efforts on BRT – Mixed Traffic along the two corridors recommended in the previous study – 9.8 miles along an Eastwood to OCC corridor and 5.5 miles along an RTC to SU corridor. The proposed routes will offer more efficient transportation routes in the community while helping move people faster – not only in those locations, but throughout Centro's entire service area.

Implementing a BRT system will provide riders with a higher-level transit experience, including faster service with fewer stops; more frequent, reliable service; longer service hours; and enhanced bus station amenities. The BRT system will also increase access to key educational and employment destinations and create opportunities for transit-oriented development in the City of Syracuse.

Centro recently received \$3 million to help fund BRT as part of the 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill recently passed by Congress. We want to thank the efforts of Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Congressman John Katko (R-NY) for their support of the bill and of BRT in our community. This money will be used to fund buses and BRT stations as part of the overall \$35 million capital costs for the BRT project.



Micro Transit On-Demand Service

To maximize service and efficiency and provide increased mobility options to its customers and residents, Centro is considering ways to offer On-Demand service on an immediate and/or pre-scheduled basis via a mobile app or by phone. The service will be zone-based with no specific fixed route.



Utilizing real-time technology on an algorithm, On-Demand service proposes flexible routes and schedules to create the most efficient trips possible. Centro is also evaluating the use of smaller vehicles and service areas and point-to-point service offerings to connect riders with Centro's Fixed Route network and cover transit desert neighborhoods.

In 2022, Centro completed the planning phase of a potential On-Demand service and hired planning consultant, IBI Group, to help refine its fleet requirements and technology platforms. Centro anticipates a 2023 service launch in one of its service areas, with subsequent launches scheduled for additional Centro properties in 2024.

Bike/ Scooter – Share

The demand for a bike / scooter share program throughout Central New York is high. To address the demand, Centro contracted with Veo (the current provider of shared bike and scooter services in the City of Syracuse) in 2022.

Since entering the contract with Veo, Centro has initiated partnerships with specific municipalities across Onondaga County to expand this micromobility service. The first expansion phase, in 2023, allows current bike-share users to complete their journeys on one vehicle – rather than stopping at municipal boundary lines where City of Syracuse limits end.

Centro will continue to work with Veo and its community partners to deploy a dynamic fleet that will meet the overall demand of the community. In 2023, Centro anticipates an overall fleet of 1,000 vehicles within Onondaga County, with further expansion of the program anticipated to additional Centro service locations in the future.



ETT
Between February and April 2023, Centro and the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council visited various parts of the county to solicit community input. Centro is looking to reshape its transit system and explore new options for customers. Community members were encouraged to stop by to share their thoughts and complete a rider survey.



Ridership on the Rebound

Centro posted significant ridership gains in 2022-23. Overall, in its four-county coverage area, Centro ridership increased by 30%, providing 1.5 million additional rides than the previous year. The increase was driven largely by a 21% increase on Syracuse and Onondaga County bus routes. Significant gains were also made in the City of Oswego (19%), service to Mexico (15%), the SUNY Oswego Campus (44%), the Syracuse University Campus (21%), and the City of Utica (11%).

“Much of the increase in city services was driven by the fare reduction we put into place last March,” said Centro Vice President of Communications and Business Planning, Steven Koegel. “We were hoping the new simpler, less expensive fare system would stimulate ridership and we’ve seen that to be true. However, part of the increase appears to be driven by a return to normalcy following the COVID pandemic.”

One of the most significant increases was seen on Centro’s SY48 Morgan Road bus route, which serves the new Amazon Fulfillment Center in the town of Clay. Cento altered the timing of service to meet the new Amazon shift times once the facility opened in late spring. The result was significant. Ridership on that route increased 55% over the previous year, including an 85% increase on weekends.

It is the second consecutive year that Centro ridership has increased dramatically. Ridership increased approximately 55% in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, following lows set the previous year during the height of the pandemic.



Centro Park-N-Ride Shuttles Just \$1 for 2022 New York State Fair

The 2022 New York State Fair proved once again how valuable Centro is to the Fair and our community.

Despite a shorter State Fair, reduced from 18 to 13 days, overall Fair attendance increased by 11% compared to 2021. That increase in attendance translated to Centro more than doubling its ridership from 137,809 passengers the previous year to 283,946 passengers.

Centro also introduced \$1.00 fares each way for the 2022 New York State Fair – a 50% reduction from previous years.

“This is great news for fairgoers, especially families looking to enjoy our Great New York State Fair. A family of four can now get to and from the Fair from these locations for less than \$10,” said Centro Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Christopher Tuff. “We thank New York State Assemblyman William Magnarelli for securing an additional \$750,000 in state funding to offset the costs of operating our Park-N-Ride services for this year’s Fair.”

The shuttle fares are the same as Centro’s current fares for its city bus services, which were reduced in March 2022 from \$2.00 per ride to \$1.00. The shuttles operated daily to the Main Gate from the Syracuse Transit Hub and parking lots at Destiny USA and Long Branch Park.

Centro also operated free shuttles from the New York State Fair’s pay parking lots at the Orange Lot and Willis Avenue.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the 2022 State Fair a success! Centro looks forward to serving the community once again for the 2023 State Fair.

Centro Welcomes New Buses to its Fleet

Centro took delivery of 35 new transit vehicles in 2022 – 18 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and 17 Clean Diesel buses. The acquisition replaced buses in Cayuga, Oneida, and Syracuse which had reached the end of their useful lives.

The new vehicles are part of a five-year plan to replace more than 100 buses and minimize capital cost expenditures within a given year. The buses are purchased with a combination of Federal, State, and local funds.

As we move forward, Centro is looking at ways to help modernize its bus fleet, including the purchase of low- or no-emission vehicles that use advanced technologies to improve air quality and combat climate change.

Centro is beginning its transition to zero emissions bus technology through the purchase of four, 40-foot heavy duty transit hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles. These vehicles will allow Centro to evaluate the emerging technology on a smaller scale without impacting service to customers. Centro will be evaluating the range, passenger satisfaction, unscheduled maintenance, and operational costs.

In 1991, Centro began moving away from diesel propulsion systems when it first introduced CNG fueled buses. Centro started with eight CNG vehicles, which over time has expanded to 130 full-sized buses.



Above: Two of Centro’s new diesel buses take to the streets in Oswego (top) and Utica (bottom). Below: Two brand new CNG buses ready to take Syracuse residents to Lights on the Lake.



Lights on the Lake Service Connects Residents, Earns Recognition

Centro partnered with Lights on the Lake, Onondaga County, and Syracuse City Parks to provide City of Syracuse residents the opportunity to ride through the Lights on the Lake display for free aboard a Centro bus. On several days from December 1 - January 5th two Centro buses picked up city residents from one of five Syracuse City Parks Community Centers and brought them to see the Lights on the Lake display. The Centro buses were greeted at Onondaga Lake Park by Santa, who stepped aboard to say hello and provide everyone aboard with a candy cane – many of whom had never been to see Lights on the Lake before.



“It really speaks to the core of our mission here at Centro,” said Centro’s Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Christopher Tuff. “This was a great partnership that brought people to see one of our community’s great holiday traditions.” The service earned Centro the 2022 Central New York Recreation & Parks Society (CNYRPS) – Outstanding Corporate Partnership Award, which recognizes a vendor, company or individual who has significantly contributed to the field of parks and recreation and developed a strong partnership with CNYRPS, a local organization, or agency.

“Centro has been a big part of the parks and recreation scene for many years, participating in events like Big Rig Day and providing transportation to some of the area’s biggest events, including the cultural festivals in downtown Syracuse, Lakeview Amphitheatre concerts, the Great NYS Fair, Taste of Syracuse, and Golden Harvest Festival at Beaver Lake,” said Onondaga Lake Park Recreation Supervisor, Megan Ball. “We are proud to have such a wonderful partner supporting our facilities, events, and communities!”



The Community Centers participating in the program were Kirk Park, McChesney Park, Westmoreland Park, Schiller Park, and Wilson Park. Participants, who were required to pre-register through Syracuse City Parks, were met at their designated community center where they were invited aboard the buses and transported to the Lights on the Lake display.

“We’re fortunate to have partners like Centro, Lights on the Lake and Onondaga County Parks willing to step up and afford our youth and families opportunities such as these,” said City of Syracuse Parks Commissioner Julie LaFave. “They may miss out otherwise. Transportation is a critical component that allows us to expand our reach.”

The hope is to continue or expand the program in coming years.



Centro Takes New Approaches to Address Ongoing Staffing Challenges



In 2022, still feeling the impacts of employee shortages across its combined service areas, Centro took a new approach to entice drivers, mechanics, and bus servicers to join its team.

Centro launched aggressive TV, radio, and digital advertising campaigns with multiple media outlets throughout Central New York. The campaigns featured Centro employees sharing their own stories about what it was like to work for Centro, and another offered prospective bus drivers the chance to drive a bus during the interview process at open houses at Centro’s main office in Syracuse.

“It’s extremely competitive out there,” said Jackie Musengo, Centro’s Vice President of Human Resources. “We’re competing in a limited resource pool, so we know we need to be more visible and creative in how we’re connecting with applicants. The most recent campaigns have been successful. It’s been years since we’ve had new driver classes this large.”

At the open houses, Centro offered potential applicants the opportunity to get behind the wheel of a Centro bus on a closed course circuit to get a feel for what it would

be like to drive a Centro bus. More than 130 potential candidates stopped by to submit applications, partake in on-the-spot interviews, and many drove a bus. As a result, Centro filled two driver training classes with nearly 40 future Centro bus drivers!

Centro also placed ads on the façade of its Syracuse Transit Hub and outside of its Cortland Ave facility in Syracuse. It placed large “ad wraps” on the outside of its two iconic green buses, which were featured in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade events in Syracuse and Utica. Centro participated in numerous job fairs, including a tabling event at the Syracuse Mets stadium, and a trade booth in the Science & Technology Building for all 13 days of the 2022 New York State Fair – all in the hopes of adding much needed talent to its workforce.

“We’re doing everything we can,” said Musengo. “We offer competitive wage and benefit packages. We offer an employee referral program, and we’re working on ways to improve the “work-life” balance of our employees. We believe Centro is a great place to work.”

To address its struggle with recruiting mechanics, Centro developed its “Grow Your Own Mechanic”



program. This program trains current Centro bus servicers who are interested in becoming mechanics in the many different facets of being a Centro mechanic.

To ensure that the age stays on track with its recruiting initiatives, Centro recently attended the “Making Connections” conference hosted by Transit Workforce and the National Transit Institute. The conference provided Centro with the opportunity to gain experience about recruitment, mentoring, and apprentice programs while gaining some insight on what other organizations have rolled out to help address workforce shortages.

“The Making Connections Conference provided Centro with the opportunity to participate in discussions concerning recruiting and employee retention,” said Centro Chief Executive Officer Brian Schultz. “In 2023, Centro will broaden communications with contacts at various transit agencies regarding the implementation of mentorship programs at Centro.”

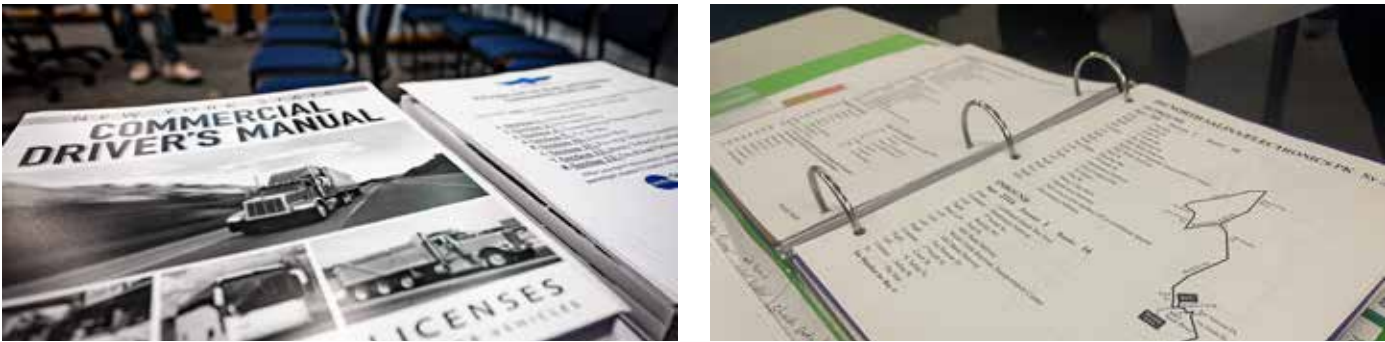
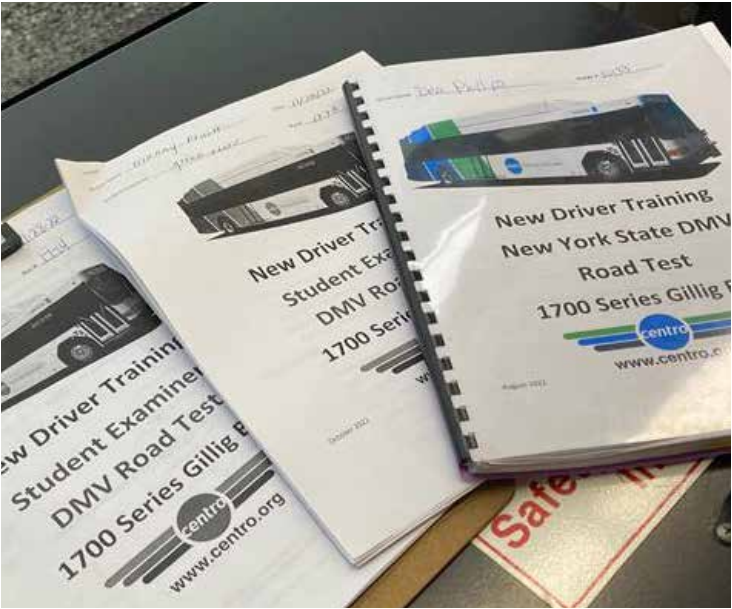
Individuals looking to build a career are encouraged to visit Centro’s website (www.centro.org) to learn more and apply online.



Congratulations & Welcome Aboard to Centro's Newest Bus Drivers!



Throughout the past year, Centro welcomed 51 new drivers to its team. The 17 part-time and 34 full-time drivers, who are currently on the road in Centro's Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Oswego County service areas, graduated from one of Centro's four CDL operator training classes.



Centro Participates in More Than a Dozen Job Fairs in 2022



Centro’s Human Resources team has been busy looking for future drivers, mechanics, bus services, and administrative personnel over the past year. To help them fill the various openings throughout the Authority, they hit the road to attend a number of local job fairs – all in the hopes of targeting individuals actively seeking out employment opportunities.

“The benefit to attending these job fairs is that they save us time,” said Centro’s Human Resources Manager, Amanda Wilson. “Whether we’re targeting specific openings or just making a presence at an event, we’re always looking for top talent. Job fairs provide us with direct access to candidates on a much more meaningful level rather than online. And the bonus is that with so much on our plates, we can connect with individuals in a shortened timespan rather than being out of the office for an entire day.”



Between April 2022 and March 2023 Centro participated in a number of job fairs put on by the New York State Department of Labor, Jubilee Homes of Syracuse, Inc., the Onondaga County Department of Social Services – Economic Security, the United Way of Central New York/Greater Syracuse Labor Council, OCM BOCES, and CNY Works.



Employee Recognition Program Promotes Positive Work Environment



Centro's employee recognition program, better known as the Reaching Productivity Milestone (RPM) program, celebrated its two-year anniversary on April 1, 2023. The program, which has grown significantly since its inception, recognizes Centro employees for their teamwork, communication, and diverse abilities through a combination of productivity incentives, recognition awards, and employee engagement activities.

In January 2023, Centro acknowledged the accomplishments of four of its employees during its quarterly award ceremony. The award winners were:

- Rookie Operator of the Year, Dominick Valerio
- Rookie Maintenance Employee of the Year, Volodymyr Morhun
- Operator of the Year, Liliya Timoshchuk
- Maintenance Employee of the Year, Mike Hyde

During the ceremony, Centro awarded 50% of available award funds to its employees. This percentage continues to increase since the inception of the program when award distributions were approximately 40% of available

funds. Centro also announced the addition of a new award category during the celebration – the Mile Marker Award. This award will increase incrementally year after year, and ties into the Safe Driving Award.

“This program provides well-deserved recognition and rewards to employees for their dedication to service and making a difference in our communities,” said Centro's Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Christopher Tuff. “We're excited to see participation increasing and look forward to implementing new and exciting workforce engagement opportunities.”

A number of employees were also presented with community commitment pins recognizing their years of service to Centro, including the following four employees who were acknowledged for 35 or more years of service: Bev Brown Ezzo (35 years); Jackie Gardner (35 years); Steven Rhodes (35 years); and Jerry Fowler (55 years).

Congratulations to all our award-winning employees and THANK YOU for everything you do each day!



A selection of RPM winners (row 1): Maintenance Employee of the Quarter: First Class Mechanic, Rob Wells, 1st Annual RPM Chili-Chowder Cook-off winner: Human Resources Compliance Manager, Kayla Garcia, Community Commitment Award recipient: Call Center Manager, Marquita Williams (20 Years), (row 2) Maintenance Employee of the Quarter: Mechanic, Eric Burrows, and Maintenance Employee of the Quarter: Working Foreman, Steve Rhodes.



Travel Training Program is Back in Action



Unity House

After a pandemic pause, Centro's popular Travel Training program made its highly anticipated return in 2022.

The program, which provides outreach services to citizens, community-based organizations, and agencies that depend on Centro's public transit system, has grown significantly since its inception in May 2013. To date, a total of 2,645 individuals have participated in the program with the goal of feeling comfortable and confident while using Centro's service to get to work, school, medical offices, the grocery store, and recreation sites – all on their own.

With the thoughtful and compassionate guidance of Centro's travel trainers, participants receive personalized, one-on-one or group travel training instruction on a variety of topics.



InterFaith Works

Centro's travel trainer recently visited with members of the InterFaith Works Senior Companion Program to talk about Call-A-Bus, OSCAR, and Shopper buses!



The Arc

Centro's travel trainers met with participants from The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter, The Center in Utica, and Unity House of Cayuga County to teach them about how to purchase bus passes, safely board the bus, and request a stop.



The Center (Utica)

"Our program offers both new and current riders across Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga and Oswego Counties the opportunity to participate in transportation education sessions, tour Centro's transit facilities, and learn the basics like how to plan a trip, purchase a pass, read a schedule, or use the GoCentroBus mobile app," said Centro Training Supervisor, Roger Thayer. "Many of our participants are new to the area or do not have a vehicle to get them to the places they need to go every day. We are an essential lifeline for them, and we are happy to be able to provide this service to those in need." Centro's Travel Training Program is free-of-charge and is available to anyone located in Centro's four-county service area.

To learn more about Centro's Travel Training program or to schedule an appointment, email Centro at: cnyrta@centro.org or call (315) 442-3366.



Representatives from Centro's marketing & travel training departments visited SUNY ESF to talk about using Centro's services, including how to access, and read a bus schedule and purchase bus passes.

Centro Named 2022 Economic Champion

In 2022, Centro was recognized as a 2022 CenterState CEO Economic Champion!

Centro was one of 421 organizations honored for its accomplishments and contributions to the local and regional economy. Collectively, the 2022 award recipients were recognized for their combined hiring of more than 5,000 employees, more than 5.8 million square-feet of expansions, and over \$1 billion dollars in capital investments to the local communities they serve. In addition, 121 of the award winners were celebrated for opening new storefronts, offices, and facilities; 76 were highlighted for celebrating a milestone anniversary; and 102 were recognized for receiving significant awards and achievements.

The winners were nominated by peers, employees, and staff, as well as by CenterState CEO and the Greater Oswego-Fulton Chamber of Commerce, the Upstate Minority Economic Alliance, and the Downtown Committee of Syracuse.





Centro Employees Graduate From Public Transportation Leadership Institute

Centro applauds Senior Director of Accounting, Melissa Brim, Senior Director of Procurement, Caitlin MacCollum, and Director of Internal Control, Suzanna Levesque who in 2022 completed a yearlong training session offered by the New York Public Transit Association. The program provides an opportunity for future transit leaders to further develop their skills and network with other transit leaders throughout New York State. Congratulations to all three of these women on their accomplishments!

Christopher Tuff Receives Mass Transit Magazine 40 Under 40 Award

Mass Transit Magazine named Centro's Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Christopher Tuff a recipient of the 40 Under 40 class of 2022! This award recognizes emerging leaders within the transit industry by highlighting their drive, ambition, entrepreneurship, and can-do attitude - individuals who are helping to shape the transit experience and carry the industry forward.



Centro, The Salvation Army of Syracuse, and the Syracuse Mets Team Up to Stuff-A-Bus with School Supplies and Clothing for Area Children in Need



Centro, The Salvation Army of Syracuse, and the Syracuse Mets teamed up to "Stuff-A-Bus" with Back-to-School supplies and clothing items as part of a Christmas in July event at NBT Bank Stadium.

Fans were asked to bring a donation to help local students in need. The goal being to stuff an entire Centro bus with new items like backpacks, lunch boxes, T-shirts (sizes 2T and up), underwear, and socks. Helpers from The Salvation Army of Syracuse and Centro were stationed in front of the stadium by the 50th Anniversary Centro bus to collect donations from attendees before they headed into the stadium to enjoy the game.

"Not every child can afford new school supplies or clothing," said Centro's Director of Marketing & Communications, Lynette Paduano. "Centro is committed to helping local students receive the resources they need to succeed academically. Here at Centro, we value education. Getting these kids the supplies they need is important if we want them to succeed. Every little bit

counts. But we cannot do it alone, so we are asking for the community's help to collect these critical-need items."

"Our Stuff-A-Bus campaign provides local children in need with brand new school supplies and essential clothing items, so they are better prepared to kick off the school year in September," said Deanna Delmonico, PR/Donor Relations Manager for The Salvation Army of Syracuse. "The Salvation Army of Syracuse welcomes you to join us as we work together to create a positive, permanent impact on education in our community."

Thanks to the outpouring of generous donors who contributed to the Christmas in July Stuff-A-Bus event, we were able to fill the bus with school supplies and clothing items which were distributed to program areas throughout the Syracuse region.

In addition to collecting donations, Centro recruiters were on hand to promote openings at its Syracuse, Utica, Auburn, and Oswego locations, accept resumes, and talk with anyone interested in building a career with Centro. Two lucky Centro employees were also selected to throw out the first pitch!

Not only was it a fun day at the stadium, but Centro was also able to step up to the plate to do some good for our local community members.

Community Outreach

Over the past year, Centro worked closely with The Salvation Army of Syracuse on a number of community initiatives, including a Back-to-School Supply Drive, Stuff-A-Bus Toy Collection, Angel Tree Program for local children, Food Donation Drive, and the Christmas Bureau Distribution Shuttle. Each of these events were successful thanks in great part to the generosity of Centro's employees.





Earth Day 2022 Community Clean-Up

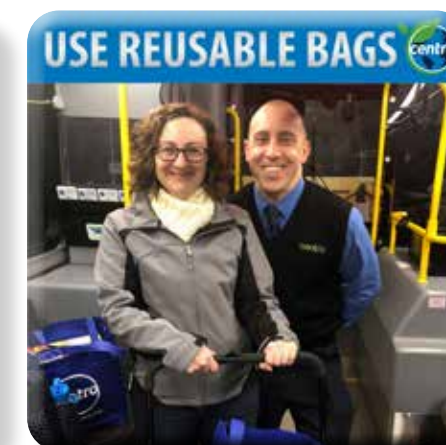
SUSTAINABILITY

On Saturday, April 23rd Centro hosted the annual Earth Day Clean Up event in Syracuse. About 50 Centro employees and their families, along with members of the Local 580 of the ATU teamed up with 15 other local businesses and not-for-profit organizations to clean up more than five miles of Syracuse's Southside. This volunteer initiative was the second year of what has become an annual tradition at Centro.

Volunteers, outfitted in their sustainability T-shirts and safety vests, picked up their grabbers and gloves and filled over 100 bags with trash collected in and around downtown Syracuse.

"Working together with other local organizations to help clean up the communities we live in, do business in, and raise our families in is both meaningful and important to the employees of Centro," said Centro Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Christopher Tuff. "It's a way to give back to the community and is something we are very proud to participate in each year as an organization."

In honor of Earth Day, Centro also shared some tips with its social media followers to help support the environment and encourage individuals to become Conservation Heroes.



- Tip #1: Plant a tree. Did you know that every year more than 18 million acres of forests are lost?
- Tip #2: Use reusable water bottles. According to environmental scientists, by 2050 there will be more plastic in our oceans than there are fish (by weight). As of 2021, our oceans contained approximately 363,762,732,605 pounds of plastic pollution.
- Tip #3: Make friends with a plant. Plants generate oxygen and absorb the CO2 that we emit.
- Tip #4: Use reusable bags. It takes 1,000 years for a plastic bag to degrade in a landfill.
- Tip #5: Volunteer. Help clean up shared spaces in your local community. Small steps create BIG impacts!



Centro Employees Step Up in a Big Way to Help Local Community

Every October since 1985, millions throughout the world get involved in Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a campaign that increases awareness of a disease that afflicts approximately 1 in 8 women in the United States.

This past October, Centro employees - many of whom have been affected by Breast Cancer personally or through a family-member - wore pink ribbons and bracelets to raise awareness against this horrific disease. Pink ribbons are an international symbol for breast cancer and wearing a pink ribbon (or bracelet) is an easy way to support the fighters, admire the survivors, honor the taken, and encourage those affected by the disease to never, ever give up hope.

In addition, Centro placed pink boxes in all its facilities to help collect items needed to assemble HOPE Kits - tangible expression of hope, filled with thoughtful items that provide patients with comfort and encouragement while undergoing breast cancer treatment. Centro employees stepped up in a BIG way, donating hundreds of items including blankets, pillows, socks, drink tumblers, tea, lotion, lip balm, journals & pens, inspirational bracelets, and activity books.

In November, the HOPE Kits and a check raised from employee donations were delivered to the Shades of

Inspiration organization where they will help bring some joy and comfort to the lives of many women in our community who are battling breast cancer.



"I'm very pleased to announce that together we raised funds to donate to this year's breast cancer awareness campaign, but I'm even prouder to say that we were able to provide much needed support to the Shades of Inspiration organization," said Centro's Director of Marketing & Communications, Lynette Paduano. "To say that they were appreciative would be an understatement. Not only did we help bring some joy and comfort to the lives of many women in our community who are battling breast cancer, we demonstrated what community is truly all about. And YOU were a part of making that happen!"



Centro employees also participated in a 2022 Holiday Happenings Campaign to support the needs of The Salvation Army Syracuse Area Services. On Friday, December 16th Centro delivered four large boxes of non-perishable food items to support The Salvation Army's Christmas Bureau program and local food pantries. In addition, holiday gifts for 20 local girls and boys were delivered as part of the Angel Tree program. The gifts were distributed to children in our local community who attended The Salvation Army Distribution Day event at the Oncenter on December 21st.



Centro also partnered with Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate to Stuff-a-Bus with toys at the Walmart in Clay. The toys collected were distributed to income-eligible families during The Salvation Army Syracuse Area Services Christmas Bureau Distribution Day event at the Oncenter. They brought lots of joy to children in our community this past Christmas.



On October 28th, Centro employees wore pink in support of Breast Cancer Awareness month as a show of solidarity to those battling the disease.

Big Rig Day Events Bring Plenty of Smiles



In 2022, Centro participated in two separate Big Rig Day events. The first was the City of Syracuse's annual Big Rig Day at Burnet Park in May. Children and adults alike were welcomed aboard the city's Police, Fire, Public Works, and Water Department vehicles where they could get behind the wheel and see what it would be like to drive a big rig! A Centro bus joined rigs from other local companies and organizations, and welcomed hundreds who stopped by to say hello, climb aboard the bus, and pick up a free coloring book and Centro sticker.

Admission to the event is free each year, and attendees can purchase refreshments from the on-site vendors.

The second event took place in June at the Dr. Edwin E. Weeks Elementary School in Syracuse. Nearly 800 Pre-K to 5th Grade students climbed aboard one of our Centro buses where they were greeted by our driver who let them explore and answered questions about how the bus works. Each student also received a complimentary Centro coloring book.

A big THANK YOU goes out to the City of Syracuse Parks Department and to the administration at Dr. Weeks Elementary School for allowing us to participate in these events and grow the next generation of bus riders.



Honor Flight – Mission 17

On the morning and evening of September 24, 2022, Centro provided shuttle service between the parking lots and the main terminal at Syracuse's Hancock Airport for veterans traveling aboard Honor Flight Mission 17 to Washington, DC to visit monuments honoring their service and sacrifice. The Mission honors the men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces at the height of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. In 2022, Honor Flight celebrated its 10th anniversary.

Juneteenth Festival Express Shuttle Service

On June 17, 2022, Centro took part in the annual Juneteenth Parade in Downtown Syracuse. The parade began at the Dunbar Center and finished at City Hall. Syracuse, which has played a significant role in the State of New York in achieving and maintaining freedom, equality, and opportunity for African Americans, was home to many early abolitionists and civil rights advocates.

Additionally, on Thursday, June 30, 2022, Centro provided free transportation to and from NBT Stadium for ticketholders attending the Juneteenth celebration game. The event, sponsored by Loretto and Nissan, included a special pre-game Juneteenth celebration ceremony on the field.



Utica Independence Day Parade

Centro provided free shuttle service from Mohawk Valley Community College to F.T. Proctor Park on July 4th for the Mohawk Valley Regional Independence Day Parade and Fireworks Celebrations. Shuttles ran consecutively until the celebration concluded.

GO Team Therapy Dogs

On Sunday, September 11, 2022, the Go Team Therapy Dogs came to Centro as part of their training. Go Team Therapy trains the dogs to provide comfort in a crisis, a hospital, an airport, on the bus, and anywhere else people could use love from a four-legged friend! Centro was honored to help them earn their vests!



College & Career Night

The students at Van Duyn Elementary - Syracuse were all smiles on Thursday, November 17, 2022, during College & Career Night! Approximately 80 students climbed aboard a Centro bus where they were greeted by the driver who gave them a complimentary Centro coloring book and sticker!

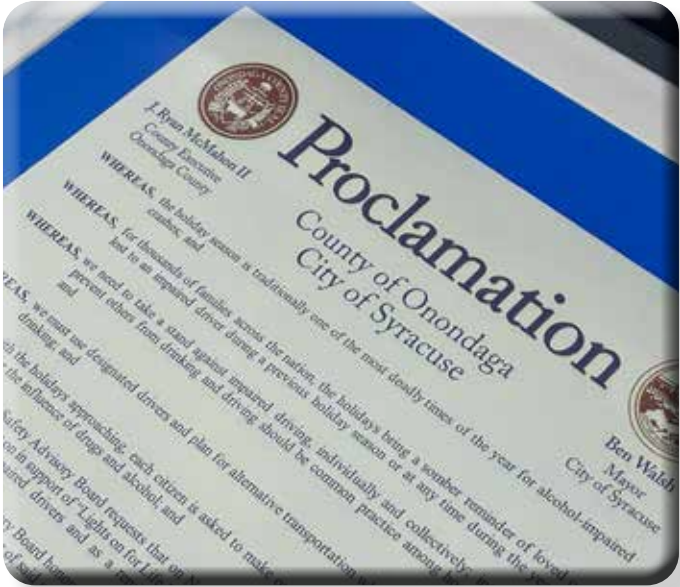
A big THANK YOU goes out to the administration at Van Duyn Elementary School for allowing Centro to participate in this event, and to all the students who spent part of their evening with us aboard a Centro bus!



39th Annual Lights on Caravan

On Saturday, November 19, 2022, Centro hosted and participated in the 39th Annual Donald H. Barrett Lights on Caravan. Sponsored by the Onondaga County Traffic Safety Advisory Board, members of local businesses, law enforcement, fire/ambulance departments, and municipalities drive their respective vehicles in a caravan, with their lights on, to draw attention to the dangers of impaired driving. The event is held to honor and remember the victims of drunk and drugged driving crashes and serves as a reminder to drivers of the dangers of driving while impaired.

Syracuse’s “Lights on Caravan” is the oldest and longest running caravan event in the country.



Syracuse Workforce Run

Centro employees joined other area organizations for some fitness fun during the 2022 Syracuse Workforce Run at Onondaga Lake Park. It is an annual 5K race where participants can choose to either walk or run along the mostly flat course. It is mostly corporate teams, but individuals also take part as well. A portion of the proceeds support a great local charity - the Rescue Mission Alliance of Syracuse.



St. Patrick's Day Parades

In what has become an annual tradition, Centro took to the streets in both the Syracuse and Utica St. Patrick's Day parades this past year. Decked out in festive apparel and accessories, Centro employees proudly walked alongside the iconic green buses. Thank you to everyone who came out to cheer us on!



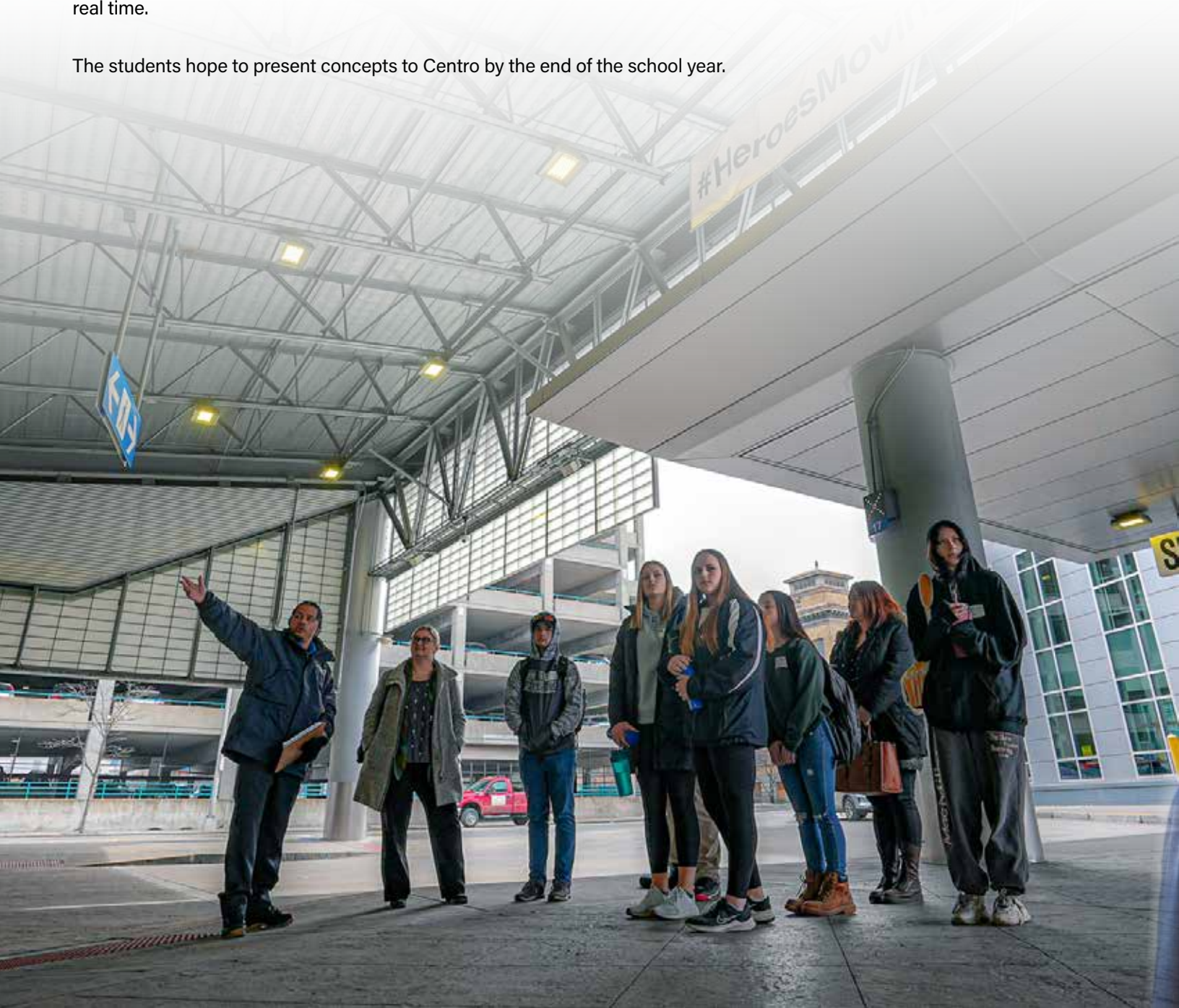
**RUNNING THE STREETS
SINCE 1972**

Local High School Students Help Design Bus Stops & Mobile Marketing Bus

Centro is partnering with local high school students on a couple of transportation research and design projects. Students from Chittenango High School's Research Writing class are working with Centro to design new solar bus stops and another project to transform a bus into a mobile information center which can be used to conduct interviews, hold public feedback sessions, or disseminate Centro service information.

Nine students from the class met with Centro leaders in March to learn more about the goals of each project and to begin putting their ideas on paper. The partnership helps both the students and the Authority. The high schoolers get a feel for what it is like to take part in real-world projects and Centro benefits from their hard work and design concepts. During their visit the students were also given a tour of Centro's facilities, sat in the driver's seat of a Centro bus, met with numerous department representatives across the Authority who talked to them about their role and responsibilities within the Authority, and took a trip down to the Syracuse Transit Hub to witness the bus lineups and transfer activity in real time.

The students hope to present concepts to Centro by the end of the school year.



BARRY M SHULMAN CONFERENCE CENTER

Barry M. Shulman Conference Center Dedication



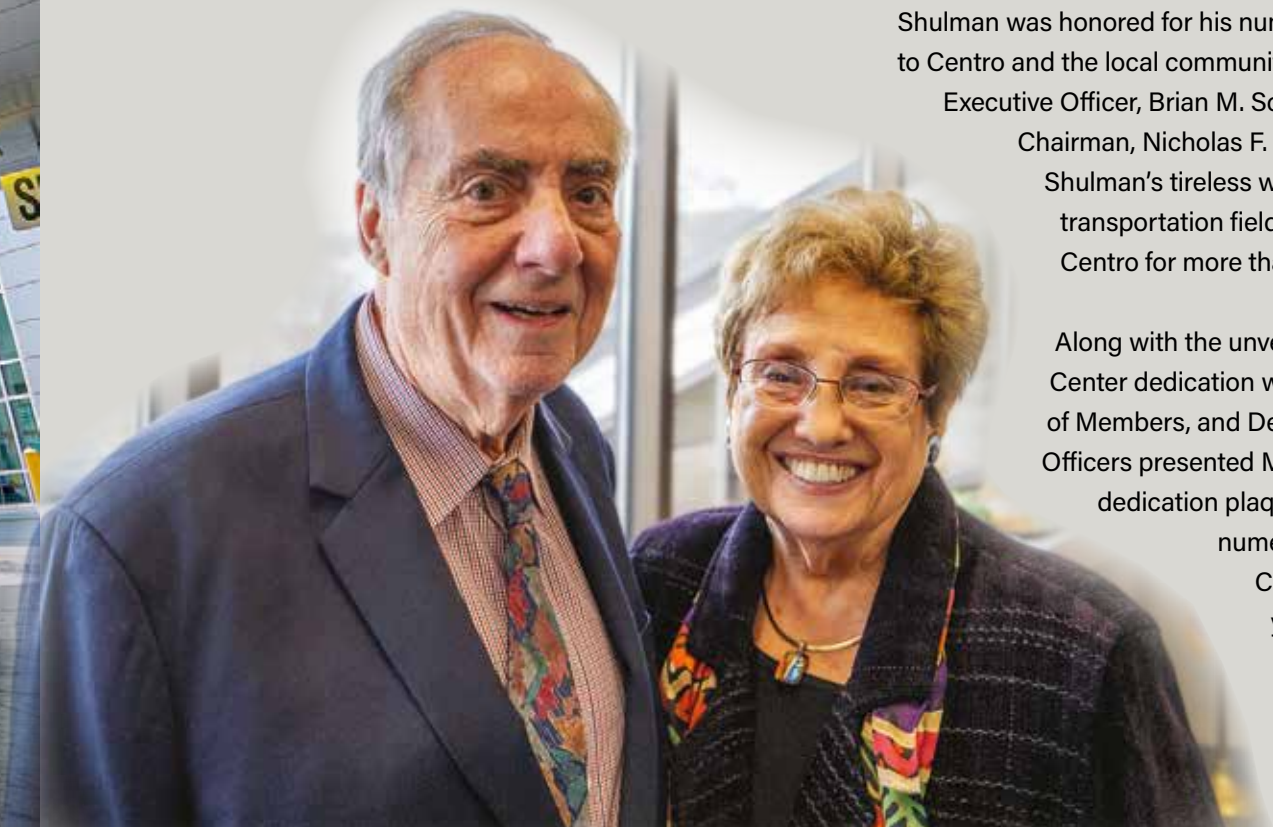
Pictured from (l-r) Rick Lee (former Centro Chief Executive Officer), John Renock (former Centro Chief Operating Officer), Brian Schultz (Centro Chief Executive Officer), Barry Shulman, Nick Laino (Centro Chairman of the Board), Frank Kobliski (former Centro Executive Director), and Steve Share (former Centro Chief Financial Officer).

Centro has renamed its boardroom the “Barry M. Shulman Conference Center” in honor of Shulman’s more than five decades as Counsel for the Authority, and his work shaping transportation in Central New York. Shulman has served as General or Associate Counsel for the Authority since its inception and wrote the legislation that created the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority and its many subsidiary corporations.

As Associate Counsel for the New York Senate Judiciary Committee, Mr. Shulman drafted numerous pieces of transportation related legislation, including, notably, the legislation enabling the creation of the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority and its many subsidiary corporations.

Surrounded by his family, current and former Centro employees, and the Centro Board of Members, Mr. Shulman was honored for his numerous accomplishments to Centro and the local community. Centro’s Chief Executive Officer, Brian M. Schultz and Board Chairman, Nicholas F. Laino spoke of Shulman’s tireless work ethic, expertise in the transportation field, and his commitment to Centro for more than 50 years.

Along with the unveiling of the Conference Center dedication wall, Centro’s Board of Members, and Deputy/Chief Executive Officers presented Mr. Shulman with a dedication plaque to thank him for his numerous contributions to Centro throughout the years.



Left: Barry Shulman and his wife Debrah Shulman, PhD.



Strategic Plan & Operational Initiatives

STRATEGIC PLAN & OPERATIONAL INITIATIVES

Strategic Plan

The CNYRTA's strategic plan is the road map for aligning opportunities, initiatives, and solutions with the CNYRTA mission and core values. The plan guides the CNYRTA in furthering its mission by embracing change and capitalizing on innovation and opportunity. The CNYRTA Strategic Planning Team routinely assesses all plan components, strategies, goals, and progress to ensure continued alignment with Centro's mission and community needs. The focus of the FY 2023-24 plan year includes the following interdependent strategies:

- Financial Sustainability: Proactive resource and financial management to ensure ongoing financial sustainability for current and future operating and capital projects.
- Service & Ridership: Improve service performance, design, and mobility offerings in line with community needs and an evolving transportation landscape.
- Community Partnership: Develop lasting and positive relationships with community stakeholders through participation in community groups, outreach programs, social media, and public forums.
- Workforce Engagement & Development: Recruit, retain, and support a strong and professional workforce through continued development, training, recognition, and engagement.
- Infrastructure Management: Proactive asset and technology management ensuring continued state of good repair while considering innovative and sustainable solutions to support future business demands. .



Financial Sustainability

The combination of Federal, State, Local and directly generated revenues used to support operations and capital costs of public transportation are inherently sensitive to economic and legislative factors. Therefore, proactive financial and resource management is essential in balancing the increasing costs of service operations, capital requirements and growth opportunities, with the uncertainties that exist in funding streams.

The finance department and executive team conduct ongoing financial planning exercises focused on continued financial stability, opportunities for resource efficiencies and consideration for future projects.

Financial Sustainability Goals Summary:

Stability: Improve financial stability against future funding fluctuations, unexpected expenses, and changes in the economy.

Proactive cash management activities in FY 2022-23 allowed the CNYRTA to both maintain necessary operating reserve accounts and create new reserves to offset future operating deficits and extraordinary expenditures. In addition, the CNYRTA was able to capitalize on favorable short-term investment options and increase rates of return on available investment funding.

For the current plan year, in addition to working with legislators and community partners to strengthen funding stability, the CNYRTA will continue to seek out and evaluate additional short-term investment options for feasibility and overall benefit to the organization

Efficiency: Continued assessment, review and implementation of improved controls and operational efficiencies maximizing the reach of available resources.

The Finance department continues the practice of analyzing, communicating, and presenting financial information throughout the organization to ensure executives, management and the Board of Directors have accurate, useful, and clear information. This practice supports operational decision making and efforts to identify and create additional efficiencies across all departments within the organization.

In addition to continuing research and development of financial information analysis, reporting, and communication across departments, the CNYRTA continues to conduct routine internal control evaluations in line with the Internal Control Review Plan to further identify new opportunities and solutions for improvements in operational efficiency.

Project Funding: Manage funding for the long-term to support changes in the transit industry and business needs.

As the future of public transportation focuses on new mobility offerings such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Bike Share, On-Demand Services, and zero-emissions bus technologies, planning for the related increase in necessary operational and capital funding requirements is critical.

Through organization wide capital planning procedures and working with a transportation consultant, the CNYRTA ensures the proper consideration for the necessary capital and ongoing operating funding is built into the planning process. The CNYRTA continues advocacy efforts for the funds to support this future growth and service offerings.

Service Design

Transit and mobility needs of the community are impacted by multiple social and economic factors such as gas price fluctuations, environmental consciousness, ride sharing options and changes in technology. To remain a responsible community

partner, the CNYRTA must be responsive to changes in community demand.

The service development department and executive team conducts ongoing service planning and evaluation exercises to ensure available resources are used to provide options that best align with current demand.

Service & Ridership Goals Summary:

Design for Demand: Design and operate transit services that best meet current and anticipated needs of the community including employers, educational institutions, medical facilities, recreational and consumer locations.

Despite a continued bus operator shortage keeping the overall service levels at roughly 70% of pre-pandemic levels in Onondaga County, service adjustments continue based on customer feedback and community need. In Spring of 2022, service to a new Amazon fulfillment center began and has generated significant ridership.

The results of these changes, a fare reduction, and the lessening impact of the pandemic has resulted in a more than 18% increase in non-contractual ridership on CNY Centro bus routes. Overall, ridership levels in each of the communities that CNYRTA serves has increased in the past 12 months by an average of 16%.

Although the shortage in manpower continues to impact service levels, the CNYRTA has a positive outlook on the ability to offer service enhancements moving forward. Aggressive recruiting efforts are underway to increase manpower to a level that will support system-wide service design enhancements and upcoming projects including:

- Using analytics to restore and increase frequency in high-demand routes
- Bus Rapid Transit – BRT
- Commuter & Reverse Commuter service
- Interstate 81 project considerations



Mobility: Ensure environmentally and fiscally responsible systems are in place allowing for optimal mobility and higher utilization of CNYRTA service offerings.

As the public transportation landscape expands, the CNYRTA continues to research additional mobility options that may compliment fixed route and paratransit services—including a Bike Sharing program within Onondaga County.

CNYRTA has reached an agreement with VEO Bike/ Scooter share to expand its existing service area beyond the Syracuse City limits into Onondaga County. Implementation of the expanded service is expected by Fall 2023. Specifically, the program will be expanded to Onondaga County’s Loop-the-Lake Trail near the New York State Fairgrounds, Erie Boulevard, and Onondaga Community College. The CNYRTA will work with VEO to assess if the Bike/Scooter program will be expanded beyond the above-mentioned locations.



Community Partnership

Public transportation services are a critical component for economic growth and development opportunities within the community. The CNYRTA strives to be a responsible

community partner in providing these services, improving service quality, and engaging with the community.

Goal Summary:

Community Participation: Remain an active, responsive, and responsible community partner.



In early 2023, the CNYRTA announced it would be reshaping its transit services. With the assistance of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council, the Exploring Tomorrow’s Transit project kicked off. This project began with a series of pop-up meetings within Syracuse and Onondaga County to gather information on public transit needs of the community. Community members were invited to take part in a transit survey that will be used to shape the Syracuse and Onondaga County system in future years. Several open houses and community meetings will follow in the spring and summer of 2023 to gain additional feedback and further discussion.

As part of the system reshaping, CNY Centro will move forward on a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Syracuse modeled after SMTC’s 2018 Smart1 study



outlining the most attractive corridors for a BRT service. This project will include, limited stop enhanced frequency service and the creation of enhanced bus stations, stops and specifically branded vehicles – with a target to begin service in 2026.

Additionally, the CNYRTA has hired a consultant to research and explore the concept of on-demand bus service for the City of Rome. This service would replace some of the outdated fixed routes that no longer generate ridership. The consultant will elicit community feedback and provide recommendations on this project.

Customer Experience: Improve the quality and seamlessness of the customer experience.

Centro offers its ridership an enhanced customer experience through technologies such as mobile Wi-Fi, a responsive website, an interactive mobile app, and social media presence, which significantly improve the ease of using public transportation services. The mobile app was recently updated to simplify and improve trip planning options.

To continue efforts of improving the customer experience, the CNYRTA is slated to roll out Mobile Ticketing technology for customer use during the 2023 calendar year.



Workforce Engagement

Ongoing workforce investment and engagement continues to be a primary goal of the CNYRTA. Without a professional, diverse, and engaged workforce, the CNYRTA would not be able to uphold its commitment to the community. The CNYRTA is committed to embracing a culture where employees are valued, provided with the tools necessary to succeed and can be confident in knowing what they do makes a difference.

Workforce Engagement Goals Summary:

Engagement: Prioritize employee recognition and appreciation of service, accomplishments & dedication to the community.

Since the implementation of the CNYRTA employee recognition and incentive program (Reaching Productivity Milestones – RPM) in April 2021, the CNYRTA has seen a measurable improvement in productivity. Through this program, employees are recognized for longevity, diverse skills, productivity, and their dedication to the communities they serve.

In addition to the employee engagement and appreciation efforts made within the RPM program, the CNYRTA also facilitated several employee engagement opportunities throughout the year including Earth Day clean up, St. Patrick’s Day parade march, Holiday food drive, Breast Cancer awareness month activities, Syracuse Workforce Run, and Centro day at the Syracuse Mets.

In the coming year, the CNYRTA will continue evaluation of the RPM program and both current and new opportunities for employee engagement events to ensure alignment with productivity goals and further progress in fostering a positive organizational culture focused on community.

Training: Foster adaptability and innovation by providing employees with the tools necessary to support success and high-quality service.

The CNYRTA recognizes the importance of having a skilled workforce to keep up with evolving technology and industry changes. In 2023, the CNYRTA redesigned and expanded its training department to support current and future operators, maintenance, and administrative employees.



With this recent department expansion and introduction of an electronic learning management system (NeoGov), the CNYRTA is now focused on further development and improvement of training department procedures and course offerings, including but not limited to:

- Required compliance & refresher training
- Mentoring programs
- Elective training & continuing education options
- Leadership and management training
- On-site expert and/or vendor training

Wellness: Increase organizational focus on employee occupational and overall wellness.

In FY 2022-23, the CNYRTA continued some of its historical wellness initiatives:

- On-site flu vaccine clinic
- On-site representative visits from various credit unions
- On-site representative visits from NYS Deferred Compensation
- Syracuse Workforce Run
- Produce Box delivery program through Onondaga County Health Dept.

As a new offering to employees, Centro partnered with the Onondaga County Health Department to offer several on-site seminars on various healthy habits including meal prepping, eating, sleep, mental health and managing stress.

Efforts will continue to enhance the variety and accessibility of company offered wellness initiatives and benefits. Current topics of research include on-site

wellness fairs, nutrition, physical fitness, and stress management.

Infrastructure Management

Emerging technologies are rapidly transforming the transportation industry. Modernization and improvement of infrastructure and technology solutions is an ongoing effort that will continue to improve operational efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Infrastructure Management Goal Summary:

Systems: Improve controls, security, and efficiencies of technology solutions.

With the increased reliance on technology in business, Cybersecurity continues to increase in importance. The CNYRTA has recently redesigned and expanded its Information Technology department to further support modernization of its Cybersecurity program and network design.

Enhancement of network systems and technology solutions is an ongoing effort. In addition to an increased focus on Cybersecurity, the CNYRTA is committed to creating new efficiencies in business processes through improvements in other major software solutions including Maintenance Connection, Trapeze, PDS Vista, and GenFare farebox technology. **Infrastructure:** Prepare for future infrastructure needs, balancing environmental and fiscal sustainability.



The CNYRTA is committed to a sustainable future, starting its commitment to a lower emissions fleet over 30 years ago by introducing compressed natural gas transit buses. As continued improvements in technology have made zero emissions vehicles a reality, the CNYRTA is in the process of researching the best path forward to a zero emissions fleet.

Consideration for funding future environmentally sustainable infrastructure needs is ongoing. Per the CNYRTA Sustainability Plan, considerations for sustainable options are made whenever possible both in daily operations and in capital and infrastructure decision making. Upcoming significant infrastructure projects include, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), a new Oneida County facility, and the transition to a zero emissions fleet.



Performance Measurements

In addition to monitoring progress on strategic initiatives, the CNYRTA uses the following measurements to evaluate service performance. Measurements are calculated on a consolidated and per company basis.

Management routinely reviews measurements against CNYRTA historical data to evaluate data trends. These measurements are reviewed and approved by the CNYRTA Board of Members annually.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

RIDERSHIP & SERVICE EFFICIENCY

Farebox Recovery	Passengers Per Revenue Hour
Subsidy Per Passenger	Operating Cost Per Revenue Vehicle Hour
Average Fare Per Passenger	Operating Cost Per Passenger

OPERATING PERFORMANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICE

Call-A-Bus Ride Denials	% Pull-Outs Met
Call-A-Bus Call Waiting Time	Complaints Per 1,000 Riders
% of Scheduled to Unscheduled Maintenance Costs	Mean Distance Between Service Interruptions

SAFETY

Non-Preventable Accidents Per 100K Miles	Preventable Accidents Per 100K Miles
--	--------------------------------------

Financial Plan & Budget Fiscal Year 2023-2024

FINANCIAL PLANNING

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET PROCESS

The CNYRTA uses a zero-based budget approach, starting at zero and building a budget based on need and cost versus a traditional incremental budget method. Zero-based budgeting can lower costs by avoiding blanket increases or decreases to a prior period's budget and forces the evaluation of costs and their relationship to the overall mission of CNYRTA. The budget process begins with a collaborative staff effort, evaluating departmental needs, and known factors, such as collective bargaining agreements, fuel lock-in, and other contractual commitments. Other elements that are considered are operational initiatives, such as revised transit services or necessary maintenance initiatives are also factored in. Several key operating and capital revenue sources are beyond the CNYRTA's direct control, namely transit operating assistance funding contained in the New York State budget, Federal formula and discretionary capital funding program, and the locally levied mortgage recording tax (MRT) dedicated to transit. Several important expense items are also, to a great degree, beyond the CNYRTA's direct control and present budgetary risks, such as health care costs, risk management and worker compensation insurance. The proposed budget is then evaluated comparing it to the current year's budget, current year fiscal year end projections, and prior year actuals, as well as other external economic factors and trends.

The draft proposed budget is reviewed with the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Team, assumptions regarding revenues, expenses, and possible operational initiatives are evaluated. The draft proposed budget is presented to the Board of Members for adoption in November. Once adopted, the proposed budget is entered into the Public Authorities Reporting and Information System (PARIS) by December 31 in compliance with Section 2801 of Public Authorities Law.



*Financial Certification of the
Chief Executive Officer*

THE AUTHORITY'S FINANCIAL PLAN
CONSISTS OF THREE ELEMENTS:

Planning & Policies

Operating Budget

Capital Budget

The CNYRTA staff continuously examines the proposed budget, identifying updates that may be necessary because of the Governor's Proposed Executive Budget (generally released mid-January) as well as any other revised assumptions, known occurrences, and changes in circumstances will be incorporated into the final budget. The Board of Members formally review changes made to the proposed budget and vote for adoption of the final budget in March. The adopted budget becomes part of the Final Budget and Financial Plan required under Comptroller Regulation Part 203, which is posted on the CNYRTA website by March 31.

FINANCIAL AND PLANNING CHALLENGES

As we continue to navigate the lingering effects of the pandemic, we’ve begun to adjust to what may be our new reality, with the continued optimism for revenue growth, return of ridership, and the ability to hire and retain staff.

The Authority began the fiscal year under a new simplified fare structure, standardizing fares for all Centro city services to \$1.00 per ride. The new structure reduced fares for most current customers and provides a more economic option for the members of the communities we serve. The intercity fare structure was also simplified. The addition of our new unlimited ride pass options has also been integrated into the new fare structure.

Over the past year, Centro’s ridership has increased on most bus routes, especially in Syracuse and Utica. Centro also seen increases in Centro’s New York State Fair and Lakeview Amphitheater services.

Although the Authority has made strides to increase ridership, revenues still under perform pre-pandemic levels. Operating Revenues continue to trend 28% under 2019-20 pre-pandemic levels, and although Mortgage Recording Tax Revenues have not been negatively affected by the pandemic, the revenue has begun to under-perform budgeted totals in some months for 2022-23 due to increased interest rates and some slowing in the real estate market.

In order to mitigate staffing challenges, the Authority has an aggressive recruitment program, however labor shortages continue to be a problem. Open positions amongst bus operators, operation supervisors, mechanics, cleaners, servicers, and certain administrative positions presents more challenges for the Authority’s operations.

Efforts to resume bus services in Syracuse that had been suspended due to a driver shortage continue. However, at this point, the Authority has not been

able to attract enough bus operators to make significant additions to its level of service.

The Authority has not been immune to the economic impacts of rising inflation rates. Increased cost for materials, supplies and services is something the Authority’s staff monitors closely.

Federal Relief funds administered by the FTA have offset the reduced revenues and funded increased expenses, allowing the Authority to sustain operations. However, because the lasting effects of the pandemic continue, the Authority will continue to rely heavily on these funds into the 2023-24 and 2024-25 budget years. Until ridership is restored to pre-pandemic levels, the Authority will be relying on reserves to close future budget deficits.



FINANCIAL POLICIES

Cash Management

The Authority’s cash management process and investment program are designed to maximize earnings, manage shortfalls, and ensure adequate cash is available to continue to fund Authority operations. Available cash balances are invested in accordance with the CNYRTA Investment Guidelines. The Authority and its subsidiaries’ investment policies are governed by New York State. Permitted investments are subject to various conditions and include bank certificates, certificates of deposit, and obligations of the State of New York or the United States government, certain repurchase agreements and permitted bonds and notes.

Reserves

A general fund balance, which the Authority had previously established, is a mechanism to buffer any year’s budget against such inherent budgetary risks, protecting both service and fares from sudden adverse changes in revenue streams or expenses. With Board approval, Authority funds are transferred to reserves as needed to mitigate risk. Board Designated Reserves have been established by the Authority for certain large cost items such as, health care, auto and general liability insurance, capital replacements, and paratransit service, which by their nature have large financial impacts on the organization from year to year.

Investment Management

The Authority invests in government securities and these investments are recorded at their fair value based on quoted market prices and valuations provided by external parties. Unrealized gains or losses on such investments result from differences between the cost and fair value of investments on a specified valuation date. Gains and losses in the fair value are reported in the statements of revenue, expenses, and changes in net position. Investment income is recognized on the accrual basis; dividends are recorded on the ex-dividend date.

Independent Audit

On an annual basis, the Authority engages the services of an independent certified public accounting firm to conduct an independent audit and report for its end of fiscal year financial statements. The Audit & Finance committee recommends the selection of the independent auditor(s) to the full Board of Members and is responsible for oversight of the independent auditor.

Debt Management

There is no limit on the Authority’s legal ability to issue debt, but it has never issued bonds in its 50-year history.



FUNDING PROFILE - OPERATING

Unsubsidized Locally Generated Revenue

Regular Line Passenger Revenues include farebox revenues, sales of fare media, revenues accrued through a Purchased Transportation agreement, and NYS Fair Park and Ride revenues.

Special Line Revenues include revenues from contracted service to local city schools, colleges, shopping centers, and NYS Fair.

Advertising and Other Revenue include revenues generated through Transit Advertising on buses and shelters, Parking Revenue, and Regional Transportation Center Tenant Lease Revenues as well as parking revenue.

Governmental Subsidized Revenue

Federal Sources of Funds for Operating Costs

Section 5307 - CNYRTA has become reliant on the federally funded operating assistance through Capital Grant Program 5307. These funds are to aid with allowable preventive maintenance cost on buses and facilities for CNY Centro, Inc. In addition to the preventive maintenance operating assistance, CNYRTA receives specific Federal operating assistance only available to non-urban and small-urban areas through Program 5307 for Centro of Oneida, and Program 5311 for Oswego, Cayuga, and Oneida Counties, and the Tully service in Onondaga County.

State Sources of Funds for Operating Cost

Statewide Mass Transit Operating Assistance (STOA) - The majority of CNYRTA's operating assistance is funded by New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) under its Statewide Mass Transportation Operating Assistance program. The funding level of the STOA program is determined by the Commissioners, the Director, New York State Division of Budget (NYSDOB) and/or the State Legislature annually, with increases and/or decreases published in the New York State Executive Budget. The New York State Executive budget deadline is April 1st annually. Due to the unpredictability of future funding levels, it is CNYRTA's budget practice to budget STOA flat annually until a final budget is provided by the New York State Division of Budget.

Local Sources of Funds for Operating Cost

Local 18b Match to STOA - In addition to the operating assistance received by NYSDOT, CNYRTA is in receipt of state mandated 18b STOA match by participating counties. Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego, and Oneida counties participate in the 18b match program. The assistance level of this state mandate has gone unchanged since 2006.

Local Voluntary Funds - CNYRTA is also in receipt of voluntary aid from municipalities (about \$15,000 annually).



Dedicated Funding

Mortgage Recording Tax (MRT) - In the counties which participate in the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (currently Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego, and Oneida), a mortgage recording fee of ¼ of 1% (with a small exemption for single- and two-family residences) is levied and payable by the mortgagee to the recording officer of the county in which the mortgaged property is located. Under State Finance law, this is known as the “additional” mortgage tax. It is remitted to the CNYRTA monthly by the respective counties.

The Mortgage Recording Tax (MRT), in particular, is highly unpredictable and can vary from year to year depending on national and local economic conditions, the regional housing market and values, business mortgage activity, mortgage interest rates (highly influenced by federal monetary policy), and the activities of local Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs) in issuing mortgage financing which was unilaterally exempted from the mortgage recording tax up until recently when legislation was enacted prohibiting exemption of MRT.

The revenue is used for the local matching share of capital grants (generally 10% of project cost), to establish necessary insurance, capital, and general fund reserves, to pay off debt (currently CNYRTA has no debt), for other expenses, and although not specifically required by law, to subsidize any operating deficits of the bus operating subsidiaries, which is largely where the MRT has been directed in recent years. The amount of revenue received can be, has been, and is volatile and unpredictable from year to year. While New York State is the only state that uses this type of tax as a transit-funding source, it is the only transit funding dedicated at the local level and is crucial to the CNYRTA's overall financial health.



Engine Shop Foreman, First Class Mechanic, Mike Hyde (left) and Engine Shop First Class Mechanic, Ed Deaver (right) work on a transmission assembly during a Voith OE (original equipment) training session.

Opposite: New York Public Transit Association members (including Centro CEO, Brian M. Schultz and Deputy CEO, Christopher Tuff) met with New York State Senator and Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Tim Kennedy to discuss the upcoming budget during Transit Awareness Day at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) in Albany.

2023-24 OPERATING BUDGET OVERVIEW

The Authority is pleased to present a balanced operating budget for 2023-24, which includes the new fare structure launched in March 2022 and considers the continued lasting effects of the pandemic, raising inflation rates and new challenges brought on by the ever-changing economic environment.

The total revenue required to support operations is \$90.7 million, representing a 7% increase over the prior year’s budget. The estimated revenues needed to sustain budgeted expenses are comprised of \$13.1 million from unsubsidized locally generated revenues, \$68.7 million from governmental subsidized revenues, and \$8.9 million from mortgage tax and other revenues.

The total estimated operating expenses for 2023-24 are \$90.7 million, representing a 7% increase over the prior year’s budget. Within the total, personnel costs are \$66.7 million, an increase of \$3.7 million from prior year’s budget. Non-personnel costs are budgeted at \$23.9 million, an increase of \$2.1 million from the prior year budget plan.

A full in-depth explanation of the key components that affect the Authority’s revenues and expenses follows. A comparison of the 2023-24 Operating Budget versus the prior year is provided on the following pages.



CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY 2023-24 OPERATING BUDGET COMPARISON

(\$ Thousands)

	2023-24 PROPOSED BUDGET	2023-24 BUDGET	CHANGE	% CHANGE
Revenue				
Unsubsidized Locally Generated Revenue	\$13,356	\$13,159	\$735	-1%
Governmental Subsidized Revenue	65,645	68,653	3,008	5%
Mortgage Tax and Other Revenue	8,850	8,850	0	0%
Total Revenue	87,851	90,662	3,743	3%
Expenses				
Personnel	64,340	66,721	2,381	4%
Non-Personnel	23,511	23,941	430	2%
Total Expenses	87,851	90,662	2,811	3%
Operating Income (Loss)	\$0	\$0		

CONSOLIDATED 2023-24 OPERATING BUDGET

(\$ Thousands)

	2021-22 ACTUALS	2022-23 PROJECTION	2022-23 BUDGET	2023-24 BUDGET	CHANGE 2022-23 PROJECTION	CHANGE 2022-23 BUDGET	% BUDGET CHANGE
Operating Revenue							
Regular Line Passenger Revenue	\$3,773	\$3,332	\$3,879	\$3,610	\$278	(\$269)	-7%
Special Line Passenger Revenue	6,441	6,823	6,848	7,392	569	544	8%
Advertising & Other Revenue	1,836	2,085	1,894	2,157	72	263	14%
Total Operating Revenue	12,050	12,240	12,621	13,159	919	538	4%
Expenses							
Salaries & Wages	31,449	33,495	35,485	39,111	5,616	3,626	10%
Other Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes	3,247	3,562	3,811	4,152	590	341	9%
Healthcare Benefits	13,312	11,165	15,829	14,793	3,628	(1,036)	-7%
Workers Compensation	3,964	3,105	3,960	3,338	233	(622)	-16%
Pension Benefits	3,739	5,175	3,863	5,327	152	1,464	38%
Risk Management	2,375	2,765	2,996	3,294	529	298	10%
Purchased Transportation	3,277	4,195	3,468	4,598	403	1,130	33%
Materials & Supplies	4,189	4,459	4,960	4,871	412	(89)	-2%
Services	5,330	5,582	7,620	7,715	2,133	95	1%
Fuel	1,319	1,967	1,717	2,325	358	608	35%
Utilities	663	707	677	762	55	85	13%
Other Expenses	237	261	312	376	115	64	21%
Total Operating Expenses	73,101	76,438	84,698	90,662	14,224	5,964	7%
Non-Operating Revenue							
Federal Assistance	18,616	15,520	16,337	15,945	425	(392)	-2%
State Assistance	37,525	43,967	43,967	49,515	5,548	5,548	13%
Local Assistance	3,193	3,193	3,193	3,193	0	0	0%
Mortgage Tax Revenue	11,165	9,277	8,530	8,800	(477)	270	3%
Gain/Loss on Disposal of Capital	(77)	48	50	50	2	0	0%
Total Assistance and Other Revenue	70,422	72,005	72,077	77,503	5,498	5,426	8%
Operating Income (Loss)	\$9,371	\$7,807	\$0	\$0	(\$7,807)		

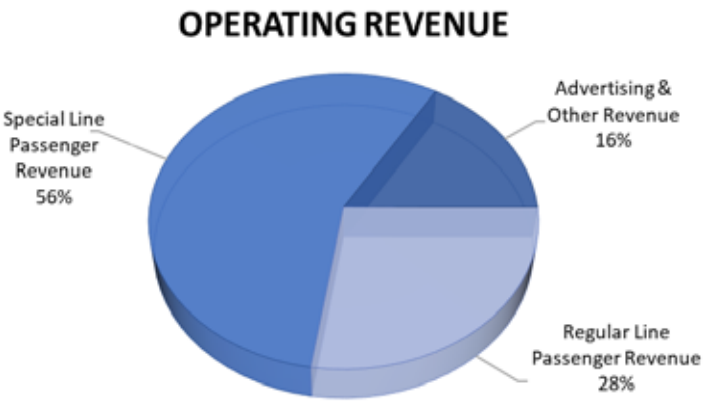


Excited students show off their Centro stickers during the annual Dr. Week’s Elementary School Big Rig Day and cook-out. 63

Revenue Assumptions
Operating Revenue

Regular Line Passenger Revenue

The budgeted regular line passenger revenue for 2023-24 is \$3.6 million, representing a 7% reduction from the prior year budget plan. Regular line passenger revenue is driven primarily by fares and the sale of various fare media offered to our riders depending on their needs. Recent fare structure changes have been considered as well as the continued ridership impacts caused by the lasting effects of the pandemic. The Authority expects ridership to continue to return over the next year, however it does not anticipate ridership will return to pre-pandemic levels. The 2023-24 regular line passenger revenue budget considers the revenue associated with the Great New York State Fair, and anticipated attendance trending closer to pre-pandemic levels.



Special Line Revenue

The Authority’s revenue generated by subsidy agreements with community partners is budgeted at \$7.3 million for 2023-24, representing an increase of 8% from the prior year budget plan. These figures consider the service request of our community partners as well as contractual rate increases. The 2023-24 special line passenger revenue budget considers the revenue associated with the Great New York State Fair, and anticipated needs to service the shuttle lots effectively.

Advertising & Other Revenue

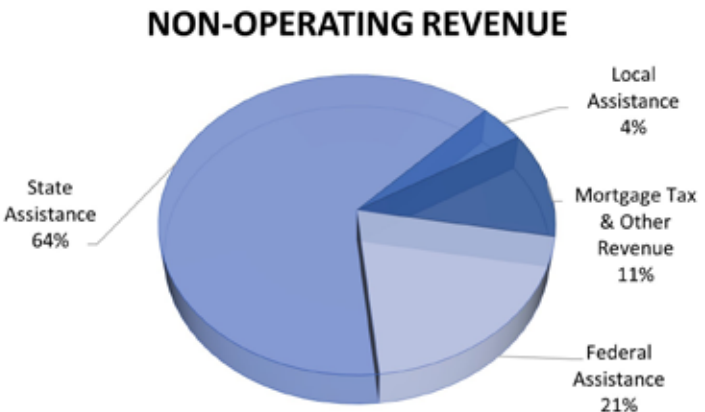
The advertising and other revenue for 2023-24 is \$2.2 million, representing an increase of 14% from the prior year budget plan. Budgeted increases are associated with guaranteed minimums for transit advertising revenues and improved projections associated with parking revenues at both the Regional Transportation Center and at the route 81 parking lot, and nominal tenant rent increases.



Non-Operating Revenue

Federal Assistance

Federal Assistance for 2023-24 is budgeted at \$15.9 million, representing a decrease of \$425 thousand over the prior year budget plan. The Emergency COVID Relief funds administered by the FTA have continued to play an integral role in the Authority’s ability to present a balanced budget. Federal CMAQ funds are also included in the 2023-24 budget which will support the Authority’s plans for expansion of service.



State Assistance

The State Assistance budgeted for 2023-24 is \$49.5 million. The budget assumes a 12.6% increase to New York State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA), as stated in the Governor’s Executive Budget.

Local Assistance

The Local Assistance budgeted for 2023-24 is \$3.2 million. The budget assumes that local assistance funding levels will remain flat.

Mortgage Recording Tax Revenue

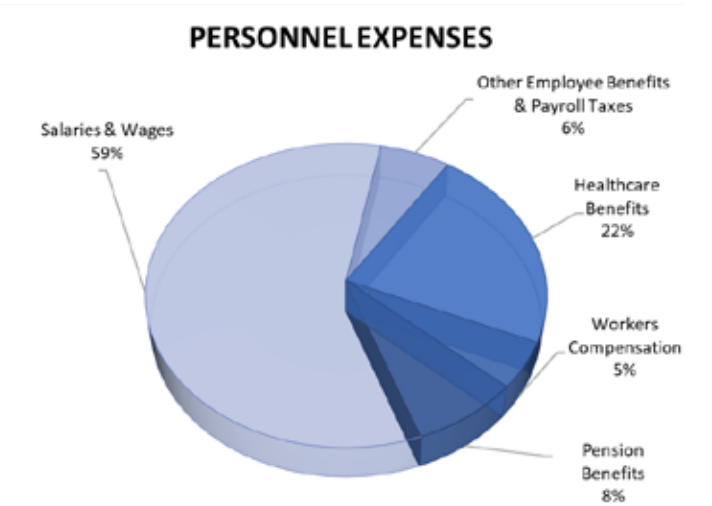
Mortgage Recording Tax (MRT) revenue is anticipated to be \$8.8 million, representing an increase of \$270 thousand over the prior year budget plan. The budget considers the recent decline in MRT revenue resulting from interest rate increases, which has caused some slowing in the real estate market. However, the Authority anticipates that commercial real estate transactions will continue to favorably impact MRT revenue. The NYS Tax Law effective July 1, 2017 that prohibits the exemption of the additional mortgage recording tax for IDAs applied to all four counties the Authority services, continues to be a contributing factor to the increases in MRT revenue.



Centro staff and their families showing their green ahead of the Syracuse St. Patrick’s Parade.

EXPENSE ASSUMPTIONS

PERSONNEL EXPENSES



Salaries and Wages

The budgeted salaries and wages expense for 2023-24 is \$39.1 million, representing an increase of 10% from the prior year budget plan. The budget considers organizational changes, the Authority's employee incentive program, the union wage increases, NYS State Fair service, annual COLA increases, as well as all departments being fully staffed and operational in 2023-24.

Other Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes

Other employee benefits and payroll taxes are largely impacted by the number of employees employed by the Authority during the fiscal year. The proposed budget assumes all departments being fully staffed and operational. The budgeted expense for other employee benefits and payroll taxes for 2023-24 is \$4.2 million, representing an increase of 9% from the prior year budget plan.

Healthcare Benefits

The Authority's healthcare benefit budget for 2023-24 is \$14.8 million, representing a decrease of 7% from the prior year budget plan. The healthcare budget considers all known impacts, to include healthcare plan premium updates, prescription drug cost, dental coverage, and insured participants that effect medical stoploss coverage.



Above: Director of Fleet Technology, John Boylan (36 years) along with Working Foreman, Anthony "Tony" Battilana (21 years) bid farewell to the shop as they begin their retirements.

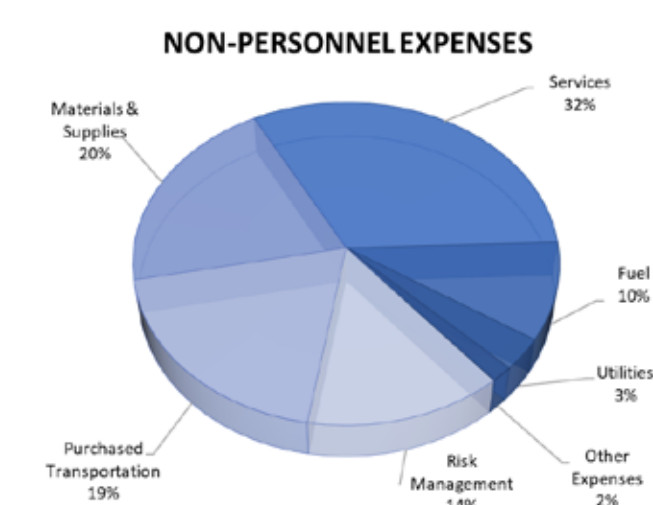
Workers Compensation

The budgeted Workers Compensation expenses for 2023-24 is \$3.3 million, representing a decrease of 16% from the prior year budget plan. The Authority's staff and risk managers continue to rigorously manage claims, promote safety in the workplace, and manage a successful light and modified duty program, which has resulted in a decrease in the number of open workers compensation claims. The Authority is optimistic that continued efforts will continue this steady decline in the number of open claims.

Pension Benefits

The budgeted pension benefit expenses for 2023-24 is \$5.3 million, representing an increase of 38% from the prior year budget plan. The Authority sponsors four benefit plans, providing pension benefits for various groups of employees among its subsidiary companies. The budget takes into consideration the rules of each plan, all departments being fully staffed, and the Authority's annual actuarial recommendation for maximum contributions to ensure all plans are appropriately funded, and market performance.

NON-PERSONNEL EXPENSES



Risk Management

The budgeted risk management expenses for 2023-24 is \$3.3 million, representing an increase of 10% from the prior year budget plan. The 2023-24 budget assumes that the Authority will continue to see significant increases in liability insurance premiums, which is consistent with industry cost increases.

Purchased Transportation

The Authority contracts third party vendors to assist with our paratransit program; they provide transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to ride our fixed route transit buses. The budgeted purchased transportation expense for 2023-24 is \$4.6 million, representing an increase of 33% from the prior year budget plan. Ridership associated with our paratransit service is returning at a faster pace than our fixed route service. Currently, purchase transportation vendors are operating approximately 72% of service requested.

Materials & Supplies

Materials and supplies include bus parts, fluids, lubricants, supplies to maintain the facilities, cleaning supplies, as well as the materials and supplies needed to support the operations for the New York State Fair service. The Authority's 2023-24 budget for materials

and supplies is \$4.9 million, representing a 2% decrease from the prior year budget plan. The budget considers the current supply need, the rate of inflation, regularly purchased supplies, computer equipment, and the current economic impacts with supply shortages and shipping delays.

Services

Services include expenses relating to contracted and one-time service requests. Contracted services include legal, audit, pension, marketing, maintenance services for various building systems, vehicles, software, custodial and security services. The budgeted services expense for 2023-24 is \$7.7 million, representing a 1% increase from the prior year budget plan. The 2023-24 budget includes regularly requested services, professional services, to include transportation consultant services, and a marketing budget that includes campaigns that highlight service expansion, and an aggressive recruitment program.

Fuel

The Authority's fleet is comprised of vehicles that operate using Gasoline, Diesel, and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). The budget is based on historical usage and anticipated future pricing. Fuel costs are budgeted at \$2.3 million for 2023-24, representing an increase of 35% from the prior year budget plan. The budget considers current economic impacts with increased fuel cost. The Authority estimates that the Alternative Fuel Credit will offset rising fuel cost by approximately \$425 thousand in CNG Fuel expense in 2023-24.

Utilities and Other Expenses

Utilities and Other expenses are budgeted at \$1.1 million, representing an increase of 17% from the prior year budget plan. The budget assumes utility rate increases, and Authority travel to return to a normal level.

PERSONNEL PROJECTIONS

Labor Classifications	Projected 2022-23		2023-24 Budget*	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Vehicle Operators	255	102	280	99
Vehicle Operations	55	6	65	9
Vehicle Maintenance	96	1	100	1
Facility Maintenance	16	3	18	1
General Administration	63	2	65	2
Total Employees:	485	114	528	112

All above employees are funded from the operating budgets of the Authority and its subsidiary operating companies, which means that wages are funded with a combination of fees charged for mass transit services, miscellaneous income, Federal, State, Local Transit Operating Assistance, and Authority funds. The above totals include all employees of the Authority and each of its subsidiary public benefit corporations.

*Added an additional 10 full-time bus operators due to planning for BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) and OnDemand service in 2023-24.



OPERATING BUDGET PROJECTIONS

Sound fiscal management and public authority regulations require the development of multi-year budget projections to alert the Authority’s Board of Members, customers, and Federal and State members of future challenges and opportunities that may affect the Authority’s ability to meet its mission and vision. The Authority updates fiscal projections with consideration to economic impacts and changes in the necessary funding levels of critical governmental subsidies.

It is critical to understand the uncertainties inherent in any projections. The Multi-Year Operating Budget Projections take into consideration anticipated expense increases, known factors regarding estimated revenue, historical trends and educated predictions. The Authority continues to rely on Emergency COVID Relief funds in the 2023-24 budget year to combat budget deficits. Subsequent budget deficits will be funded using reserves with the hope that operating revenues return to the pre-pandemic level, and state operating assistance will continue to increase.

MULTI-YEAR OPERATING BUDGET PROJECTIONS

(\$ Thousands)

	2023-24 BUDGET	2024-25 BUDGET	2025-26 BUDGET	2026-27 BUDGET
Operating Revenue				
Regular Line Passenger Revenue	\$3,610	\$3,791	\$3,980	\$4,179
Special Line Passenger Revenue	7,392	7,540	7,691	7,844
Advertising & Other Revenue	2,157	2,205	2,249	2,294
Total Operating Revenue	13,159	13,535	13,920	14,317
Expenses				
Salaries & Wages	39,111	40,675	42,302	43,995
Other Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes	4,152	4,318	4,491	4,670
Healthcare Benefits	14,793	15,829	16,937	18,122
Workers Compensation	3,338	3,505	3,680	3,864
Pension Benefits	5,327	5,540	5,762	5,992
Risk Management	3,294	3,623	3,986	4,384
Purchased Transportation	4,598	4,874	5,166	5,476
Materials & Supplies	4,871	5,115	5,370	5,639
Services	7,715	8,101	8,506	8,931
Fuel	2,325	2,418	2,515	3,015
Utilities	762	808	856	908
Other Expenses	376	391	406	423
Total Operating Expenses	90,662	95,196	99,977	105,419
Non-Operating Revenue				
Federal Assistance	15,945	19,370	11,360	8,604
State Assistance	49,515	50,248	50,385	50,152
Local Assistance	3,193	3,193	3,193	3,193
Mortgage Tax Revenue	8,800	8,800	8,800	8,800
Gain/Loss on Disposal of Capital	50	50	50	50
Total Assistance and Other Revenue	77,503	81,661	73,788	70,799
Operating Income (Loss) Before Reserves	\$0	(\$0)	(\$12,269)	(\$20,303)
Use of Operating Reserves	0	0	12,269	20,303
Operating Income (Loss)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FUNDING PROFILE - CAPITAL

The CNYRTA takes full advantage of capital grant programs from both federal and state sources; primarily those provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). The current capital programs available to CNYRTA are as follows:

Federal Programs

Section 5307 (The Urbanized Area Formula Funding Program) of Federal Transportation Law, which makes Federal resources available to urbanized areas and to Governors for transit capital, operating assistance, and for transportation related planning in urbanized areas. The Governor or Governor’s designee is the designated recipient for urbanized areas with a population between 50,000 and 200,000.

Federal Transportation Law offers a flexible funding program to transit related activities for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. Eligible activities under CMAQ* include transit system expansion and improvements that are projected to realize an increase in ridership; travel demand management strategies and shared ride services; pedestrian and bicycle facilities and promotional activities that encourage bicycle commuting.

Federal Transportation Law offers a flexible funding program to transit related activities for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. Eligible activities under CMAQ* include transit system expansion and improvements that are projected to realize an increase in ridership; travel demand management strategies and shared ride services; pedestrian and bicycle facilities and promotional activities that encourage bicycle commuting.

Section 5339 (The Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program) of Federal Transportation Law, which makes Federal resources available to State and designated recipients to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment, construct bus-related facilities including technological changes or innovation to modify low or no emission vehicles or facilities.

Section 5311 (The Rural Area Formula Funding Program) of Federal Transportation Law, which makes Federal resources available, providing capital funds to States to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000. CNYRTA receives these funds administered by NYSDOT for Centro of Oswego and Centro of Cayuga.



NYS Senator John Mannion toured Centro’s maintenance facilities and spoke with mechanics, members of the Operations Department and administrative staff.

FTA, Federal Grant Programs fund 80% of project costs, while NYSDOT funds 10%, leaving the CNYRTA with a 10% match.

*FTA, Federal Flexible Funding Program funds 80% of the project cost, while CNYRTA funds 20% of the project cost.

State Programs

State Dedicated Funds (SDF) provides State resources for the improvement of transit systems to include the replacement of buses, facilities and garage modernization, transit related equipment (bus washers, service vehicles) and other federally eligible projects.

Accelerated Transit Capital Funds (ATC) provides State resources to upstate public transportation sponsors for capital projects that, in combination, have a minimum service life of no less than ten (10) years. Eligible projects must meet the minimum service life threshold and be considered as an FTA activity, including vehicle rehabilitation and/or replacement, fleet enhancement, deployment of modern technologies, passenger amenities and maintenance facilities.

Modernization and Enhancement Program (MEP) supplies State resources to capital projects, that in combination, have a minimum service of no less than ten (10) years. Eligible activities include any FTA activity, meeting the minimum service life threshold, including vehicle rehabilitation and/or replacement, fleet enhancement, deployment of innovative technologies and passenger amenities and maintenance facilities.

State Grant Programs fund 100% of the project costs.



Capital Budget Overview

The Authority's Capital Improvement Plan is a compilation of proposed capital investment needs to support and improve the infrastructure and operations of the Authority. Key components of the Capital Improvement Plan are to support and improve the Authority's vehicles, facilities, equipment, and service; thereby allowing the Authority and its subsidiary operations the ability to strive for financial stability, improved service, customer experience, and increased ridership, while modernizing infrastructure and technology.

The Capital Improvement Plan is fiscally limited by the available funding sources. Management decisions about the priority of capital improvements take into consideration the level of Federal and State capital funding that is allocated to the Authority. In limited instances capital improvements are funded 100% locally.

Planned asset replacement allows management to identify capital funding needs, while keeping operating cost predictable, maintain the reliability of service, increase energy efficiencies, and ensuring the safety of our customers and employees.

The CNYRTA plans to complete the following capital projects in fiscal year 2023-24. The projects listed are highlights of the complete Capital Improvement Plan, which are funded with a mix of Federal, State and Local funds.

- Renovation of Syracuse Driver Area
- Replacement of the Back-up Generators for Auburn and Oswego Garages
- Upgrades to the GFI Mobile Ticketing System
- Replacement of the Tank Tops for our Underground Fuel Storage Tanks
- Garage Dust Removal & Ceiling Painting Project



MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROJECTIONS

(\$ Thousands)

Authority Fiscal Year -->	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection
Onondaga County Projects:					
Bus Signage	\$ 100	\$ 500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Bus Support Equipment/Facilities Rehal	-	1,500			
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) & Engineering	5,000	-	10,000	15,000	-
Computer Hardware	215	222	200	200	200
Computer Software	425	125	125	125	125
Engineering Services	200	-	200	-	200
Equipment	231	-	-	-	-
Facility Upgrades	3,955	480	3,000	-	-
Fare Collection System Replacement	4,009				
Service Vehicles	110	-	70	190	170
Support Vehicles	90	-	-	-	170
Rolling Stock - Fixed Route Buses	2,015	38,945	-		7,000
Rolling Stock - On-Demand Vehicles	1,480	-	-	-	-
Rolling Stock - Paratransit Buses	320	1,540	1,540	-	1,015
Total Capital Project Cost	\$ 18,150	\$ 43,312	\$ 15,135	\$ 15,515	\$ 8,880
Oneida County Projects:					
Computer Hardware	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment	145		-	-	-
Facility Upgrades	2,292			-	15,000
Rolling Stock - Fixed Route Buses	-	11,172	-	-	-
Rolling Stock - Paratransit Buses	440	-	-	-	-
Support Vehicles		-	90	-	180
Total Capital Project Cost	\$ 2,877	\$ 11,177	\$ 5,090	\$ -	\$ 15,180
Grand Total Capital Project Cost	\$ 21,027	\$ 54,489	\$ 20,225	\$ 15,515	\$ 24,060

Projected capital grant funding from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act has allowed the Authority to program significant future capital projects. Examples of these projects:

- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on the James St. to South Ave. to Onondaga Community College corridor
- BRT Syracuse University to the Regional Transportation Center corridor
- Solar panel installation to produce green electricity to support our facilities.
- Transition of fixed route fleet from diesel and CNG fueled vehicles to clean Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric propulsion, meeting NYS requirements by 2036.
- Construct a new consolidated garage and office facility for Centro of Oneida



This publication is dedicated to the life and legacy of Centro Inside Supervisor Terry McGriff. His helpful wisdom, strength of character, and friendly demeanor will be remembered and sorely missed.



THANKS FOR RIDING



www.centro.org



#GoCentroBus

www.centro.org | (315) 442-3400

200 Cortland Ave, PO Box 820, Syracuse, NY 13205-0820