



CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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Election 2006, Transit Hopes

Nation-wide, several transit initiatives were passed by voters this November.

* Salt Lake City voters approved, by 64 percent, Proposition 3, raising the sales tax by a quarter-cent to pay for rail expansion and road projects.

* Minnesota voters approved an amendment to the state constitution that requires the state government spend more money on roads and public transit by assigning all money collected from the sales tax on motor vehicles to transportation - a move that's expected to funnel an extra \$300 million a year into transportation projects, including not less than 40% of revenues for transit.

* In Grapevine (Ft. Worth, Texas area) 73% of voters approved Proposition 1, a one-half-percent sales tax for economic development, which was largely focused on bringing regional passenger rail ("commuter rail") from Ft. Worth to Grapevine.

In the WNY region there were no propositions on the ballot specifically related to public transit. However, several elected officials have been heard speaking publicly in favor of expanding Metro Rail.

Assemblyman Sam Hoyt is on record to push for taking the line out to the North Campus of UB (per the original plan). Congressman Brian Higgins seconds the motion.

State Senator-elect Antoine Thompson is a long-time supporter of the proposed extension to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport. Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples seconds the motion.

Here's hoping governor-elect Spitzer is listening!

Citizens for Regional Transit Monthly Meeting

3330 Main Street, corner NF Blvd., Buffalo

November 21, 2006
12:00-1:30 PM

"Rail-Volution 2006"

Gladys Gifford, CRTC President, reports on her experiences
at Rail-Volution 2006, Chicago, Illinois, Nov. 5-8

Citizens for Regional Transit meets in
University Presbyterian Church education wing,
across from the University Station of Metro Rail.
Enter through the parking lot door, take elevator to "ML."

**CRTC meetings are free and open to the public.
Come on your lunch break, bag lunches welcome!**

Public Rally, December 4, 2006

7:00 PM

at Studio Arena Theater

SOS

Help Save Our Station!

sponsored by the Campaign for Downtown Buffalo
assisted by Citizens Regional Transit and the LWVBN

**Shall the Theater Station be eliminated,
for "Cars Sharing Main Street"?**

I was privileged to represent CRTC at Rail-Volution 2006, held in Chicago, Illinois, November 5-8. The conference drew over a thousand attendees, including representatives from seven countries. Rail-Volution was founded in 1995 by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (Oregon).

The conference theme for 2006 was the relationship between rail transit and efforts to create more livable communities.

A variety of speakers made presentations and led discussions that explored all facets of the planning processes by which communities can improve quality of life. Such improvements feature higher-density, mixed use developments where a greater percentage of trips are taken by foot, bicycle or transit.

Conference events were held at a downtown hotel, while concurrent "Mobile workshops" took participants on trips throughout the Chicago area to have a first-hand look at the positive impact transit has had on neighborhoods.

The first plenary, Nov. 6, included a welcoming speech by the new U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Mary E. Peters. She emphasized the goals of the USDOT as safety, reliability, and congestion relief. Ms. Peters and her staff left immediately after her speech.

for more info: www.railvolution.com

The workshop I attended on Nov. 6 was dubbed "Rail-Volution 101: an Introduction to Livable Communities." Speakers and discussion were lively and stayed on schedule even while we munched our box lunches.

We heard from Rep. Earl Blumenauer, who summarized the history and impacts of Rail-Volution. The event started out of his need to bring together experts and community leaders around the transit project he envisioned for Portland, Oregon.

When other areas expressed an interest, the conference became an annual event and has empowered many regions to bring transit into planning for better quality of life in communities around the USA.

We were challenged by E.B. Arrington, from Parsons Brinkerhoff's Placemaking division, to recognize that transit-oriented development (TOD) is a commitment to making transit the central organizing element in community planning for any given neighborhood. When transit stations or bus stops are simply put into an area without explicit zoning or intentional planning, the result is transit-adjacent development (TAD). He suggested that TAD is often detrimental to the intended impact of public transit in a given area.

Other speakers included: Todd Litman, Executive Director, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, Victoria, BC, Canada; Tom Shrout, Executive Director, Citizens for Modern Transit, St. Louis, MO; Katherine Perez, Vice-President for Development, Forest City, Los Angeles, CA.

CALENDAR

Nov. 21 Noon
CRTC Monthly Meeting
3330 Main St., Buffalo
(corner NF Blvd & Main)

Dec. 4 7:00 PM
SOS rally to save the
Theater Station!
Studio Arena (see p. 1)

Dec. 6 9:30 AM
PCC meeting of GBNRTC
NYSDOT 100 Seneca St., Buffalo

Dec. 19 Noon
CRTC Monthly Meeting
3330 Main St., Buffalo
(corner NF Blvd & Main)

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return service requested