



# CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

published by Citizens Regional Transit Corporation  
P.O. Box 1186, Buffalo, NY 14231-1186  
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Volume #7 Issue # 10

December 2006

## Good News for All!

The Christmas season offers good news for everybody, whether brought by Santa Claus or by a baby in a manger. This good news offers hope in the darkness of winter, with expectation of better times.

Likewise, the vision for better Metro Bus service and expanded Metro Rail is good news for all of Western New York.

Such good news offers the hope that:

- \* workers in the airport corridor can travel to work efficiently;
- \* airport travelers can reach downtown Buffalo easily;
- \* UB students can travel between campuses comfortably and efficiently and UB employees can travel to work without paying for a second car;
- \* Tonawanda residents can access businesses and downtown Buffalo easily;
- \* commuters from the Southtowns can avoid rising congestion on expressways;
- \* business patrons and residents of the Cobblestone District can reach downtown Buffalo by Metro Rail;
- \* Main Street business owners and residents enjoy improvements to the street-scape that enhance Metro Rail as an asset to downtown Buffalo.

The good news of Christmas comes with a price tag--we have to participate in the work to make those hopes come true.

Likewise, the good news of better and expanded public transit is a hope that requires our participation to make it all come true.

Will you help?

Join the Citizens for Regional Transit, with your membership dues and your energetic participation!

Help make this good news come true!

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## CRTC Monthly Meeting

**Tuesday, December 19  
12:00 Noon**

### “Just Transportation and Hunger”

a discussion led by

**Gladys Gifford**

**Hunger Action Educator  
Presbytery of Western New York**

In the holiday season, many household budgets are stretched to the limit in their effort to provide traditional celebrations. Hear how transportation policy feeds into that injustice.

As Hunger Action Educator for Presbyterians in WNY, Ms. Gifford educates Presbyterian congregations about the root causes of hunger in our area.

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**Citizens Regional Transit meets at:**

**3330 Main Street, corner NF Blvd., Buffalo**

University Presbyterian Church education wing  
Enter through the parking lot door, take elevator to “ML.”

**CRTC meetings are free and open to the public.**

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## Rail-Volution: Days Two & Three *...by Gladys Gifford, CRTC President*

Over a thousand participants in Rail-Volution 2006 focused on the relationship between rail transit and livable communities. Here are some highlights:

The mid-morning plenary on Nov. 7 was titled, "The Changing Shape of the City," and featured three panelists: Robert Puentes, Brookings Institute; M. David Lee, consultant, Boston; and Karen Lado, Enterprise Community partners, Denver.

In his analysis of the shifting dynamics of cities Puentes noticed that cities attract a population marked by cultural diversity and rapid change whose livelihoods are based on a "knowledge economy." Such a population gathers in downtowns that correlate with high-quality public transit. Puentes offered strategies for urban areas to thrive in the future: build on your strengths, cooperate within regions, fix the basics for transit and flexible built environment, offer choices to residents and businesses, and transform the built landscape to encourage walkable and livable cities.

Tuesday's schedule concluded with a trade show reception in the evening.

The final plenary on Wednesday afternoon featured two speakers who energized the whole conference with their enthusiasm: Jan Gehl, architect from Copenhagen, Denmark, and John Norquist, President of the Congress for the New Urbanism.

Gehl's experience with Copenhagen has given him the confidence to assert that great cities must be organized around pedestrian mobility. He insisted that urban planning should start with designing attractive public spaces. He asserted that the problem is this: "cities have traffic departments and not pedestrian departments," with the result that cars are visible and people are invisible. He illustrated his talk with photos of Copenhagen over the last 100 years.

Norquist urged the conference to keep pushing for better urban planning and design. He noted the backward "road hierarchy" that dominates highway funding, which requires that the bigger roads such as expressways and arterials are funded through state and Federal budgets, even when they add no value to the community. Local streets, where abundant value is generated for the community, are left languishing through inadequate local funding. His experience shows that traffic can be managed to disperse through communities rather than be concentrated in congested highways, much the same way as wetlands absorb flowing water. He urged all planners to insist on recovering good urban form in order to recover from bad policies.

Rail-Volution 2007 will be held in Miami, FL, Oct. 31-Nov. 3.

## **...On Track, here and there**

...**Business First (Buffalo)** conducted an informal poll about Metro Rail expansion in October, 2006. The question asked: "Metro Rail runs six miles from downtown Buffalo to UB's South Campus. What would you like to do with the Metro Rail system?"

Options offered included extending Metro Rail to UB's north campus and adding a second line to the airport.

Over 70% of respondents agreed with both expansion options offered.

Many comments offered enthusiastic support for Metro Rail expansion.

...On Nov. 7, voters in 13 states in different regions of the USA approved 21 out of 30 state and local transit-related ballot initiatives that authorized public transit expenditures of about \$40 billion.

...observed on Metro Rail (**Buffalo**): LaSalle Station has new paint in the underground boarding area; new advertisements in the trains; external signage on all the stations--go **NFTA!**

...A half mile of new track came online Friday, connecting the trains that run along **Sacramento's** K Street Mall to the downtown Amtrak depot.

Sacramento officials [seek] plans to turn the neighborhood around the Amtrak depot into an urban hub with housing, stores and offices.

Long range plans call for a new line out to the Sacramento Airport by 2027.

*KCRA-TV News 12-8-06*

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### **Citizens Regional Transit Corp.**

aims to improve and expand bus and rail transit for all of WNY through citizen involvement and education.

Join us! Membership dues are fully tax-deductible:

corporate	\$100.00
household	35.00
individual	25.00
student	5.00

send check to:

**CITIZENS REGIONAL TRANSIT CORP.**

c/o Alvin J. Schuster, treasurer

174 Capen Blvd., Amherst, NY 14226

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## **Save Our Theater District Station, aka S.O.S.**

On Dec. 4, the Campaign for Greater Buffalo held a public information meeting at Old Editions Bookshop in downtown Buffalo. Despite ice and snow, over thirty people came to view the Campaign's presentations on how to save the Theater District Station from elimination in the Cars on Main Street proposal. Steve Siegel presented data to show the locations of current and proposed residences and businesses that the Theater District Station serves. Chris Hawley presented transit station design information, and offered an adjusted location that would accommodate the goals of Cars on Main Street without eliminating the Theater District Station.

Attendees were urged to write the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), to express support for retaining the Theater District Station. A ruling from the FTA is expected by Dec. 15.

*...excerpted from on-line encyclopedia at vtpi.org*

*In the twenty years since Metro Rail opened in downtown Buffalo, various business and residential developments have occurred along the route. Have these projects incorporated Metro Rail as an asset to encourage downtown activity (TOD)? Or has Metro Rail been ignored (TAD)?*

*The following article explains TOD, and offers basic understandings to achieve our goal: sustainable public transportation that supports a vital and livable WNY.*

*Transit Oriented Development (TOD) refers to residential and Commercial Centers designed to maximize access by Transit and Nonmotorized transportation, and with other features to Encourage Transit Ridership. A TOD neighborhood has a center with a rail or bus station, surrounded by relatively high-density development, with progressively lower-density spreading outwards. For example, the neighborhood center may have a transit station and a few multi-story commercial and residential buildings surrounded by several blocks of townhouses and small-lot single-family residential, and larger-lot single-family housing farther away. TOD neighborhoods typically have a diameter of one-quarter to one-half mile (stations spaced half to 1 mile apart), which represents pedestrian scale distances. It includes these design features (Morris, 1996):*

- The neighborhood is designed for Cycling and Walking, with adequate facilities and attractive street conditions.
- Streets have good Connectivity and Traffic Calming features to control vehicle traffic speeds.
- Mixed-use development that includes shops, schools and other public services, and a variety of housing types and prices, within each neighborhood.
- Parking Management to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking compared with conventional development, and to take advantage of the parking cost savings associated with reduced automobile use.

Transit Oriented Development generally requires at least 6 residential units per acre in residential areas and 25 employees per acre in Commercial Centers, and about twice that for premium quality transit, such as rail service (Pushkarev and Zupan, 1977; Ewing, 1999; Robert Cervero, et al, 2004). These densities create adequate transit ridership to justify frequent service, and help create active street life and commercial activities, such as grocery stores and coffee shops, within convenient walking distance of homes and worksites....

What's the difference between a true transit-oriented development, which will deliver promised social and economic benefits, and a transit-adjacent development? A true TOD will include most of the following:

- The transit-oriented development lies within a five-minute walk of the transit stop, or about a quarter-mile from stop to edge. For major stations offering access to frequent high-speed service this catchment area may be extended to the measure of a 10-minute walk.
- A balanced mix of uses generates 24-hour ridership. There are places to work, to live, to learn, to relax and to shop for daily needs.
- A place-based zoning code generates buildings that shape and define memorable streets, squares, and plazas, while allowing uses to change easily over time.
- The average block perimeter is limited to no more than 1,350 feet. This generates a fine-grained network of streets, dispersing traffic and allowing for the creation of quiet and intimate thoroughfares.
- Minimum parking requirements are abolished.
- Maximum parking requirements are instituted: For every 1,000 workers, no more than 500 spaces and as few as 10 spaces are provided.
- Parking costs are "unbundled," and full market rates are charged for all parking spaces. The exception may be validated parking for shoppers.
- Major stops provide BikeStations, offering free attended bicycle parking, repairs, and rentals. At minor stops, secure and fully enclosed bicycle parking is provided.
- Transit service is fast, frequent, reliable, and comfortable, with a headway of 15 minutes or less.
- Roadway space is allocated and traffic signals timed primarily for the convenience of walkers and cyclists.
- Automobile level-of-service standards are met through congestion pricing measures, or disregarded entirely.
- Traffic is calmed, with roads designed to limit speed to 30 mph on major streets and 20 mph on lesser streets.

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**TOD at the Wall Street Journal!**

The December 6, 2006, issue of the Wall Street Journal featured an article by Thaddeus Herrick which details the TOD projects in the metropolitan Denver area. A consultant who worked on the Denver project was quoted: "[TOD] is an opportunity for automobile-oriented cities to recreate themselves."

*available at www.djreprints.com*

**Come hear and learn from an expert!**

## **John Norquist**

**President and CEO, the Congress for the New Urbanism**

**presents an update on the current study:**

### **“Highways to Boulevards: Reclaiming Urbanism and Revitalizing Cities”**

**Friday, December 15  
10:30 AM**

**Harbor Club at HSBC Arena**

Buffalo is one of the three cities (with Louisville and Seattle) participating in the three-year study. Norquist will be joined by Scott Bernstein, President of the Center for Neighborhood Technology, which is participating with the Congress for the New Urbanism in the study. Partners for a Livable Western New York helped to select Buffalo as one of the cities to receive the grant that funded the study.

**The event is free, but reservations are required!  
To reserve your spot, call 852-3501**

Refreshments will be served.

The HSBC Arena doors open at 10:00 AM.

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#### **Citizens Regional Transit Corporation**

P.O. Box 1186

Buffalo, NY 14231-1186

*return service requested*

### **CALENDAR**

Dec. 15  
New Urbanism at HSBC Arena

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

Jan. 3 9:30 AM  
PCC meeting of GBNRTC  
NFTA, 181 Ellicott St., Buffalo

**Jan. 16 Noon  
CRTC Monthly Meeting  
3330 Main St., Buffalo  
(corner NF Blvd & Main)**

**Jan. 26 time TBA  
Policy Committee  
GBNRTC, Niagara Falls**