



CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

published by Citizens Regional Transit Corporation
P.O. Box 1186, Buffalo, NY 14231-1186
crtc@citizenstransit.org http://citizenstransit.org/

Volume #7 Issue # 8

October 2006

Fatal Attraction

Admit it--an automobile is a beautiful thing. For many of us, the car may be the most beautiful, luxurious item we own. And for many people, their car is an emotional extension of themselves, as well as a cherished personal space.

To purchase a car is to be attracted to a vehicle that promises much, including entry into the privilege of job access, opportunity for personal solitude on the highway and glimpses of glamour as the night-life crowd cruises the streets.

But the very vehicle which sates our desires and provides access to many of our needs is fatal to our health.

Nationally, car crashes accounted for 43,443 deaths in 2005.* At a rate of 14.6 per 100,000 population, that's about 146 fatalities in the Buffalo-Niagara region.

Furthermore, the miles traveled each year is steadily rising, as is the numbers of vehicles on the road.

Compounded with the effects of air pollution, our fascination with the automobile truly becomes a fatal attraction.

Clearly, we need another mode of transportation.

Hallowe'en reminds us of All Souls Day
May your celebration be safe.

And please take a moment to remember those who have died because they had to use a car for personal mobility.

Then join with CRTC, to help spread the message to expand Metro Rail, for the sake of our very lives.

* see www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/

CRTC Monthly Meeting

**Tuesday, October 17
12:00 Noon**

“Eliminating the Theater Station??”

a discussion led by

Chris Hawley

**Assistant Director,
Campaign for Greater Buffalo Architecture, History
and Culture**

The Final Design Report for the Preliminary Design of the “Cars Sharing Main Street” project has been posted by the City of Buffalo. In the report, the design team insists that the Theater Station should be eliminated in order to accommodate cars on Main Street in downtown Buffalo. Mr. Hawley, of the Campaign for Greater Buffalo, is organizing a coalition to save the Theater Station.

Come join in the discussion and help Save Our Station!

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.

More Mass Transit Connections to Airports

...excerpts from article by Gary Stoller 9-27-06 www.usatoday.com

New mass transit options are making it easier for travelers to commute to airports....

In Seattle, for example, only 2% of passengers use public transit to get to the airport, says Seattle-Tacoma airport spokesman Bob Parker. Seattle officials hope that percentage will increase in 2009 when rail service is expected to be added to existing bus services. [In August] construction began on a rail link, which will enable travelers to go between downtown and the airport in 33 minutes.

...Airport mass transit projects proposed, underway or completed since last year include:

•**Salt Lake City.** Voters in November will decide the fate of a proposal to build four rail lines, including one to the Salt Lake City airport. If approved, Salt Lake County would borrow \$895 million to finance the work.

•**WashingtonDulles.** Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine decided this month to move forward with a 23-mile, above-ground Metro rail extension to Washington Dulles airport that could cost \$4 billion. The extension could be completed by 2015.

•**Warwick, R.I.** Federal, state and local officials broke ground in July on a \$222.5 million train station and rental-car garage that will be a short walk from T.F. Green International Airport. The facilities are expected to open in 2008.

•**Phoenix.** Local government is building a rail system with an airport station. It's expected to begin operating in late 2008. Officials say passengers will be shuttled for free from the station to the terminals.

•**Los Angeles.** Non-stop bus service started in March between the airport and Union Station. The 20-mile ride takes 45 minutes or less.

•**Milwaukee.** Amtrak began service to a Milwaukee airport station last year. The station, which cost \$6.8 million to build, has a 300-space parking garage and offers free shuttle service to airport terminals.

The federal government is concerned that ground access to airports may not keep pace with passenger growth, which is expected to rise from 688 million in 2004 to nearly 1 billion by 2015. Cities will face increased roadway congestion because most travelers commute to airports in cars or taxis, the GAO report says.

*For full text, see:
http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2006-09-26-airport-transit_x.htm?POE=click-refer*

Referenced GAO study issued July, 2005.

...CRTC in action

...Rail-Volution conference in **Chicago, Nov. 5-8**, will focus on how "transit is changing the face of our communities one innovative project at a time." The conference teaches the principles behind livable communities, offers networking with peer groups, and presents speakers "who constantly push the envelope and dare...to think beyond the ordinary." **CRTC President, Gladys Gifford** plans to attend.

...CRTC made a presentation to the **NFTA Board of Commissioners**, Sept. 25, highlighting the benefits of Metro Rail to the whole NFTA system and the added benefit of the proposal to expand Metro Rail to the airport. Chairman Stamm expressed appreciation for the presentation and invited the CRTC to return to discuss further options to expand Metro Rail.

Citizens Regional Transit Corp.

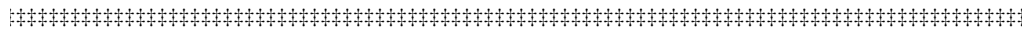
aims to improve and expand bus and rail transit for all of WNY through citizen involvement and education.

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



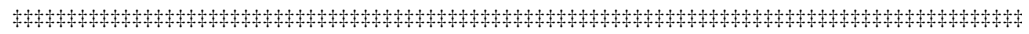
Save Our Theater District Station

The proposal to eliminate the Metro Rail Theater Station is a very bad idea.

I find that asking people to walk 700 feet further to the Theater District in a Buffalo winter is unacceptable. To accomodate cars moving around the portal, the Cars Sharing Main Street design could move the station slightly south. Then, remove the Fountain Plaza Station instead since that station is rarely used outside of rush hour.

My wife and I use Metro Rail to attend Studio Arena Theater. If the Theater Station is removed, my wife and I will not renew our season ticket subscription to Studio Arena Theater; something I hope will not be necessary.

...Richard A. Olday



Metro Rail’s Airport Corridor: the Smartest Distance between Downtown Buffalo and the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport

...a CRTC presentation to the NFTA Board of Commissioners, 9-25-06

At the invitation of NFTA Chairman Gregory Stamm, the CRTC made a brief presentation about Metro Rail to the full NFTA Board of Commissioners, September 25th. The purpose of the presentation was to outline the advantages Metro Rail brings to the NFTA, and to show the NFTA that the best way to capitalize on Metro Rail is to expand the light rail into the Airport Corridor.

The main points of the presentation were:

*** Expanding Metro Rail capitalizes on current opportunities**

Metro Rail ridership is rising--there is more demand along the Main Street corridor, as well as pressure from higher gasoline prices. Metro Rail’s assets include the command and control center, as well as the maintenance facility, which were built for a system of 46 miles. Congestion in the Airport Corridor, especially the Kensington Expressway, shows the need for the Metro Rail option.

*** The NFTA can make better use of Metro Rail**

In 2001, the NFTA released to the public the Strategic Transit Assessment (STA), which showed that Metro Rail must be expanded to make full use of its designed potential. The STA found that expanding Metro Rail in the Airport Corridor could double ridership without doubling operating costs and that the Airport Corridor was the best candidate to apply for Federal funding for capital construction. However, in 1992, the NFTA Board decided to discontinue long-range planning for Metro Rail expansion and as a result, Buffalo’s Metro Rail is the only light rail system in North America that has not been expanded.

*** The public supports Metro Rail expansion**

In 2003-2004, CRTC collected more than 10,000 signatures in support of Metro Rail expansion in the Airport Corridor.

*** Metro Rail in the Airport Corridor**

Connect with the Inner Harbor, proposed Bass Pro development, Erie Community College City campus, sports and entertainment venues, Central Terminal, Villa Maria College, Walden Village senior center and housing, Walden Galleria, suburban employment, BNIA, park and ride lot at the airport, numerous hotels, shopping and small businesses

*** Metro Rail is a Service Asset to the NFTA**

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, Metro Rail reported 14.2 million passenger rides on 12.4 miles of rail (both directions), or 1.1 million rides per mile of rail, while Metro Bus reported 55.7 million passenger rides on 1,305 miles of road, or 53,823 passenger rides per mile of road. In other words, Metro Rail is carrying 80% more riders per mile than does Metro Bus.

*** Metro Rail is a Financial Asset for the NFTA**

In FY 2004, Metro Bus earned \$13,997 per mile of road traveled in passenger fares, while Metro Rail earned \$316,588 per mile of track traveled in passenger fares.

(These figures are calculated with respect to 1,305 miles of road traveled by the buses, compared to 12.4 miles of rail (two directions), using data from the 2006 APTA Public Transportation Fact Book.)

*** Financing the Airport Corridor**

Financing to build the Airport Corridor extension can be found in both public and private sectors. Since the NFTA does not have a huge debt burden, it has bonding ability. (see STA) The current Federal transportation bill contains various funding opportunities. On the private side, Design-Build-Operate-Maintain (DBOM) is one of the feasible alternatives, where a private entity is given authority to design, build, operate and maintain the project for a specified time frame. After that time, the responsibility for running the system reverts back to the public owner.

*** Capital costs to build the Airport Corridor**

Estimates to build the Metro Rail extension vary, in the range of \$16-20 million per mile. The proposed Airport Corridor is ten miles long. Actual costs may be much less, since it is a surface-only expansion, with no costly tunneling and most of the rights-of-way are already owned by public entities.

The presentation concluded with a challenge to the NFTA Board, asking them to reverse their ruling of 1992 and to begin now to plan the Airport Corridor expansion.

Chairman Stamm expressed appreciation for the excellent presentation and assured the CRTC that their proposal to expand Metro Rail into the Airport Corridor will be considered seriously.

Did you know?

Of the nation's top 50 metropolitan areas, all but two were planning a New Start project, adding to a existing system or have a new system under construction.

**The Visions Harvest Committee Presents
THE 2006 WORLD ON YOUR PLATE SERIES
A Day of Learning, Community and Food**

FEATURING

Frances Moore Lappé
**“Fat, Famine & Froot Loops:
Where’s Democracy when we Need It?”**

Author of Diet for a Small Planet & Democracy’s Edge

Saturday, October 21st
First Presbyterian Church
1 Symphony Circle
9:30AM-4:00PM
Admission (Includes Lunch) \$20

10:00-11:00 AM workshops include:

“Just Transportation: To Eat or To Drive?”
led by Gladys Gifford, President,
Citizens Regional Transit Corp.

Sponsored by: Food for All, Indigenous Women’s Initiatives,
the WNY Peace Center

For more information, call 716.894.2013

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation

P.O. Box 1186
Buffalo, NY 14231-1186

return service requested

CALENDAR

Oct. 17 Noon
CRTC Monthly Meeting
3330 Main St., Buffalo
(corner NF Blvd & Main)

Oct. 21 9:30 AM registration
World on Your Plate forum (p. 4)

Oct. 21 8:30 AM-12:30 PM
PFALWNY neighborhood walk
1824 Main Street, Niagara Falls
info: G. Grasser, 883-5070

Nov. 1 9:30 AM
GBNRTC PCC meeting
Erie Co. Public Works,
45 Oak Street, Buffalo

Nov. 4-8 (Saturday to Wednesday)
Rail-Volution 2006
Chicago, Illinois

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