



CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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P.O. Box 1186, Buffalo, NY 14231-1186
crtc@citizenstransit.org http://citizenstransit.org/

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Transit Snapshots

Western New Yorkers love to travel. CRTC members and friends report--

My husband and I recently attended a week long Elderhostel program in San Francisco, California. The theme of the program was the history of the city; from original settlers to present day, including the impact of the 1906 earthquake and fire.

We took BART(Bay Area Rapid Transit) from the airport to the Civic Center and schlepped our roll-on luggage to the Elderhostel hotel, located on a bus line. Our leaders instructed us on how to use public transit: every afternoon the group used public buses to reach the touring destinations. Each evening we reached restaurants by bus or on foot. We returned to the airport by BART.

Using San Francisco's public transportatoin system was definitely convenient!

--Betty

I was scheduled for a professional conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, so my husband joined me for sight-seeing. The conference hotel was in downtown, and the light rail system was right there. We saw everything and never needed a car!

--Trisha

We knew that Vancouver, BC, had a terrific public transit system when we planned our trip. However, we were amazed at just how easy and convenient it was to get around. Wait at any stop, whether bus or rail, and the vehicle will arrive in fifteen minutes! We went anywhere we wanted to go, without taking all day to get there!

--Alvin

Send us your transit snapshots. We will share them with our local leadership, whose budgets limit their travels, these days.

CRTC Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, May 16

12:00 Noon

“High Speed Rail in Upstate New York?”

a presentation by

David Skoney

member of the NYS Task Force on High Speed Rail

David Skoney will present the current status of high speed rail discussions. He and Bruce Becker, president of ESPA have had meetings with the staff of Brian Higgins and Sam Hoyt. The chairman of the NYS Task Force on High Speed Rail is Joseph Eagan, a highly respected appointee of Joseph Bruno.

Join us!

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.

Recent Studies Inform Transit Planning

www.vtpi.org

Summertime is coming, and our personal pace should slow down to allow for reflection and evaluation. CRTC encourages everyone interested in improving public transit in the WNY region to take advantage of the following resource, the Victoria Transport Policy Institute (VTPI).

From their web page:

The Victoria Transport Policy Institute is an **independent research organization dedicated to developing innovative and practical solutions to transportation problems.** We provide a variety of **resources available free** at this website to **help improve transportation planning and policy analysis.** We are funded primarily through consulting and project grants. Our research is among the most current available and has been widely applied. It can help you:

- **Identify better solutions** to transportation problems, including some approaches that are frequently overlooked or misunderstood.
- **Identify the full benefits, costs and equity impacts** of alternative transportation policies and programs.
- **Compare and evaluate** alternatives.
- **Create a bridge** between theory and practice.

Two recent publications of note:

Promoting Public Health Through Smart Growth: Building Healthier Communities Through Transportation And Land Use Policies

This report explains how our built environment shapes our transportation choices, and in turn, human health. It identifies specific transportation and land use reforms that can help create healthier and more livable communities. Written by Lawrence Frank, Sarah Kavage and Todd Litman.

(Lengthy, but filled with facts and charts and illustrative photos--a good browse.)

Appropriate Response to Rising Fuel Prices

This updated paper investigates the best public policy response to rising fuel prices. This analysis indicates that efforts to reduce fuel prices may harm consumers and the economy overall by encouraging long-term inefficiencies.

(An easy read, and the conclusions may surprise you...)

On Track, Here and There

...Ground-breaking was held March 30 for the **St. Louis Gateway Transportation Center's Multi-Modal Terminal Building and Concourse.** Due to open in about fifteen months, the facility will serve Amtrak, light rail, local and intercity buses. 4-06, *NARP News*

...Ridership on the **Hudson-Bergen Light Rail** is booming [3-16-06] two weeks after NJ Transit opened two new stations in Union City and North Bergen. NJ Transit spokesman Dan Stessel said weekday ridership has jumped 16% since the agency opened stations on Bergenline Avenue in Union City and Tonnelle Avenue in North Bergen. Before the opening of those two stations on Feb. 25, the system had an average of 23,378 weekday riders. Today, the average number of weekday riders stands at 27,222. 3-06, *Jersey Journal*

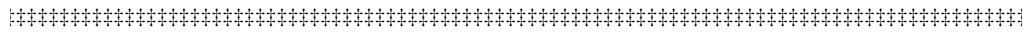
...[According to] Elmer Von Dullen, Superintendent of Streetcar Construction for the **New Orleans Regional Transportation Authority,** with the regular Canal cars (the PT-2000s) out of service for nearly two more years, the antique, olive-green St. Charles cars will undoubtedly continue to operate as substitutes for the PT-2000s on Canal in the interim. Thus, Earl emphasizes, "Now is the time to photograph this event...It's like deja vu," Earl adds, "seeing the green cars on Canal again. It may never happen again!" ...3-9-06 *lightrailnow.org*

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

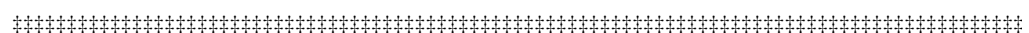


“Marketstructure” at UB, Dyett Gallery in Hayes Hall

Students at UB's School of Architecture and Planning have put together a gallery showing, "Marketstructure," which showcases innovative ideas for reusing the urban infrastructure of Buffalo.

Of particular interest is the railroad section. Student research shows graphically how the existing rights-of-way could be reused as a commuter system which would then support economic revitalization of the region.

The exhibit is open, M-F, 9-5, through May 15.



MetroLink's current weekday ridership has recently been averaging between 51,000-55,000, with annual ridership totalling about 16 million per year and 133 million annual passenger-miles – already a significant increase over 2003, when MetroLink's ridership totalled about 15 million annually and 124,972,600 passenger-miles.

These ridership figures for **St. Louis'** MetroLink LRT system stand in stark contrast to those of Metro's entire 101-route bus system, which in 2003 accounted for only 122,165,700 passenger-miles but at far greater operational cost. In other words, *Metro's single modest 38-mile LRT line accounts for more passenger-miles than all of the 101 bus routes also operated by the transit agency.*

The accomplishments of MetroLink are particularly impressive if one goes further into the past.... In FY 1993, without MetroLink, St. Louis's buses moved only 173,582,057 passenger-miles – compared with a total bus and rail figure of about 247 million in 2003. Thus, over approximately a decade, MetroLink has boosted transit use more than 42 percent with just a single, long line.

On the whole, MetroLink's performance provides an excellent *model* – for cities across North America – of the kinds of public transport successes that can be achieved with a well-designed and well-managed application of LRT technology.

Overview of system

The 38-mile (61-km) MetroLink system with its 28 stations (including two in subways and three elevated) has characteristics of both an interurban LRT (particularly as it reaches eastward into the Illinois countryside) and a semi-metro, running mostly on grade-separated and exclusive alignments connecting East St. Louis (Illinois), central St. Louis (Missouri), and the city's western suburbs out to the Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. It's a totally highfloor system with high-platform stations, somewhat similar in design to LRT in Los Angeles.

The system currently consists of two routes extending west and east from St. Louis. The first line, 17 miles (27 km) long, was opened in July 1993. MetroLink's second route, a 17-mile (27-km) extension, opened in May 2001, extending the line further eastward into Illinois with 8 additional stations, terminating at Southwestern Illinois College, and with large park-and-ride lots constructed at all but one of the 8 new stations. An extension of this line north and east to Shiloh-Scott Air Force Base opened in 2003.

A major project now under way is the city's Multi-Modal Station, which will provide a central hub adjacent to downtown St. Louis for transportation for residents, tourists, and other travellers. The new station will provide the ability to transfer directly to and from Amtrak trains, MetroLink, and MetroBus services. Also, there will be a good connection with Greyhound intercity motor coach services through MetroLink and MetroBus.

Shaky funding

The transit system's spectacular resurgence has taken place despite one of the poorest public financing structures in the USA. As Tom Shrout, Executive Director of the St. Louis transit advocacy group Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT) has explained, St. Louis's Metro is dependent almost entirely on local sales tax for its operations, but this is relatively small compared to many other municipalities...." Missouri contributes less than \$1 million per year.

"Sales tax revenues have been stagnant during the recession and have not grown in years in St. Louis City" says Shrout. "We might begin to see some reversal of that because of the new growth we are seeing in the city, especially downtown and the Central West End – stimulated in part by MetroLink."

St. Louis County "grew for years with out-migration from the city" Shrout further notes. "Now it is composed mostly of older, spread-out suburbs and its growth has stagnated. In short, sprawl has eroded the tax base. Fortunately we are seeing higher-density development occurring around Cross County MetroLink stations in Clayton and at Eager Rd. and the Galleria that are yet to open. I expect to see more of this as several municipalities are anxious to maximize their investment."

LRT is "crown jewel" of transit system

Despite the financial uncertainties, it's clear that MetroLink has been an enormous asset to St. Louis, its mobility, and its economic development. By the system's 10-year anniversary in 2003, Metro issued a list of some 31 developments totaling just under \$2 billion in investment around MetroLink stations.

The impact of transit-oriented development (TOD) has been particularly strong in the city's downtown. According to CMT, "Millions of dollars have ... been invested in the redevelopment of buildings in downtown St. Louis adjacent or within walking distance into residential lofts."

"MetroLink is the crown jewel of the transit system and one of Metro's biggest success stories, reversing a long, slow period of general decline in transit ridership" declares International Business Publishers in a 2003 booklet celebrating MetroLink's 10-year anniversary. Elsewhere, the booklet emphasizes MetroLink's economic advantages:

MetroLink LRT has revitalized transit

But by far the most spectacular success brought by MetroLink is that it has *totally revitalized* the performance of *all* public transit in St. Louis – *reversing the steady downward trend* that characterized the all-bus transit system preceding the installation of the LRT system.

Moreover, according to a Metro survey, the overwhelming proportion – nearly 80% – of MetroLink riders are not former bus passengers, but are *totally new* to transit.

Did you know?

Public transportation saves more than 855 million gallons of gasoline, or 45 million barrels of oil a year - a level equivalent to the energy used to heat, cool, and operate one-fourth of all American homes annually.

Niagara Frontier Chapter,
National Railway Historical Society
invites all:

Cleveland Traction 2006
Ride the Greater Cleveland RTA

Saturday, June 10

8:30 AM depart	Park&Ride lot on Transit Road at Thruway exit 49
9:00 AM depart	Holiday Inn, Camp Road, Hamburg
9:00 PM return	Hamburg
9:30 PM return	Thruway exit 49

Join us, Saturday, June 10, day-long trip to Cleveland, Ohio, to ride the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) electric cars.

The RTA operates a growing, modern, integrated transportation system. The blue/green line consists of 15 miles of single track used by 48 light rail vehicles serving 34 stations. The red line consists of 19 miles of single track used by 60 heavy rail vehicles serving 18 stations. The RTA services an area of 458 square miles including 59 municipalities and 1.4 million people.

Reservations required! Reservation deadline, June 2, 2006.

Only 34 seats available on lavatory-equipped motor coach.
Bus tickets are \$40. adults, \$36. seniors (60+). Lunch and dinner on your own.

Send reservations to: Richard Olday, 171 Parwood Trail, Depew, NY 14043

Include: name, address, phone, check made out to NFCNRHS.

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation

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

return service requested

CALENDAR

to May 15 M-F, 9-5
UB "Marketstructure"
Hayes Hall gallery showing

May 16 12:00 noon
CRTC monthly meeting
University Presbyterian Church
Main & NF Blvd., Buffalo

June 7 9:30 AM
PCC meeting of GBNRTC
NYS Thruway Authority 856-2026

June 10 Save the Date!
trip to Cleveland, National Railway
Historical Society

June 20 12:00 noon
CRTC monthly meeting
University Presbyterian Church
Main & NF Blvd., Buffalo

July 12 9:30 AM
PCC meeting of GBNRTC
Niagara County 856-2026

July 17-21 (Monday to Friday)
Chautauqua Institution theme week
"Landscape Architecture and
Community Design"

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