



# CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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April, 2005

## Lean Clean Green Metro Rail

April brings Earth Day activities-- we clean up shorelines and waterways and public parks; we take our hazardous waste from our garages to the county drop-off site; we use creation-evoking liturgies in church and synagogue and temple--and we lament the endless pollution that our society pours into Earth's ecosystem.

Thanks to Metro Rail riders, we do have good news for Earth Day!

Here's how:

\* Metro Rail is propelled by electricity that is entirely generated by Niagara Falls hydropower from the New York Power Authority, not coal or gas.

This energy is green!

\* Each Metro Rail car carries 55 seated passengers and can carry a crowd of 200, with up to four cars in a train, with only one driver.

This energy is lean!

\* The more than 20,000 people who use Metro Rail daily are enjoying a zero-emissions ride: no noxious fumes, no carbon monoxide, no carbon dioxide, no volatile organic compounds, no nitrogen oxides, no particulates.

This energy is clean!

Hats off to everyone who rides Metro Rail, whether as a commuter or on special occasions. We are doing our bit for Mother Earth.

For the Buffalo-Niagara region, every day is Earth Day on Metro Rail.

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## CRTC Monthly Meeting

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

### **“Public Transit as an Effective Tool to Combat Global Warming”**

a Videotape of lecture by

**Dr. Sigmund F. Zakrzewski  
(1919-2005)**

**Come join in conversation following the video, to explore the environmental benefits of an expanded Metro Rail.**

Dr. Sigmund Zakrzewski, professor of environmental toxicology, was active in the CRTC since the mid-90's. He served as the environment chair, and as the treasurer.

The video shows a presentation by Zak on global warming at a forum October 18, 2001, at UB's Center for Tomorrow. The video includes the forum that followed his presentation which discussed local impact of global warming, and included CRTC.

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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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## Green Transit Facts

...cftc.org

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.

Public transportation generates 95% less carbon monoxide, 92% less in volatile organic compounds, and about half as much carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide per passenger mile than passenger vehicles.

On-road vehicles are responsible for 44% of all CO2 emissions in the US, one-third of all NOx emissions and one-quarter of all VOC emissions.

In 1999, public transportation vehicles used 856 million gallons of fossil fuels and 5.2 billion kilowatt hours of electricity - which is less than 1% of all energy consumed in the U.S.

For every passenger mile traveled, public transportation is twice as fuel-efficient as private automobiles, sport-utility vehicles, and light trucks.

### 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

## Public Hearings Set for Transportation Plans

...GBNRTC.org

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### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 2006-2010

*All meetings will run from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.*

**Tuesday April 12, 2005** - Cheektowaga Senior Center  
3349 Broadway, Cheektowaga NY

**Thursday April 14, 2005** - Buffalo and Erie Co. Public Library  
1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo NY

**Tuesday April 19, 2005** - Quality Inn  
7708 Niagara Falls Blvd., Niagara Falls NY

**Thursday April 21, 2005** - Lockport Town Hall  
6560 Dysinger Road, Lockport NY

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The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) has set the above hearings schedule. These public hearings provide opportunities for the public to comment on all federally funded transportation projects being considered, for October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2010. The GBNRTC, in cooperation with the NYSDOT, is responsible to select the projects considered in the TIP.

These meetings present the draft TIP, which must reflect those projects of highest priority based on regional needs, local desires, long-range plan conformity and funding availability.

**The public review and comment period began April 3, 2005, and will end on May 4, 2005.**

The TIP is available for review at all public libraries. Please make every effort to learn the features of the TIP and to attend the hearing nearest you, or to submit comments.

Submit comments to: GBNRTC, 438 Main Street, Suite 503, Buffalo, NY 14202  
FAX 716-856-3203 staff@gbnrtc.org

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### Congress set to pass Transportation Act

Both the House and the Senate have passed their respective versions of the new Act. They are expected to reconcile the two versions in mid-April.

For details, see [Transfer, 3-25-05, transact.org](#)

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# Pittsburgh: Rehabilitated Overbrook LRT Line Opens

...lightrailnow.org July 2004

On 2 June 2004, Pittsburgh's Port Authority transit agency reopened its 5.2-mile (8.4-km) Overbrook LRT line after a four-year major reconstruction project costing some US \$115.8 million (part of the \$386 million Stage II Light Rail Transit Project).

Since 1984, the Port Authority has been operating a 25-mile (40.3-km) light rail system, called "The T", providing service to Downtown Pittsburgh and several suburban communities south of the city. The southern end of the T, between South Hills Village and Castle Shannon, opened in April 1984. The downtown subway opened on July 1985, and modernization of the line between South Hills Junction and Castle Shannon was completed in May 1987.

The T winds through Downtown Pittsburgh via a subway with three underground stations (Steel Plaza, Wood Street, and Gateway) and three above-ground stations (Station Square, First Avenue, and Penn Park), providing high-quality rail transit service to major destination points and business centers within Downtown Pittsburgh.

However, the original Overbrook branch had to be closed in 1993 due to increasing maintenance problems and the rising costs of renovations. Some of these maintenance problems apparently stemmed from the installation of worn-out second-hand rail in some sections; in addition, necessary improvements to replace obsolete structures and widen clearances for the newer, wider light rail vehicles, were deferred.

The reopened Overbrook Line, upgraded to modern light rail standards as part of the authority's Stage II Light Rail Transit Project, now provides more efficient rail service from Castle Shannon to Downtown Pittsburgh.

The Overbrook Line project included the replacement of five bridges and construction of six new bridges. The line's original 22 streetcar-style stops were replaced by 8 high-platform, ADA-compliant light railway stations. In addition, as part of the Stage II project, upgrades to the traction power network, Operations Control Center, and signals and communications, plus the addition of 28 new light rail vehicles and rebuilding of 40 existing cars, were implemented, and altogether are expected to strengthen Pittsburgh's entire LRT system. The new cars are expected to be in service by September 2004.

The Stage II project is expected to attract approximately 13,000 weekday riders to the T by 2015. The project has supported more than 17,000 jobs and is projected to bring the region some \$2.2 billion in economic benefits through consumer spending, investments, and the generation of business revenues, among other economic stimuli.

Four light rail transit lines to the South Hills – Allentown, South Hills Village, Overbrook, and Library – now provide thousands of people with convenient and efficient transit service to Downtown Pittsburgh and other destinations in southern Allegheny County each day. However, rail transit in Pittsburgh has gone through a rollercoaster ride of setbacks and advances over the past several decades.

In the early 1960s, Pittsburgh had the largest surviving streetcar system in the United States, with the privately owned Pittsburgh Railways Company operating more than 600 PCC cars on 41 routes. In 1964 the system was acquired by the Port Authority of Allegheny County, which rapidly converted most routes to buses. By the early 1970s, only a handful of streetcar routes remained, most of which used the Mt. Washington Tunnel just south of the Monongahela River to reach the South Hills area.

At that time, Port Authority planners were determined to scrap the rail system entirely in favor of busways ("BRT") and an automated guideway transit system developed by Westinghouse Electric called Skybus. Community opposition rallied against the plan and in favor of retaining the electric rail trolley system and upgrading it into modern LRT. In the end, the LRT option was adopted, along with development of a busway ("BRT") system.

Today, the future of LRT in Pittsburgh looks increasingly brighter. Architects and engineers are currently working on plans to extend the LRT system across the Allegheny River and to the new convention center as part of the agency's North Shore Connector Project. Port Authority expects to break ground on the project in late 2004 or early 2005.

*Update: On February 8, 2005, the Federal Transit Administration announced full-funding grants for four new projects, including Pittsburgh's North Shore Connector Project.  
see <http://www.fta.dot.gov/>*

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## Buffalo-Pittsburgh tour set for June 11, 2005

The local chapter of the National Railway Historical Society encourages everyone interested in Metro Rail expansion to travel to Pittsburgh, to view first-hand the many recent improvements to Pittsburgh's light rail system.

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## **CRTC Spring Fundraiser,**

### **A Garage Sale!!**

**Saturday, May 14,  
8:00 AM-3:00 PM**

**171 Parwood Trail  
Depew, NY**

**Come browse for great finds  
Come troll for hidden treasures**

**Support the mission of the CRTC while  
looking for that special item**

This CRTC Garage sale will be hosted by Richard Olday, CRTC Board.

Parwood Trail is located at the end of Rehm Road in Cheektowaga.

Nearly half of the houses in the subdivision cooperate in this sale, as advertised in the Penny Saver.

Quality merchandise, Old Time Radio memorabilia, computers.

Proceeds to benefit CRTC purchase of powerpoint equipment.

### **CALENDAR**

**Apr. 12** 6:00-8:00 PM  
GBNRTC Public Hearing on TIP  
first of four, various locations  
(details, p. 2)

**Apr. 12** 7:00 PM PLWNY  
Epic Center, 1000 Main St., Buffalo  
Tim Wanamaker and Chuck Thomas,  
“Land Use Planning--2005, APA  
Conference, San Francisco”

**Apr. 13** 9:30 AM  
GBNRTC PCC meeting  
Donovan Bldg., Bflo.

**Apr. 19 12:00 noon**  
**CRTC monthly meeting**  
**(note changed time)**

**April 19** 7:00 PM  
Nichols School, Smart Growth series:  
Neal Payton – Architect, Silver  
Springs, MD

**May 14** CRTC Garage Sale, 8-3 PM

**May 17** 7:00 PM Nichols School,  
Smart Growth series: Christine Todd  
Whitman - former U.S. EPA

**June 11** time TBA  
National Railway Historical Society  
tour to Pittsburgh, PA

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**Citizens Regional Transit Corporation**

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*return service requested*