



# CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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## Connecting the Dots

Could we connect the dots, between highway construction and transportation?

The current TIP includes eight projects to widen roads, plus extending the 219 around Springville, for a local outlay of over \$164 million (see p. 2). Plotted on a map, the added road capacity roughly parallel the areas to be served by an expanded Metro Rail.

How can local governments justify those expenditures in view of the local government claim not to be able to pay for parks and auto bureaus and salary raises? How will they maintain more roadway, i.e., lane-miles?

The reasoning given is that this \$164 million leverages additional millions from the Federal cash cow, to complete these building projects. But when the Federal dollars have been poured into concrete and the projects done, will the Feds also maintain these added lane miles, forever?

Building highways or adding lane-miles simply forces governments deeper into debt to maintain those roads.

The aim of transportation policy should be to move large numbers of people from one place to another. Building more lane-miles concentrates the movement of cars, not people. Investment in an expanded Metro Rail will ease the pressure of traffic on the existing roads and ease the personal financial burden of everyone to purchase and maintain cars.

Let's work together to make transportation do its job: move people efficiently, economically, equitably.

Let's all connect the dots.

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## CRTC Monthly Meeting

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

### “Public Transit Labor Issues”

by

**Vince Crehan,  
President/Business Agent,  
Amalgamated Transit Union, Local #1342**

**Come join in lively discussion, to explore the labor implications of an expanded Metro Rail.**

Vince Crehan has served as President of Local #1342 since 1996; he was an NFTA bus driver 1984-1995. Vince is a life-long resident of South Buffalo.

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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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# More Highway Miles, no Expanded Transit in Transportation Improvement Program 2006-2010 (TIP)

by Gladys Gifford

Analysis of the TIP projects proposed by the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council shows that New York State proposes to spend \$68.9 million to construct the next segment of Route #219 south around Springville, plus \$80.3 million to widen six highways during 2006-2010. Erie County proposes to spend \$15.6 million to widen two highways in the same period.

A total of \$164.8 million is proposed to be spent from state and county funds to support these projects over the life of the TIP. No funds are allocated to support the public transit project that is languishing in the GBNRTC's Long Range Plan, known as "High Quality Transit Improvements" along the Airport Corridor and the Tonawanda Corridor.

The six highway widening projects proposed by the NYSDOT are:

- \* Route 20 in the Southtowns, from Route 62 to the junction of Union Road and Harlem Road;
- \* Route 5 south of Lackawanna, to accomodate the Union Ship Canal project;
- \* Route 240 (Harlem Road) on the border of Amherst and Cheektowaga, Genesee Street to Yorktown Road
- \* Route 62 in Wheatfield, Kreuger Road to North Tonawanda city line
- \* Route 62 in Wheatfield, Kreuger Road to Walmore Road
- \* Sweet Home Road in Amherst, Maple Road to Ellicott Creek

The two highway widening projects proposed by Erie County are:

- \* Wehrle Drive in Amherst, Aero Drive to Transit Road
- \* East Robinson, Route 62 (Niagara Falls Boulevard) to Sweet Home Road

When the eight proposed projects to widen roads are plotted on a map, there is a strong correlation with the CRTC's proposal for expanding Metro Rail. Demand for travel on these roads could be alleviated in three directions: the Tonawanda Corridor, to connect the LaSalle station with the Tonawandas, and relieve congestion along Sweet Home Road; the Airport Corridor, to reduce demand on Wehrle Drive and Harlem Road; the Southtowns Corridor, to reduce demand on Route 62, and to alleviate traffic pressure on Route 5.

The eight projects to widen suburban highways will encourage more vehicles to use those roads (the 'induced travel' effect). None of the projects benefit the cities of the two counties, where streets are falling further into disrepair. Scarce public dollars should be spent to provide more public transit service on well-maintained streets and rail in densely-populated areas.

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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.

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corporate	\$100.00
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c/o Alvin J. Schuster, treasurer  
174 Capen Blvd., Amherst, NY 14226

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## TIP to be Adopted at May 20 Policy Meeting

The GBNRTC Policy meeting will be held Friday, May 20, 9:00-10:30 AM.

Agenda includes these action items: approval of the 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and an amendment to the 2025 Long Range Plan concerning the Main Street Revitalization Project (opening downtown Main Street, Buffalo, to automobiles).

Public comment is allowed on agenda items, limited to 3 minutes per speaker. A public forum follows the official meeting for transportation discussion.

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[Beginning] May 9, the Senate will resume work on its SAFETEA plan, legislation that renews the nation's surface transportation law or TEA-21 through fiscal year 2009.

Senators will immediately turn to consideration of an amendment to increase funding for the legislation by \$11-13 billion above the \$283.9 billion level approved in Committee and recommended by the President.

Anticipating the Senate action, Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta weighed in with a strong statement [on May 5] urging the Senate to stick to the President's funding level. "Last week the President made it clear that he would veto any bill that increases the top-line dollar figure beyond the \$284 billion, six-year level that has already been overwhelmingly approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works," Mineta said.

Despite the threat of a certain veto by the President, pressure has been building for months in the Senate to add funds to the SAFETEA legislation. The funding amendment to be offered by Senate Finance Chair Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Ranking Minority Member Max Baucus (D-MT) is expected to pass overwhelmingly, setting the stage for a confrontation with President Bush later in the process.

The additional funds will help so called "donor" states improve their rate of return on highway dollars sent to Washington and it promises to raise funding commitments to transit programs, which were shorted by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee when the \$283.9 billion SAFETEA package was being developed in March.

Following the debate on the funding amendment, the Senate is expected to move a cloture motion that, if adopted, would give Senators a fixed period of time (sometime on May 12) to offer amendments to the SAFETEA bill; any amendments after time would have to be ruled in order and be germane to the legislation.

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## Spring UB Intern Project Benefits CRTC

CRTC enjoyed the benefit of an intern from the University at Buffalo's Environmental Planning Department during the spring semester. Brian Goldman, a junior from Long Island, volunteered to design and produce a new educational resource for the CRTC. Titled, "The Smartest Distance Between Two Points," this resource explains how Metro Rail benefits the Buffalo-Niagara region and offers detailed information on how the light rail system works. Included in the resource are references and suggestions for parents and teachers to use while working with children and young people.

Mr. Goldman's project was the basis for a presentation to adults at the Parent Center, downtown Buffalo, on April 20, where it was well received.

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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 ride the Allegheny County Transit Authority's two newly rebuilt light rail lines. The Pittsburgh system will show Buffalo visitors how light rail can be expanded into the suburbs, and demonstrate a successful process to reach that goal.

The 23-passenger bus departs 8:00 AM, Park & ride lot at Thruway exit 49 on Transit Road, and at 8:30 AM, Holiday Inn at Camp Road, Hamburg. Arrive noon in Pittsburgh. Lunch on your own, then escorted ride on the Overbrook Line and the Library Line (total 25.2 miles of light rail). Reboard bus for return to Buffalo with dinner stop on your own in Erie, PA. Return approximately 9:30 PM, Hamburg, and 10:00 PM, Transit Road.

### Cost--

- Bus: \$33.00 (\$30.00 seniors)
- Transit fares: \$9.00 (bring singles and quarters for exact change)
- Lunch and Dinner: personal responsibility

**Reservation Deadline-- June 4--- only 23 seats available!!**

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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**

The 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**

**May 11 9:00 AM**  
GBNRTC PCC meeting  
Carnegie Bldg, Niagara Falls, NY

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

**May 17 12:00 noon**  
**CRTC monthly meeting**  
**Vince Crehan, transit union**

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

**May 20 9:00-10:30 AM**  
GBNRTC Policy Meeting  
Buffalo Downtown Library  
(see p. 2)

**June 8 9:30 AM**  
GBNRTC PCC meeting  
NYS Thruway, Cheektowaga

**June 11 8:00 AM**  
National Railway Historical Society  
tour to Pittsburgh, PA (see p. 3)

**June 14 6:00 PM**  
PLWNY, Epic Bldg, 1000 Main St.  
Report from APA conference, by Tim  
Wannamaker and Chuck Thomas

**June 21 12:00 noon**  
**CRTC monthly meeting**  
**“History of Buffalo’s Transit”**

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**Citizens Regional Transit Corporation**

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*return service requested*