



CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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One Step Forward....

The advantages of effective public transit are well understood, but often poorly implemented.

Consider the following:

* CRTC brought the NFTA and Fannie Mae together in May, 2004, ready to offer "Smart Commute" mortgages for the Buffalo area. An agreement with a lender was finally reached, and the advantages of public transit commuting will finally translate into homeowner advantage, over a year later (see p. 2).

* The new stadium for the Yankees, planned for South Bronx, provides fewer seats for the fans, but more parking, i.e., a car-dependent baseball stadium in the most transit-dependent American city.

* Philadelphia's rebuilt and ready trolley cars have been stalled by a parking lot.

On the other hand, visionary leaders understand how effective public transit, especially light rail, boosts their economy and creates the infrastructure for quality communities.

Consider the following:

* Denver's voters have approved a \$4.7 billion tax increase to pay for FasTracks, a 12-year plan to expand bus service and add 119 miles of rail lines.

* A developer in Charlotte, NC, plans to build almost 1,000 homes just south of Huntersville, including 27,000 square feet of shopping, clustered around a transit stop scheduled for completion in 2009.

Hello, Buffalo!
Let's try two steps forward....

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CRTC Monthly Meeting

**Tuesday, July 19
7:30 PM**

"A Solar-Powered Carousel"

presented by

**Joan Bozer
WNY Sustainable Energy Association**

Come join in lively discussion, to explore features of the proposed solar-powered carousel, to be located near Metro Rail, in Buffalo's revived Inner Harbor.

For more information, see www4.bfn.org/wnysea

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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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“Smart Commute” Finally Implemented

nfta.com

The CRTC is pleased that “Smart Commute” has finally arrived in Buffalo. The CRTC initiated contacts between the NFTA, Fannie Mae, and a bank early in 2004, with agreement in principle adopted by the NFTA Board, April 26, 2004. The following is excerpted from the press release issued by the NFTA, June 22, 2005.

Buyers of single- and two-family homes in the Buffalo Niagara region now have a financial incentive to purchase their home near public transportation. The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), today announced the Buffalo Niagara Smart Commute® Initiative, which gives prospective home buyers in Buffalo and neighboring communities a greater opportunity to qualify for a mortgage with the help of savings that can be realized from living near and using the Metro transit system.

The Buffalo Niagara Smart Commute® Initiative addresses the link between housing affordability and transportation costs, and recognizes that homeowners who spend less on commuting expenses can contribute potential savings toward the purchase of a home.

If home buyers purchase a home within a half-mile of a Metro rail station or Metro bus stop, The Summit Federal Credit Union (The Summit) will add a portion of their potential transportation savings to their qualifying income, which could increase their home-buying power and help them buy more home for their money.

The announcement of the Initiative took place at a bus stop at the intersection of Amherst Street and Crescent Avenue. NFTA executive director Lawrence M. Meckler; Anthony M. Masiello, Mayor, City of Buffalo; Michael S. Vadala, president and CEO of Rochester-based The Summit Federal Credit Union; Peter Peterson, president of the Buffalo Niagara Association of Realtors and, John J. Maloney, senior deputy director of Fannie Mae’s (FNM/NYSE) Western and Central New York Partnership Office were in attendance.

NFTA’s executive director Meckler announced, “As an added incentive to the program, borrowers under the Buffalo Niagara Smart Commute®

Initiative will also receive a free monthly Metro pass for six months (two per household) for unlimited use of the Metro system.”

The Buffalo/Niagara Association of Realtors, will promote the Smart Commute® Initiative in the region.

The advantages of purchasing a home through the Buffalo Niagara Smart Commute Initiative are:

- * For loan qualification purposes - The Summit will add a portion of the potential transportation savings to borrowers’ qualifying income – an addition of \$200 per month for one wage-earner households and \$250 per month for two wage-earner households – which could increase the home-buying power of a typical purchaser of a median-priced home by approximately \$10,000.
- * Low down payment of only 3 percent on the purchase price of the home.
- * Enables home buyer to reduce or eliminate the expense and upkeep of a personal vehicle.
- * Benefits the environment by allowing the home buyer to conserve natural resources, lessen impact of vehicular emissions and reduce traffic congestion.

Borrowers don’t have to be a The Summit Federal Credit Union member to apply for a mortgage and may be required to complete home buyer education classes both before and after the purchase of the home.

For more information on the Buffalo Niagara Smart Commute® Initiative, consumers may contact The Summit at 1-800-836-7328 ext.7010. Membership in The Summit is not required.

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

Quotable quote...

“Any student of history understands that whether it be the relationship between the Erie Canal and development in upstate New York, or the Transcontinental Railroad and the development of the West leading to the creation of cities such as Las Vegas, or even what Sam Bass Warner called "Street Car Suburbs" here in Boston, there is a direct and distinct relationship between transit access to major centers of employment and the value of real estate.”

Lawrence S. DiCara, Boston Business Journal , May 20, 2005

Public Transit Still Safer than Automobile Travel

reviewed by Gladys Gifford

Action on New Transportation Act

Late in the evening of June 30, House and Senate conferees reached tentative agreement on an overall framework and funding level for the TEA 21 reauthorization bill (H.R. 3) -- \$286.4 billion over six years, with reportedly \$52.6 billion for transit. Earlier in the evening, Congress passed an eighth temporary extension of TEA 21 through July 19, which the President signed into law on July 1. Conferees struggled in recent days over a number of highway related issues, including the portion of highway funding included in the so-called "minimum allocation" (the percentage of gas taxes returned to the state where they are collected), the amount for highway earmarks in the bill versus the amount for earmarks in the appropriations process, and the split between House and Senate highway earmarks. Conferees agreed on a framework to address these issues, and staff are expected to negotiate details within this framework over the July 4 recess.

Appropriations Update

The full House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Transportation, Treasury and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia appropriations bill (H.R. 3058) by a vote of 405-18 on June 30. The bill would provide \$8.482 billion in FY 2006 for the federal transit program as reported in APTA's June 23 Legislative Update. The increase of \$836 million over FY 2005 is the largest ever one-year increase for federal transit funding and is consistent with guaranteed funding in the House-passed TEA 21 reauthorization bill. During consideration of the bill, the House adopted an amendment by voice vote to increase Amtrak funding to \$1.2 billion. The Senate subcommittee is expected to mark up its version of the appropriations bill the week of July 11, but its consideration on the Senate Floor may not take place until September.

In response to the recent tragedy in the London Underground, the Victoria Transport Policy Institute (VPTI) has published a report by Todd Alexander Litman to evaluate the overall safety of public transit, taking into account all risks, including recent terrorist attacks.

Called, "Terrorism, Transit and Public Safety Evaluating the Risks," the report indicates that "transit is an extremely safe mode, with total fatality rates per passenger-mile approximately one-tenth that of automobile travel."

Supported by charts and statistics, the report analyses casualty rates from the United Kingdom and the United States, showing that death rates from automobile crashes far exceed those from transit accidents.

"Transit risks tend to receive more attention than automobile risks. Because they are rare, incidents that kill or injure a few transit passengers often receive national or international media attention, while automobile crashes that kill a few people are so common they are considered local news, and injury accidents often receive no media coverage at all.

Transit terrorist attacks are designed to be highly visible, resulting in heavy media coverage. The fact that such attacks are intentional rather than accidental makes them particularly tragic and frustrating. And they raise fears that such attacks may become more frequent or severe, so risks may increase in the future. For these reasons, it is unsurprising that transit terrorism tends to instill more fear than other risks that statistically are likely to cause greater overall harm. That is exactly what terrorists intend."

To view the full report, see: Victoria Transport Policy Institute 1250 Rudlin Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 3R7, CANADA www.vtpi.org info@vtpi.org Phone & Fax 250-360-1560

Buffalo-Pittsburgh tour, June 11, 2005, was great success!

Twenty-two people traveled by bus to Pittsburgh on Saturday, June 11, representing CRTC and the Buffalo Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The group, guided by transit staff, toured the newly renovated Overbrook line, connected at the Library park n-ride to Washington Junction and arrived at the South Hills Village Mall and large parking ramp.

CRTC will feature a full report of the Pittsburgh tour at an upcoming monthly meeting.

**“Restore Buffalo”
Open House at Central Terminal
Free! Music! Displays!**

Saturday, July 23, 11 AM-4 PM

"Restore Buffalo" Open House at the Central Terminal will feature:

Jazz music from the Kenton/St. Joe's Summer Jazz band

Over 200 pieces of art at our
depARTure galleries in the concourse and first floor.

Displays by: BEREC, Free Buffalo, Preservation Coalition of Erie County,
Revitalize Buffalo, Buffalo Rising Magazine and Journal, Darwin Martin
House and Graycliff Conservancy, and **Citizens Regional Transit.**

Food and beverages will be available.

Come out and see what's good about Buffalo!

More information at: www.buffalocentralterminal.org

**Every Day Earth Day
Exposition at the Buffalo Zoo**

Sunday, August 14, 10 AM-4 PM

Everybody come! CRTC plans to have a display

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation

P.O. Box 1186

Buffalo, NY 14231-1186

return service requested

CALENDAR

July 13 9:30 AM
GBNRTC-PCC meeting
Niagara Co. Public Safety Bldg.,
Lockport

**July 19 7:30 PM
CRTC monthly meeting
“A Solar-Powered Carousel”
3330 Main St., Buffalo**

July 23 11:00 AM-4:00 PM
“Restore Buffalo” open house
Central Terminal, Buffalo

Aug. 10 9:30 AM
GBNRTC-PCC meeting
NFTA, Buffalo

Aug. 14, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM
Earth Day Expo at the Buffalo Zoo

No CRTC meeting in August!!