



CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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New Leadership?

According to this summer's GBNRTC newsletter, the NFTA will not begin to plan for Metro Rail expansion until 2010. This is backwards.

By 2010, we will have a new governor, a new President, a new mayor, a new County legislature, a new Erie County executive.

By 2010, the price of gasoline will probably hit \$5 a gallon.

The NYSDOT budget for 2006-2010 includes numerous road-building and road-widening projects here in Western New York. These projects are proposed for a shrinking population which frequently opposes such road-building and road-widening.

Meanwhile, the one project that has proved to have widespread public support -Metro Rail expansion to the airport-- receives no funding whatsoever.

Will the new leadership be willing to go where the public wants them to lead?

The new leadership could act boldly, to go where none have gone before.

This new leadership could jump-start the Metro Rail planning process:

- * They could listen to their constituents, who simply ask that the planning for Metro Rail expansion begin now.
- * They could gather together a coalition of Erie County elected leadership to support operations & maintenance of an expanded Metro Rail.
- * They could push the NFTA to insist that the GBNRTC amend the current NYSDOT budget to include planning for Metro Rail expansion.

Now that would be new leadership!

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CRTC Monthly Meeting

**Tuesday, September 20
12:00 Noon**

“Metro Rail: the Smartest Distance Between Two Points”

A preview of CRTC's new educational power-point based on work done by UB intern, Brian Goldman, edited and revised by Seth Triggs and Gladys Gifford.

**Join us!
Meet our new UB intern, Christopher Brown.
Help shape the new power-point presentation.
Offer suggestions for venues and public relations campaigns.**

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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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NYS Transportation Bond Act on November Ballot

by Gladys Gifford

On November 8, New York State will put a question to the voters: shall the state issue a new transportation bond, in the amount of \$2.9 billion?

This proposed Transportation Bond Act was offered by Gov. George Pataki, State Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver as part of the New York State Transportation Memorandum of Understanding, released July 13, 2005. The Bond Act is expected to complete the transportation budget for the next five years of funding, to spend \$35.8 billion on capital improvements to all modes of transportation in the state.

The package is shared equally between the state Department of Transportation and New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). Unlike the defeated bond act proposed in 2000, this proposal lays out in clear detail the projects to be funded.

The MTA's share (\$17.9 billion) will fund needed core system improvements, key projects to expand and improve connectivity in the subway system, and additional security improvements. The proposed bond act will supply \$1.45 billion of the total needed.

The bulk of the NYSDOT's share (\$17.9 billion) is slated for highways and bridges, including \$1.13 billion from the proposed bond act. All other modes of transportation receive only \$0.6 billion (\$636 million) for capital improvements. Out of that \$636 million, \$235 million goes to freight and port needs, \$116 million goes to aviation, and \$50 million goes to the canal corridor. Only \$235 million is available for upstate public transportation needs.

Highway projects in Western New York to be partially funded by the proposed bond act include: reconstruct Route #219 south of Springville (\$11.4 million), reconstruct Route #62 in Wheatfield (\$6.0 million).

WNY public transportation would receive twenty hybrid buses for the NFTA from the proposed bond act.

The Lancaster Airport would receive \$1.9 million and the Olean Airport would receive \$300,000 from the proposed bond act for various capital improvements.

In summary:

Albany plans to spend \$35.8 billion on capital improvements to the state's transportation system over the next 5 years. Of that amount, 8% is to be raised by the proposed bond act.

Half of all transportation funds are to be spent in New York City by the MTA.

The up-state half will be shared by many counties and four transportation authorities. 97% of these funds will be spent on highways and bridges. Only 3% of the up-state share will be spent on public transportation, to provide clean energy hybrid buses.

The defeated Bond Act of 2000 asked for \$3.8 billion to help fund a total capital transportation program set at \$34.2 billion. The current need for additional spending on transportation infrastructure is supported by the findings of the NYS Advisory Panel (Transportation--Trouble Ahead 11-04), which cited increased usage while repairs lag for both public transportation and highways.

However, up-state public transportation deserves more than 3% of the funding to serve densely populated areas. Scarce resources should go for moving people efficiently, conserving oil and planning effective transportation policy. Will this Bond Act do the job?

Sources: www.budget.state.ny.us;
www.state.ny.us/governor/press

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

Making Connections between Environment and Transportation:

David Orr,
Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics,
Oberlin College

"Earth in Mind: Patriotism, Politics and the Environment in an Age of Terror"

University at Buffalo
Wednesday, September 28, 8:00 p.m.
Slee Hall on the UB North Campus in Amherst.

Dr. Orr writes and lectures extensively on the connections between the built environment and the natural environment. He includes impacts of transportation policy in his analysis.

New Federal Transportation Bill Passed

...www.tstc.org 8-19-05

Nearly two years and 12 funding extensions after TEA-21 expired, President Bush signed the 1,752-page "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users" (SAFETEA-LU) on August 10, 2005. The bill provides \$286.4 billion in funds over six years (fiscal years 2004-2009) for highway construction and maintenance, transit projects and operations, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and safety programs.

SAFETEA-LU represents a nominal 38% increase over TEA-21 spending levels but only a **15% rise** if inflation is accounted for. The levels are far less than FHWA, AASHTO and others have said is necessary to repair and modernize transportation networks across the country. The amount is also significantly less than the \$318 billion the Senate sought in its version of the bill last summer, and is nearly \$100 billion short of the \$375 billion House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chair Don Young's (R-AK) proposed roughly three years ago. The overall funding level was a major sticking point for the White House... White House concessions on the overall funding level, and a congressional compromise which guarantees that by 2008 each state will get back at least 92% of contributions to the highway trust fund, cleared the way for SAFETEA-LU's passage just before Congress left Washington for August recess.

With fiscal year 2004 behind us, SAFETEA-LU will provide over \$244 billion in guaranteed funding for fiscal years 2005 through 2009. Of that, more than \$193 billion is set aside for broadly defined highway programs (a roughly 10% inflation-adjusted increase). Public transit will receive more than \$45.3 billion over five years (for a 22% hike after inflation), and a larger highway safety program has been separated from the highway title and will get about \$5 billion.

New York State will receive **\$8.4 billion in highway funding** over the next five years. New Jersey will get \$4.7 billion, and Connecticut will receive \$2.5 billion in highway funding. Federal Transit Administration funding is doled out to states, metropolitan planning organizations and transit agencies using formulas based on population, ridership, and density, among other variables. Detailed allocations are not

entirely clear as yet, though New York and New Jersey can be expected to receive a large portion of the transit total. The two states are slated to receive at least \$490 million (and probably more) directly allocated in 2006 for the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail line, the LIRR Connection to Grand Central, and probably the Second Avenue Subway.

Much attention has focused on the high level of Congressional earmarking in SAFETEA-LU. The bill contains nearly 6,400 member items totaling \$24 billion (about 9% of the total guaranteed funding). [By contrast,] in 1987, President Reagan vetoed a transportation bill because there were 152 earmarked projects in it....

The New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut congressional delegations were certainly active in this regard. With 494 earmarks totaling \$990 million, New York State received the second highest number of special projects (California was first), and the fourth highest dollar amount for earmarks....

Under the guise of "streamlining," SAFETEA-LU makes several changes to the environmental review process. For one, the bill sets a 180-day deadline for court challenges to project permits or environmental reviews and exempts projects with "de minimis" impacts from protections afforded to historic sites and natural resources. The federal requirement that transportation and air pollution reduction plans must be coordinated will remain, though the frequency of reviews is lengthened to every four years from three.

SAFETEA-LU offers good news for bicycling and pedestrian advocates. The bill contains about \$600 million for a new Safe Routes to Schools program for improving the bicycling and pedestrian environment around schools, although spread across the country this will amount to only a few million per state per year. It also boosts the Transportation Enhancements program, heavily used since 1991 to build cycling and walking infrastructure, to about \$4 billion, up from \$3.3 billion in TEA-21, and features a large number of "green pork" earmarks for cycling and pedestrian projects.

Is the Intermodal Transportation Center in Jeopardy?

At a public hearing, July 14, 2005, the spokesman for Foit Albert Associates indicated that the structure to be built on the site of the Donovan Office Building would be a parking ramp. This "Inner Harbor Parking Facility" would be built to accommodate the needs of the Hamburg Drain running through it and would provide 1000 parking slots for cars. He said that the Federal money earmarked for the project does not include an intermodal design.

What happened? The Bass Pro Memorandum of Understanding clearly states that the Parking Facility would incorporate the Intermodal Transportation Center. Did the Federal dollars go walking? ...Stay tuned....

Making Connections between Environment and Transportation:

Daemen College Center for Sustainable Communities and Civic Engagement presents:

Environmental Summit

Saturday, October 1, 2005

9:00 AM-12:00 noon

Daemen College, Wick Center, Social Room

Featured Speakers:

**Congressman Brian Higgins,
NYS 27th District**

**Dr. Joseph Gardella,
UB Professor of Chemistry,
Sierra Club**

Discussion sessions to follow speakers:

**toxic hot spots, recycling, transportation policy,
sustainability, waterfront, and more**

Goal: collaborate and educate for solutions!

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation

P.O. Box 1186

Buffalo, NY 14231-1186

return service requested

CALENDAR

Sept. 13 6:00 PM
PLWNY meeting
EPIC Bldg, 1000 Main St., Buffalo

Sept. 14 9:30 AM
GBNRTC PCC meeting
Buffalo City Hall, Rm #1417

**Sept. 20 12:00 Noon
CRTC monthly meeting
3330 Main St., Buffalo**

Sept. 20 7:00 PM
The Nichols School, Buffalo
“Smart Growth is Smart Business”
series presentation, “Creating New
Suburban Neighborhoods of Lasting
Value” by Craig Lewis, a planner
from Charlotte, NC.

Sept. 28 8:00 PM
Slee Hall, UB Amherst Campus
David Orr, “Earth in Mind” (p. 2)

Oct. 1 9:00 AM-12:00 noon
Daemen College Environmental
Summit, Main St., Amherst (p. 4)

Oct. 12 9:30 AM
GBNRTC PCC meeting

Nov. 15 7:00 p.m., The Nichols
School, “Transportation Strategies for
the 21st Century” – James Charlier,
transportation planner, Boulder, CO