



# CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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crtc@citizenstransit.org http://citizenstransit.org/

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March 2007

## *It seems to me...*

It happens almost every day. Some elected official, from the president on down, says that we must find alternative sources of energy.

But, how many times do you hear an elected official call for alternative forms of **transportation**? Once in a blue moon. Al Gore got it right in his academy award winning film. But he's no longer an elected official.

Both Republicans and Democrats seem to be in the dark on this issue. It's up to us to enlighten them, to write to them.

Remind them

\* that alternative forms of transportation can save millions of gallons of gasoline daily, ultimately eliminating our dependence on foreign oil..

\* that light rail transit in our cities, using electric power generated by "green" sources, and high speed inter-city trains, will take millions of cars off our streets and interstate highways.

Our elected officials must recognize these facts, and they must take off the blinders that cause them to fund highways at excessive rates, but provide pitifully inadequate funding for inner-city rail and intra-city high speed rail.

Please don't wait for somebody else to do it. Sit down right now and write to your Representatives-- Higgins, Reynolds, and Slaughter, and Senators Clinton and Schumer. Speak up to our newly-elected Governor, Eliot Spitzer. Call your city, town and county officials.

You elected them. It is up to you to tell them--rail transit is the green way to go!

Joe Radder

Past Chair, CRTC

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## **CRTC Monthly Meeting**

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

## **"Canal Side - The next Great Place in America"**

**a presentation by**

**Charles Rosenow, President**

## **Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation**

Charles Rosenow is a city planner who has worked in economic development for the City of Buffalo and the ECIDA. He has recently returned to Buffalo from Nevada, where he worked on projects for the city of Reno and most recently for an Indian Tribe in northern Nevada. Local projects include Dunn Tire Park, Tiff Farm, Buffalo Free Trade Complex, and the original application for Federal transit funds to build Metro Rail.

He will present the latest form of the Bass Pro development proposal, with related transit and parking concepts.

### **Join us!**

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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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**Toronto's Big Idea**

...www.thestar.com

Toronto Transit Commission unveiled an ambitious blueprint [3-16-07] for a light rail system that would crisscross the city far beyond existing and planned subway lines.

The 60- to 80-kilometre web of light rail would cost about \$6 billion.

The plan would improve transit access to virtually every corner of Toronto and move 175 million people a year, a third of whom would be new transit users, according to TTC chair Adam Giambrone. The plan calls for seven light rail lines, covering 120 kilometres of the city, employing an additional 250 new model streetcars.

"No Torontonian should be disadvantaged because they don't own a car," he told the city hall press conference, adding that the new network would connect neighbourhoods currently unserved by transit.

Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker referred to the announcement as "a miracle plan" that would extend a spider web of light rail transit from one end of the city to the other, and "be spectacular."

**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

**The Fed gives, the Fed takes away (at FHWA)--  
How shall NYS Distribute the Pain?**

by Gladys Gifford

*rescission:*

*the act of rescinding, or repealing--annulling, revoking a previous action*

A recent urgent notice from the policy wonks at Surface Transportation Policy Partnership (STPP) has added a new word to our vocabulary at CRTC: rescission.

Apparently, the annual Federal appropriations bills regularly signed by the President may include a rescission order, which requires states to relinquish an arbitrary share of transportation funds previously allotted but not yet obligated to be spent on projects (programs).

In other words, states are being told to swallow a major cut in the national transportation budget.

According to the STPP (*stpp22@transact.org*), there were three such rescission orders during FY '06, totalling \$3.845 billion. This most recent order from the White House amounts to \$3.471 billion--and this is only the first to be issued in 2007. This order was issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on 3-19-07, but no such order has been posted on the FHWA website nor has the information been easily available to the public.

Parks & Trails New York (*ptny@ptny.org*) has reported that the amount being repealed for New York State is \$163.6 million.

The concern raised by both watch-dog groups is this: which programs will suffer cuts? At risk are funds for Transportation Enhancement programs, Recreational Trails Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), Bridge programs, and parts of the Surface Transportation Program.

**Governor Spitzer** must decide by **April 18** how this cut in transportation funding is distributed. Citizens are obliged to advise him on this important issue.

Contact the governor at [www.ny.gov/governor/contact/index.html](http://www.ny.gov/governor/contact/index.html)

Advising the governor are:

**Timothy J. Gilchrist - Deputy Secretary for Economic Development and Infrastructure** ([timothy.gilchrist@chamber.state.ny.us](mailto:timothy.gilchrist@chamber.state.ny.us)),  
and **Astrid Glynn - Acting NYSDOT Commissioner** ([commissioner@dot.state.ny.us](mailto:commissioner@dot.state.ny.us)).

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**Ridership on Metro Rail grows but shrinks on Metro Bus**

*The most recent ridership statistics reported by the NFTA to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) show that*

Metro Rail carries over 21,000 passengers per day on 6.4 miles of rail (up 8.67% over 2005), compared to Metro Bus which carries 63,700 passengers per day on 1,305 miles of road (down 2.45% over 2005).

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# Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Authorizes Full Funding for Fiscal Year 2007

...CFTE Update 03.29.07 - Vol.5 No.3 info@cfte.org

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has issued the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Apportionments and Allocations Notice. The notice provides specific details regarding how the \$8.975 billion will be distributed for federal transit programs under the FY 2007 Continuing Appropriations Resolution (P.L. 110-5, H. J. Res 20) which the president signed on February 15.

The resolution, a spending bill that completes all unfinished FY 2007 appropriations bills including the FY 2007 Transportation Appropriations bill, was approved by Congress on Feb 14th. The inclusion of \$8.975 billion for transit programs is the same level authorized by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU, P.L. 109-59).

This was exciting news for Transportation Advocates because most domestic federal programs did not receive an increase and instead had funding frozen at FY 2006 levels, but transit and highway programs were spared from the freeze.

FTA was given the authority under the continuing resolution to allocate and distribute all FY 2007 New Starts/Small Starts funds, and the agency received similar discretion to allocate just less than half of the \$901 million of Bus and Bus Facilities and Clean Fuels grant funds after SAFETEA-LU earmarks are honored.

FTA was granted this authority because the FY 2007 continuing resolution contained no earmarks. The new Democratic leadership of the 110th Congress has agreed to establish new restrictions on earmark requests that are included in FY 2008 bills.

FTA did not indicate in the Apportionments Notice how those funds will be distributed for New Starts/Small Starts projects.

FTA did give details regarding a selection process for \$12 million in Alternatives Analysis funds that were not earmarked by SAFETEA-LU.

To view the full notice:  
<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/07-1290.pdf>

# Smart Growth Series, Niagara Falls

Partners for a Livable WNY is participating with a group of concerned citizens of the City of Niagara Falls in a nine-week Wednesday evening **Smart Growth series “Revitalizing and Romancing the City – From Smart Growth to Sustainable Development” beginning April 11.**

The public is cordially invited to this free event.

All programs will be at the **Niagara Falls Public Library from 7 to 9 p.m.**

The topics of the series and some of presenters are:

**April 11** – Stirring the Pot to Prosperity – Using the Principles of Smart Growth as the Ingredients for Revitalization – **George Grasser**, President, Partners for a Livable Western New York

**April 18** – Dealing with Vacant and Abandoned Properties – **Michael Clarke**, Director of the Buffalo Office of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

**April 25** – Housing for Everyone – **Timothy Wanamaker**, Director of the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning

**May 2** – Making Downtown and Neighborhood Retail Work

**May 9** – The Public Realm – **Roger Brown**, Rochester architect

**May 16** – Mobility Around the City

**May 23** – Infill Development

**May 30** – Quality of Life for City Residents

**June 6** – Where Do We Go From Here?

The format for these programs will be a 30-40 minute presentation followed by a panel response and comments (there will be three local panelists for each presentation), followed by questions and answers and audience participation. A large contingent of local officials is expected to attend these programs.

**For more information:**  
**phone 716-807-6754 or 716-285-1318**  
**e-mail Zach Casale at zcasale@mainstreetniagara.com**

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The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) announced [3-12-07] that Americans took 10.1 billion trips on local public transportation in 2006 – the first time [over the 10 billion mark] in 49 years. Over the last decade, public transportation’s growth rate outpaced the growth rate of the population and the growth rate of vehicle miles traveled on our nation’s highways. ....Public transit use is up 30 percent since 1995. That is more than double the growth rate of the population (12 percent) and higher than the growth rate for the vehicle miles traveled on our roads (24 percent) during that same period. In 2006, public transit ridership grew 2.9 percent over 2005. To put the 10.1 billion public transportation trips in perspective, transit trips outnumber domestic airline trips by 15 to one.

....<http://www.apta.com/research/stats/ridership>

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Citizens Regional Transit Corp. invites you

## **Step It Up 2007 rally**

**4-14-07, 11:00-11:30 AM,**

**Church Street station, Metro Rail**

Main Street at N. Division

**Celebrate Buffalo's green transportation,**

**Metro Rail!**

**Urge Congress to Step It Up**

**to curb global warming!**

**Bring posters and show the world how**

**Buffalo's downtown transit goes green!**

*see [StepItUp2007.org](http://StepItUp2007.org) for more information*

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**Citizens Regional Transit Corporation**

P.O. Box 1186

Buffalo, NY 14231-1186

*return service requested*

### **CALENDAR**

April 11 7:00-9:00 PM  
Smart Growth series, Niagara  
Falls Public Library (p. 3)

**April 14 11:00 AM**  
**Step It Up rally**  
**Church St. station (p. 4)**

**April 17 Noon**  
**CRTC Monthly Meeting**  
**3330 Main St., Buffalo**  
**(corner NF Blvd & Main)**

April 18 7:00-9:00 PM  
Smart Growth series, Niagara  
Falls Public Library (p. 3)

April 18 Midnight  
Deadline for NYS to surrender  
FHWA monies (p. 2)

May 2 9:30 AM  
PCC meeting of GBNRTC  
Carnegie Bldg, 1022 Main St.,  
Niagara Falls, NY

**May 15 12:00 noon**  
**CRTC Monthly Meeting**  
**3330 Main St., Buffalo**  
**(corner NF Blvd & Main)**