



CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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

Volume #8 Issue # 5

May/June 2007

It seems to me...

They just don't get it!
In a March 12 column ([Buffalo News](#)), George Will quoted U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters. She said that (automobile) traffic congestion is growing worse. In the last twenty years, traffic congestion in the eighty-five largest cities (Metro Buffalo would be one of these) has caused the number of hours wasted each year during rush hours for the average driver to increase from sixteen to forty-seven.

What was Will's answer?
He said, "there must be new highways and new lanes on old ones."
They just don't get it!

Adequate rail rapid transit would have the appeal to lure millions of car-owners out of their cars. Yet Federal transportation spending in 2007 was less than \$9 billion for transit, compared to \$39 billion for highways! And the Bush administration wants to add almost \$3 billion more for highways in 2008, but less than \$0.5 billion for transit.

Interestingly, it costs less to build light rail transit from scratch than to expand a highway. The NYS Department of Transportation will spend \$28 million to expand only two lane-miles of Transit Road, compared to \$7-10 million to construct a mile of rail for light rail transit!

When will we wake up? When will we insist that we must expand Metro Rail?

The public meetings scheduled by the GBNRTC (see p. 3) are the perfect opportunity to speak up. Let's jolt our transportation planners awake! Tell them: spend taxpayer dollars on expanding transit, not new roads!

Joe Radder

Past Chair, CRTC

CRTC Monthly Meetings

**Tuesday, May 15
12:00 Noon**

"Cobblestone District, Next Steps"

The CRTC Board brings updates on the proposal to extend Metro Rail into the Cobblestone District, along S. Park Ave.

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

"UB Transportation"

Christopher Austin, Transportation Coordinator for UB, briefs CRTC on transportation issues and plans at the University at Buffalo.

Join us!

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.

Bass Pro--or Con?

by Gladys Gifford

As presented to CRTC at the April meeting, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corp. (ECHDC) has proposed another formula to attract Bass Pro to downtown Buffalo. The project was touted [3-30-07] by elected leaders as good for downtown revitalization and as a tool to reconnect Buffalo with the waterfront.

However, the details may tell another story. Is the "Pre-Development Agreement" available for public review? Does this agreement honor the Environmental Impact Statement implemented in 2004 for the Erie Canal Harbor Project?

These questions and more were immediately raised by public-interest groups who have spent years and good faith efforts on the waterfront Master Plan. The public worked together to craft the goals set forth in the Master Plan: to honor historic preservation, to ensure compatible economic development, and to insist on public access by way of multiple transportation modes.

For more information, check out the League of Women Voters Buffalo-Niagara, Buffalo Riverkeeper, and the Campaign for Greater Buffalo.

To review the Erie Canal Harbor Project master plan, contact the NFTA or ask at the business desk of the Central Library, Buffalo.

Keeping Our Eyes on the Road: How an Aging Population Will Get from Here to There

...excerpts from a speech given 8-05 by Dr. Byron Thames

Member, AARP Board of Directors

...Nationally, we're just a few years away from a dramatic demographic shift. The baby boom generation is getting older. The latest predictions say that by the year 2030, one in five Americans will be 65 or older....

...One of AARP's most recent studies found that non-drivers over the age of 75 say they face severe restrictions on their daily activities. In fact, they were six times as likely as drivers to miss doing something they would have liked to do because they did not have the transportation....

...But for many elderly people....there comes that day when they have to hand over the keys.

Then what?

....here in the U.S., 60 years of federal transportation policy has focused almost exclusively on the construction and maintenance of roads to accommodate the automobile. That mindset has to change.

...We need more pedestrian-safe communities. Remember sidewalks?

...We need aggressive investment in our mass transit systems. In a recent survey we conducted at AARP, 60 percent of seniors said that there was no public transportation within 10-minute walking distance of their homes. The suburbs and rural areas are badly underserved in

this area. And even many urban public transportation systems are geared toward commuters, offering infrequent service during off-peak hours or to areas where there aren't many offices and workplaces. We need greater innovation—more feeder routes, more dial-a-ride options, and more hybrid services.

And by the way, public transportation shouldn't just be seen as a last resort when driving is no longer an option. It should be prevalent enough in our communities that people are accustomed to using it regularly throughout their lives....

It's going to take more public dollars. It's going to take grass roots activism from the citizens who live with the consequences of these decisions every day. And it's going to take an increased commitment from our policymakers.

At AARP, our vision is to help Americans 50 and over age with dignity and purpose. But there can be no dignity or purpose without the ability to get from here to there. Increasing the options for mobility and transportation is at the heart of AARP's 10-year social impact agenda....

The challenge is an awesome one, but we have no choice. We have to do it if we want to stay true to universal American values like freedom, dignity and choice.

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

CRTC Launches Fundraiser for Cobblestone Loop

The Cobblestone District loop proposed by the CRTC is a short extension of Metro Rail, running from the foot of Main Street east on South Park Avenue, north two blocks on Louisiana Street, then west on Perry Street to reconnect with Main Street.

This 1.2 mile extension of Metro Rail would provide public transit access to many businesses and residential areas, including HSBC Arena, the Lofts at Elk, Seneca Nation, Buffalo Municipal Housing, plus numerous parking lots.

The CRTC has met with an engineering firm who has agreed to produce the feasibility study (project outline) required in order to proceed. The goal of the CRTC fundraiser is to raise \$9,750. by the beginning of June, the cost of the feasibility study. As of May 8, CRTC has raised over \$1,000., from members and friends.

CRTC urges all supporters of Metro Rail expansion to help us reach our fundraising goal! Checks in any amount to CRTC are welcome, sent to the treasurer (address at left).

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS
2030 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN &
2008-2012 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) is hosting a series of four public meetings to encourage the community to review and comment on the Draft 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Draft 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Erie and Niagara Counties. The 2030 Long Range-Transportation Plan contains an integrated set of public policies, strategies, and investments to maintain, manage, and improve the transportation system in the Erie and Niagara County region through the year 2030. The 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program, which is the capital-programming component of the 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan, consists of all federally funded roadway, transit and major transportation projects being considered within the region over the next five years.

The following public meetings have been scheduled to further explain and discuss the proposed plans. All meetings will run from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. A formal presentation will be made followed by a public comment period. Special accommodations will be provided upon request. The public review and comment period extends from May 5, 2007 to June 4, 2007.

- May 8, 2007**- Quality Inn, 7708 Niagara Falls Blvd., Niagara Falls, NY;
- May 10, 2007** - Lockport Town Hall, 6560 Dysinger Road, Lockport, NY;
- May 15, 2007** - AAA Travel & Insurance Center 100 International Drive, Williamsville, NY;
- May 17, 2007** - Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Central Meeting Room 2nd Floor, 1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo, NY

The Draft 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Draft 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program are available for review at public libraries throughout Erie and Niagara Counties, the GBNRTC website at www.gbnrtc.org, and at the GBNRTC offices at 438 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202.

If you cannot attend a public meeting you may send your comments to: GBNRTC, Suite 503, 438 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202; (716) 856-2026; Fax: (716) 856-3203; E-mail: staff@gbnrtc.org.

**CRTC Member Travels via
Public Transit in Japan,
Australia**

...by Anne Huberman

I just returned [3-19-07] from four weeks in Brisbane, Australia, followed by two weeks in Osaka, Japan. I used public transportation in both places for almost all of my travels, and it was a joy to be able to get around without driving (on the left side of the road).

In Brisbane, I used buses for most travels, and they came frequently and reliably enough to be very useful. We also took a local train to visit the art gallery in the city, and in the past we have taken the CityCat -- a high speed catamaran on the Brisbane River -- to get around in the city.

In Osaka, we toured using a very convenient subway system and the train system to which it connected. Subway trains came so frequently that we never had to wait more than a few minutes, and the network was so extensive that we could always get close to our destination.

We took the Shinkansen (bullet train) from Osaka to Tokyo, about 340 miles in 2.5 hours. It was *FAST* (over 130 mph), very smooth, comfortable, and right on time. Wouldn't it be nice to have such a fast train to Albany? to NYC?

It's good to be home after such a long trip, but I wish it were as easy to get around in Buffalo. Light rail to the airport would be a good start...

Good -Going Launched by GBNRTC for AI Gore eventgbnrtc.org

A first for WNY was launched for the 4-27 Gore event at UB's north campus.

The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) introduced Good-Going Western New York at www.goodgoingwny.com for participants.

The launch of this website by the GBNRTC provides travelers and commuters with a secure, easy-to-use and available method to find alternative transportation options for traveling such as ridesharing, bus/rail, bicycling and park-n-ride.

The main feature of this website is a carpool-matching program which allows the user to find ridesharing opportunities in the Erie and Niagara Counties area. Good Going lets you enjoy the advantages of sharing ride costs and the benefits of less stressful travel, while also reducing traffic congestion and pollution in this region.

Good Going also offers information on other travel choices - transit (Metro bus/rail), the location of park-and-ride lots, and bicycling.

The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)
hosting

Public Meetings

Draft 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) & Draft 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Hear explanations and Be Heard!

Transportation Plans impact Erie and Niagara Counties for years to come!

All public meetings held 6:00 - 8:00 PM.

**Tuesday, May 8, 2007 - Quality Inn
7708 Niagara Falls Blvd.
Niagara Falls, N.Y.**

**Thursday, May 10, 2007 - Lockport Town Hall
6560 Dysinger Road
Lockport, NY**

**Tuesday, May 15, 2007 - AAA Travel Center
100 International Drive, Williamsville, NY**

**Thursday, May 17, 2007 - Buffalo & Erie County
Public Library
Central Meeting Room 2nd Floor, 1 Lafayette Square,
Buffalo, NY**

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation

P.O. Box 1186

Buffalo, NY 14231-1186

return service requested

CALENDAR

**GBNRTC public meetings, LRTP,
TIP, 6-8 PM:**

May 8 Niagara Falls

May 10 Lockport

May 15 Williamsville

May 17 Buffalo

Niagara Falls Smart Growth

Niagara Falls Public Library,

7-9 PM:

May 9 – The Public Realm

May 16 – Mobility Around the City

May 23 – Infill Development

May 30 – Quality of Life

June 6 – Next Steps

May 15 12:00 noon

CRTC Monthly Meeting

3330 Main St., Buffalo

(corner NF Blvd & Main)

May 19 8 AM-1:30 PM

“Green and Growing” summit,

Buffalo State College, \$20

(includes breakfast and lunch),

call 852-2857 by 5-10; keynote

speaker: Storm Cunningham

June 6 9:30 AM

PCC meeting of GBNRTC

NYS Thruway, 455 Cayuga Rd

Cheektowaga, NY

June 19 12:00 noon

CRTC Monthly Meeting

Aug. 5 Toronto trip

bus tour sponsored by NRHS