



CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

published by Citizens Regional Transit Corporation
P.O. Box 1186, Buffalo, NY 14231-1186
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Volume #10 Issue #1

January/February, 2008

It seems to me...

There is apparently no gasoline price too high for the average motorist. People will drive to commute to and from work and for local errands just as much with gasoline at \$3.25 per gallon plus as they did when gas was less than \$2. I live on Route 5 in Williamsville, and the traffic is just as horrendous now as it was when gas was cheap.

There may be some slight reduction in long-distance pleasure travel. The Thruway Authority says usage is down, but there's no apparent reduction at the local level.

What will it take to change that? \$4 gasoline? \$5 gasoline? I doubt it. Buses just don't attract car owners, no matter how much they save the user or how much the benefits of bus-riding are publicized. Rail does, however. Just look at all the cars in the Metro Rail park-and-ride lots every day.

Our elected officials talk a lot about alternative fuels, but you seldom hear a word about alternative forms of transportation. Oh yes, occasionally somebody will say people should use public transit more. But they don't seem to understand that success begins with marketing, successful marketing begins with the product, and the product that will sell is rail rapid transit.

The NFTA is talking about expanding the Buffalo Niagara International Airport now serving from 5 to 6 million passengers per year, and they're spending \$26.7 million on the Niagara Falls International Airport, now serving relatively few passengers, mostly on charter flights. When will the NFTA speak up for expanding Metro Rail that serves over 5 million passengers per year in a single 6 mile corridor?

Joe Radder

Past Chair CRTC

CRTC Monthly Meeting

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

"New Year at CRTC"

CRTC's Annual Meeting, to elect officers for 2008 and receive the Annual Report.

**FRIDAY, February 15
12:00 Noon**

(note new day, Friday, same location)

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.

Nancy Naples Appointed to Amtrak Board

www.narprail.org 12-21-07

Three nominees for the Amtrak Board were approved by the Senate Commerce Committee on December 18: Republicans Nancy Naples of [Buffalo,] New York and Denver Stutler of Florida, and Democrat Thomas Carper of Illinois...

Naples said she had loved trains ever since riding from Buffalo to the 1965 World's Fair in New York City. She said she planned to ride the *Empire Builder* early next year to try out Amtrak's current long-distance services.

Stutler said train travel "represents simplicity...many times I have traveled between Washington and New York and it is just simple and friendly. However, I don't think we have made it clear to people how easy it is to catch a train."

Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) urged the nominees to focus on the benefits Amtrak provides and not just the costs. Both Sen. Mel Martinez (R-FL) who introduced Stutler and Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL), a committee member, strongly endorsed Stutler.

Amtrak Funded by Congress, but Operating Funds Shorted

www.narprail.org 12-21-07

Congress completed Fiscal 2008 appropriations work [12-21-07], passing an omnibus bill which funds every federal department except Defense.... The omnibus gives Amtrak \$1.325 billion, a \$31-million (or 2.4%) increase over the 2007 level, but \$255 million less than Amtrak requested. Operating funds are reduced to \$475 million (down \$15 million from 2006 and 2007), while capital grants total \$850 million (of which no more than \$285 million may be used for debt service). If debt service takes close to \$285 million as expected, the amount left for capital would be \$565 million, or \$70 million above the levels of the two previous years.

The omnibus also includes \$30 million to reimburse states for capital costs of improving existing intercity passenger rail service and providing new service, with the federal share limited to a maximum of 50% of a project's cost. As well, the provision from the 2002 emergency USDOT loan that prevented Amtrak from using federal funds to initiate new intercity passenger train routes has been lifted.

The Amtrak and state program figures together equal \$1.355 billion, which is \$61 million or 4.7% above the 2006/2007 levels.

Reduce Airport Congestion! Support Trains!

The FAA will cap the number of hourly flights at New York's JFK Airport beginning next year [2008]. Regrettably, in announcing the new regulations, Transportation Secretary Mary Peters failed to mention the obvious role that passenger trains could play in reducing congestion at busy airports, especially for travel within the Northeast Corridor. As *Wall Street Journal* reporter Dan Machalaba noted in an article about Amtrak's *Acela Express* in August, the 20% increase in *Acela* ridership in Fiscal 2007 year-to-date at that point represented enough passengers to fill 2,000 Boeing 757 jets. Yet, most short-distance flights utilize much smaller planes, often low-capacity regional jets that burden airports with the same slot capacity requirements as large aircraft.

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 \$150.00
- household 35.00
- individual 25.00
- student 5.00

send check to:

CITIZENS REGIONAL TRANSIT CORP.
c/o John K. Howell, treasurer
289 Ashford Avenue
Tonawanda, NY 14150-8563

Progress on the Cobblestone Loop Feasibility Study!

In 2008, the CRTC continues our fundraiser for the Cobblestone Loop feasibility study, to be prepared by Stone Consulting. Our goal is \$9,750. We have raised \$3,700 since mid-April, 2007. As soon as the money is in hand, the work will begin and is expected to be completed in about three months.

Help us reach our goal!

Send your donation to the CRTC treasurer, ASAP!

For more information, see the CRTC web page, citizenstransit.org.

New Year Resolution: Reduce Emissions! How?? Reduce Motor Vehicle Travel!

by Todd Alexander Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute (www.vtpi.org)

[Recently,] I attended the Energy Analysis Forum sponsored by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, where leading North American energy analysts discussed current thinking concerning greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies, much of which involves emission cap and trade programs. Similarly, a recent report by McKinsey, "Reducing U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions: How Much At What Cost" evaluates emission reduction strategies according to their cost effectiveness.

Virtually all this analysis is biased *against mobility management* (strategies that increase transport system efficiency by improving accessibility options and applying more efficient incentives, described at <http://www.vtpi.org/tdm>), for the following reasons:

* Co-benefits are ignored. Current analysis gives little consideration to benefits such as congestion reduction, road and parking facility cost savings, consumer savings, reduced traffic accidents, and improved mobility for non-drivers, although these benefits are often larger in total value than emission reduction benefits.

* Current analysis generally ignores the additional external costs that result when increased vehicle fuel efficiency and subsidized alternative fuels stimulates additional vehicle travel, called a "rebound effect."

* Mobility management emission reductions are considered difficult to predict. Although case studies and models are available for many of these strategies this information is not widely applied to energy planning.

* Mobility management programs are considered difficult to implement. Such programs often involve multiple stakeholders, such as regional and local governments, employers and developers, and various special interest groups. As a result, they tend to seem difficult and risky compared with other emission reduction strategies that only require changes to utility operations, fuel production or vehicle designs.

* Analysis often assumes that vehicle travel reductions harm consumers and the economy. In fact, many mobility management strategies benefit consumers directly and increase economic productivity. Our research indicates that with more optimal pricing and planning practices, travelers would choose to drive less, use alternative modes more, and be better off overall as a result.

Described differently, there are two general approaches to reducing transportation emissions: reduce emission rates per vehicle-kilometer or reduce total vehicle-travel. The first often seems easier, but if done correctly, the second provides far more benefits and so is often best overall (<http://www.vtpi.org/wwclimate.pdf>).

Currently proposed emission reduction programs (particularly those that rely on cap-and-trade) will not implement mobility management as much as optimal, and will miss an opportunity to help address other planning objectives, such as congestion reductions, crash reductions, consumer savings and improved mobility for non-drivers.

It is up to people who understand the wider value of mobility management to educate energy analysts about these issues, so mobility management can receive the support justified.

Spitzer Sets Smart Growth Cabinet

www.ny.gov/governor/press 12-10-07

Governor Eliot Spitzer today [12-10-07] signed an Executive Order creating a Smart Growth Cabinet. The Cabinet will review state agency spending and policies to determine how best to discourage sprawl and promote smart land use practices. It will coordinate cross-agency activities and develop "smart growth" policies that cater to New York's unique regional needs.

Recognizing both the environmental and economic benefits of smart growth, the Cabinet will be chaired jointly by the Governor's Deputy Secretary for the Environment Judith Enck and the Deputy Secretary for Economic Development and Infrastructure Timothy Gilchrist. The Governor's Smart Growth Cabinet will hold its first meeting in January 2008.

Smart growth is sensible, planned development that balances the need for economic development with the need to preserve and enhance our built and natural environment. Studies show that workers and businesses increasingly view quality-of-life and quality-of-place as major factors in deciding where to locate. In a recent study of New York businesses, the New York State Economic Development Council found that two quality-of-life factors were particularly influential in business location decisions – access to outdoor recreation and vibrant, livable urban centers.

Governor Spitzer has appointed several agency leaders [to the new Cabinet] with first-hand experience in smart growth: DOT Commissioner **Astrid Glynn** implemented Massachusetts's smart growth program; Upstate Economic Development Chair **Dan Gundersen** worked on smart growth initiatives in Pennsylvania and Maryland; Deputy Secretary of State for Local Governments **Robert Elliott**, advanced smart growth initiatives in the Hudson Valley as Mayor of Croton-on-Hudson and President of the New York Planning Federation; DEC Commissioner **Pete Grannis**, advocated smart growth and sustainable development as a lawmaker for three decades.

UB Green to Host Town Hall Meetings on Climate Change Initiatives

The UB Green Office is releasing the **UB Green Climate Action Report**, the result of two years of collaboration between the UB Green Office, key university partners and an Advisory Committee consisting of UB students, faculty, staff and community members. The report consists of a greenhouse gas emissions inventory spanning 1997-2004 and a comprehensive list of opportunities for the University at Buffalo to take action to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

With the release of this report, UB Green will initiate a campus and community dialogue on climate change. To help this effort, UB Green is planning a series of Town Hall meetings. UB Green staff will present an overview of the report and answer questions and record comments from participants.

Attendees will receive a copy of the **UB Green Climate Action Report** as well as materials for promoting the report and emission reduction strategies when the Town Hall series has concluded.

Town Hall meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- **January 29th, noon, 210 Student Union,
UB North Campus**
- **January 30th, 3pm, 210 Student Union,
UB North Campus**
- **January 30th, 7pm, Screening Room, Center for the Arts**
- **February 4th, 7pm, Harriman Hall Social Hall,
UB South Campus**
- **February 5, noon, 301 Crosby Hall, UB South Campus**
- **February 20th, 7pm Unitarian-Universalist Church,
Elmwood Ave., Buffalo**

For more information, contact Jim Simon, Associate Environmental Educator UB Green, at 716- 829-3535 (fax 716 829 2704). Also, visit <http://climatenotes.wordpress.com> to download the executive summary for the UB Green Climate Action Report.

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation

P.O. Box 1186
Buffalo, NY 14231-1186

return service requested

CALENDAR

Jan. 9 9:30 AM
PCC meeting of GBNRTC
NFTA, 181 Ellicott St., Buffalo

Jan. 12 9:00 AM-1:00 PM
Electronics Recycling Drop-off Day
by Erie County, at Buffalo Zoo

Jan. 15 12:00 noon
CRTC Annual Meeting
3330 Main Street, Buffalo

Jan. 29 to Feb. 20
UB Green Town Hall meetings
(see announcement, this page)

Feb. 7-9, 2008
New Partners for Smart Growth
Conference, Washington D.C.
For details, contact George Grasser,
ggrasser@irdprojectmanagers.com

NEW DATE!!!
Feb. 15 12:00 noon
CRTC Monthly Meeting
3330 Main Street, Buffalo
NEW DATE!!!