



# CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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## Seeing is Believing

The Transit Restructuring study recently completed for the NFTA includes a proposal that the NFTA begin planning for "high-quality transit corridors" that serve the suburbs.

Yes!

But where exactly will these corridors be located? And what mode of transit will be used in these corridors?

Citizens *for* Regional Transit says:  
"Come see the Airport Corridor!"

Thirty-plus years ago, when Metro Rail was first proposed, the plan was to build a network of light-rail lines that would serve the Tonawandas, UB in Amherst, the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport (BNIA), and the Southtowns. This is the vision which Citizens for Regional Transit supports. Currently, Buffalo has one light-rail line. The region needs a light-rail network.

One corridor that is ready-made for a new Metro Rail line lies between downtown Buffalo and the BNIA, along abandoned railway rights-of-way. This corridor connects many business and residential areas, and features many stops, including Central Terminal and Walden Galleria.

This corridor enjoys the full support of the City of Buffalo and the Town of Cheektowaga.

But the best way to understand the full potential of this corridor is to see it.

Citizens *for* Regional Transit will offer guided tours on Thursday afternoons in July. Seating is limited, so sign up early (see p. 3).

"Come see the Airport Corridor!"

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## CRTC Monthly Meeting

**Wednesday, May 19  
12:00-1:00 PM**

## Preservation and Transportation: Connecting the Vision

a conversation  
with

**Henry McCartney, Executive Director  
Preservation Buffalo Niagara**

May is National Preservation Month. In honor of that theme, CRT is sponsoring a discussion with Henry McCartney, Executive Director, Preservation Buffalo Niagara.

How do the goals of Citizens *for* Regional Transit and Preservation Buffalo Niagara fit together? How could public transit be highlighted at the preservation convention in 2011?

**Join us!**

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**Citizens *for* Regional Transit meets at:**

**617 Main Street, Market Arcade Building, Buffalo**

Meeting space is available courtesy Preservation Buffalo-Niagara.

**CRTC meetings are free and open to the public.**

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## New Streetcar Lines

...scientificamerican.com

Cities working on plans to create their first modern streetcar lines include:

- \* Little Rock, Arkansas
- \* Los Angeles, California
- \* Sacramento, California
- \* Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- \* Atlanta, Georgia
- \* Boise, Idaho
- \* New Orleans, Louisiana
- \* Baltimore, Maryland
- \* Grand Rapids, Michigan
- \* Charlotte, North Carolina
- \* Cincinnati, Ohio
- \* Columbus, Ohio
- \* Lake Oswego, Oregon
- \* Providence, Rhode Island
- \* Dallas, Texas
- \* Fort Worth, Texas
- \* San Antonio, Texas
- \* Salt Lake City, Utah
- \* Arlington, Virginia
- \* Kenosha, Wisconsin
- \* Tucson, Arizona
- \* Washington, D.C.

*Ed. note:*

*When will Buffalo hop on board???*

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### 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
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## Streetcars poised for a Dramatic Comeback

...newurbannews.com/15.3/streetcars.html, April-May, 2010

Thanks to the Obama Administration, streetcars may soon be reintroduced into many cities that haven't had them for more than 50 years.

Since the middle of last year, the US Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have largely reversed policies of President George W. Bush that favored bus rapid transit and made it difficult to spend federal funds to build streetcar lines.

Twenty-two cities around the country have plans for streetcar lines that could go into construction within two years, Rick Gustafson, executive director of Portland Streetcar Inc. in Oregon, told a 1000 Friends of Connecticut conference in March. Some of those projects will no doubt suffer delays for financial or other reasons, Gustafson later told *New Urban News*, "but I would predict that in 24 months there will probably be five to eight systems under construction."

Those with the strongest prospects for early construction include:

- Tucson Modern Streetcar, a 3.9-mile line which, when it opens, may carry 3,600 riders per weekday on a route connecting downtown Tucson to the University of Arizona. The Tucson line received funding through a US Department of Transportation TIGER grant in February, as did lines in Detroit, Dallas, New Orleans, and Portland.

- Seattle's First Hill Streetcar, a 2.2-mile line that would connect Capitol Hill, First Hill, and the International District to Link light rail and Sounder commuter rail. It would be Seattle's second modern streetcar line, joining the South Lake Union Streetcar, which started operating in December 2007.

- District of Columbia Streetcar, a 37-mile network that would offer the first streetcar service in the nation's capital since 1962. Construction of a two-mile segment linking Union Station to an emerging retail and entertainment district has already begun, its \$75 million cost paid entirely by local funds. Another \$30 million segment, also paid for with local funds, would connect a federal employment center to the low-income Anacostia neighborhood. Washington's system — which already has several cars that were fabricated in the Czech Republic — may end up costing a total of \$1.5 billion, which could be paid for through a combination of federal funds, tax-increment financing districts in the areas to be served, and revenue from other sources.

- Extension of the Portland [OR] Streetcar — the line that in 2001 kicked off America's streetcar renaissance — to areas on the east side of the Willamette River, thus making a loop of the city center. The project, which could generate 2,500 housing units, has begun construction.

David Vozzolo of HDR Engineering traced how the Obama Administration has made it easier for cities to start new streetcar lines or expand existing ones:

- Last June, FTA announced that it would evaluate New Starts and Small Starts applications on the basis not only of cost-effectiveness (as judged by how much travel time is saved) but also the land uses that the transit project would support and the economic development the transit project would bring about.

Approximately equal weight would be given to each of those three factors.

- In December, DOT announced that it would make grants of up to \$25 million each for "urban circulator systems such as streetcars and rubber-tire trolleys." It noted that these systems foster "the redevelopment of urban spaces into walkable mixed use, high density environments."

- In January, DOT rescinded a Bush policy that had required New Starts projects to achieve at least a "medium" rating on cost-effectiveness. That rating relied on criteria that tended to favor longer-distance modes of transit, such as bus rapid transit. Gustafson points out that no streetcars were able to qualify for funds under the Bush measure of cost-effectiveness.

# “Day of Action” Highlights National Transit Crisis

by Ya-Ting Liu ...blog.tstc.org 4-22-10

The Transportation Equity Network (TEN) dubbed April 20 the [National Day of Transit Action](#) and is urging Senators to support a bill[S 3189] introduced by Sherrod Brown (D-OH) that will give transit agencies the flexibility to use up to 30-50% of federal transit funding for operating expenses (dependent on an increase in local transit funding).

TEN partners held transit rallies in Washington, D.C.; Minneapolis and St. Paul; and Atlanta, where the local transit agency MARTA and the local branch of the Amalgamated Transit Union placed large red Xs on buses and trains slated to be cut. MARTA is cutting [roughly 30%](#) of its transit service.

Transportation for America echoed the call for emergency transit funding from Congress with a wide release of its [updated national transit cuts map](#) that show the extent and scale of service cuts across the country.

Without additional transit funding from Congress in the form of emergency aid or an infrastructure focused job bill in the short term and flexible spending for [federal transit dollars for operating expenses in the long term](#), transit service will continue to deteriorate in the region, leaving millions of New York and New Jersey residents stuck and stranded.

...As the Senate stalemate over job creation vs. deficit spending continues, millions of Americans are left [stranded at the station](#) at a time when they need affordable travel options to get to work and look for work.

# TIGER-II stirs Anticipation

...reported by Gladys Gifford

Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, aka TIGER, is back!

The earlier version was implemented as part of the overall Federal stimulus package, and used extensively by the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) to help keep many regional transportation projects funded.

TIGER-II is being coordinated with a similar granting program at Housing and Urban Development (HUD), called the Community Challenge Grants. Included in the HUD grant criteria is funding for transit corridor or station-area planning.

Deadlines for TIGER-II are soon: pre-applications are due July 16, and final applications are due August 23, 2010.

So....NFTA be nimble, NFTA be quick!!

For full explanation and official language, see [dot.gov/recovery/ost/tigerii/#](http://dot.gov/recovery/ost/tigerii/#).

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“Our new policy for selecting major transit projects will work to promote livability rather than hinder it. We want to base our decisions on how much transit helps the environment, how much it improves development opportunities and how it makes our communities better places to live.” --U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, January 13, 2010

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## ***...save the date.....tour proposed Airport Corridor in July....save the date...***

Citizens for Regional Transit is sponsoring bus tours of the proposed Airport Corridor extension of Metro Rail. Participants will see potential sites for stations and hear how the project will benefit metro Buffalo.

Tours are scheduled for Thursday afternoons, July 8, 15, 29, starting from Buffalo’s City Hall at 1:30 PM. Reservations required, since seating is limited on buses.

Reservations accepted at [crtc@citizenstransit.org](mailto:crtc@citizenstransit.org).

## **NFTA Public Meetings re. Transit Assessment**

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority has scheduled four public meetings to present Metro's Service Restructuring and Fare Analysis/Strategic Assessment Study.

At the meetings, the public will learn details of a draft report prepared by consultants from Transportation Management & Design, Inc. The firm conducted a comprehensive strategic assessment of how Metro delivers its service and recommended ways to better meet the mobility needs of the region, thus making it easier to access jobs, schools, entertainment, medical and social services using Metro.

### **Meetings Schedule:**

- May 24 at 6 p. m. — UB Center for Tomorrow
- May 25 at 2 and 6 p. m. — Erie Community College City Campus
- May 26 at 6 p. m. — ECC South Campus
- May 27 at 2 and 6 p. m. — NFTA Transit Center on Portage Road, Niagara Falls

The draft plan can be viewed online at [nfta.com/metro](http://nfta.com/metro).

### **CALENDAR**

May 17 9:00-11:00 AM  
GBNRTC Policy Committee  
Adams Mark Hotel  
120 Church St., Buffalo

**May 19 12:00 noon**  
**CRTC Monthly Meeting**  
**617 Main Street, Buffalo**

May 24-27 (*p. 4*)  
NFTA transit public info meetings

June 2 9:30 AM  
GBNRTC PCC meeting  
NYS Thruway Authority  
455 Cayuga Road  
Cheektowaga, NY

**June 16 12:00 noon**  
**CRTC Monthly Meeting**  
**617 Main Street, Buffalo**

July 8, 15, 29  
CRT-sponsored bus tours of  
proposed Airport Corridor  
Buffalo City Hall, 1:30-3:30 PM  
Reserve seat at  
[crtc@citizenstransit.org](mailto:crtc@citizenstransit.org)

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### **Citizens Regional Transit Corporation**

617 Main Street  
Buffalo, NY 14203

*return service requested*