
CRT News

next CRT Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, September 21, 2011

12:00-1:00 pm

“Cars on Main Street, Deja Vue”

**Special Guest Stephen Stepniak,
Commissioner of Public Works, Buffalo**

**Citizens for Regional Transit meets at:
617 Main Street, Market Arcade Building, Buffalo**

Meeting space available courtesy Preservation Buffalo-Niagara



**CRT meetings are free and open to
the public**

Access for all?

In the discussions held since 2000 concerning the proposal to return vehicles to downtown Buffalo's Main Street, one set of voices has been drowned out-- the disabled, the elderly and the young.

The Theater Station is well-used, by thousands of riders-- especially those who are unable or unwilling to use cars.

What about high school students, going to Hutch Tech?

What about senior citizens attending theater events?

What about City Mission patrons who use the system to find help?

What about UB staff and students who commute to the south side of the new medical campus?

What about all of us who find the pedestrian-transit mall a refreshing urban experience without the hassle of parking?

The City and the NFTA are scrambling to accommodate this project, on behalf of businesses.

What about us?

ALERT!!

Newsletter email adjustments...

CRT is in the process of changing our email procedures for the newsletter.

Please ignore/delete any message from the CRT which asks you to re-subscribe.

Your email address is already on the new lists.

Thanks for your patience!!

Crowd Says “No!” to Cars on Main Street

by Gladys Gifford

On August 29th, more than 35 people crowded into the 14th floor City Hall conference room to hear details about Buffalo’s Cars on Main Street project.

The group heard first from the engineers and architects, who justified removal of the Theater Station as a safety measure in order to allow cars to merge onto the Metro Rail trackbed.

Next, Citizens for Regional Transit made a brief presentation, showing their alternate design, which keeps the Theater Station while providing space for cars to travel parallel to the Metro Rail trackbed.

Thirteen citizens then spoke, united against the removal of the Theater Station and having motor vehicles share the trackbed.

They demanded: Who is looking out for the disabled and elderly? Why haven’t we heard about this project before now? Who benefits? What about the people who rely on the Theater Station? Will you take a look at the alternative design?

Stephen Stepniak, Buffalo’s Public Works Commissioner, responded that he will look carefully at the CRT alternative design. CRT invited him to their meeting, Sept. 21.

Many of the citizens at the meeting were members of VOICE-Buffalo, Citizens for Regional Transit, and the League of Women Voters Buffalo-Niagara.

Missing the Summer CRT Newsletter? Download it with the following link:

<http://www.citizenstransit.org/news/news2011summer.pdf>
(about 2MB in size)

Transportation, Amtrak Funding Yanked Around by Congress

Deal funds highways, airways

By: Jonathan Allen
September 10, 2011 12:11 AM EDT, POLITICO

Congressional leaders struck a deal late Friday [9-9-11] to extend temporarily the expiring laws governing the nation’s highways and airways at roughly their current funding levels.

The bill would authorize programs of the Federal Aviation Administration through January and surface transportation laws through March. Highway programs would be funded at the fiscal 2011 rate — \$41.7 billion — far above the \$27 billion approved in their budget earlier this year. Because the extension is for six months and not a full year, the actual amount authorized is half of the fiscal 2011 level. The FAA would get about \$5.4 billion for the four-month period beginning in October and ending Jan. 31.

Without action, authorization for both highway and aviation programs would expire at the end of this month, and both President Barack Obama and members of Congress have warned that scenario could cost hundreds of thousands of jobs.

“Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) confirmed with Senator Tom Coburn’s (Okla.) office that he plans to **introduce an amendment to eliminate the dedicated set-aside for the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program** from the extension. He may even go so far as to filibuster to get his way, blocking the whole bill, including maintenance and construction of roads, bridges and transit. **TE is the nation’s largest funding source for trails, walking and bicycling.**”
9-13-11 email from RTC, railstotrails.org

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation & Housing proposed **slashing funding for Amtrak to \$1.1 billion—a reduction of more than \$357 million** from what Amtrak received in FY2011. Significantly, **the operating grant would be cut 60%**--from \$563 million in 2010 and 2011, down to \$227 million. The bill requires states to pay 100% of costs of operations of short corridors. This apparently overrides ongoing negotiations among states and Amtrak aimed at complying with Amtrak’s 2008 reauthorization law. *National Association of Railroad Passengers 9-9-11 alert, narprail.org*

Aging in Place, Stuck Without Options

reviewed by Lynn Magdol

Aging in Place, Stuck without Options: Fixing the Mobility Crisis Threatening the Baby Boom Generation, issued by Transportation for America, reports on an emergent transportation crisis for seniors.



In 2000, an estimated 11.5 millions persons 65 and older had inadequate transportation options, with a projected 35% increase to 15.5 million by 2015.

The Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY Metropolitan Area is projected to have 87,954 seniors without adequate access to transportation in 2015, or 49% of the local senior population.

The post-World War II baby boomers are now becoming senior citizens. They are living longer than previous generations, resulting in more years of declining health and limited driving. They will be living on fixed incomes, resulting in less financial ability to own a car.

More federal funding is recommended for programs that go beyond bus and train to include smaller vehicles (vans, ridesharing) for short-route shuttles to take seniors to shopping and health care. A coordinated multimodal system is ideal. Communities are encouraged to include seniors in the planning of such programs. A “complete streets” policy” should accommodate seniors walking between home and bus stops/train stations.

There is an especially acute need in rural and suburban areas, where a majority of seniors reside. Ironically, the NFTA has recently cut back on bus services in outer areas. Fortunately, there is federal funding that has been earmarked specifically for the elderly and for rural areas.

The full report can be found online at HYPERLINK "<http://t4america.org/resources/seniorsmobilitycrisis2011>" <http://t4america.org/resources/seniorsmobilitycrisis2011>

Citizens for Regional Transit invites You---

Mission: CRT seeks to improve bus transit and to expand rail transit for all of Western New York through citizen involvement and education.



Join us!

Membership dues are fully tax-deductible!

corporate \$150.

household \$35.

individual \$25.

student \$5.

Membership payable by check or via PayPal.

Send check to:

Citizens Regional Transit

c/o John K. Howell, treasurer

289 Ashford Avenue

Tonawanda, NY 14150-8563

7th Annual Environmental Summit

Saturday, September 24

9:00am - 12:30pm

Daemen College, Wick Center

“Green is Green: It Makes Cents”

Workshops include:



- Green Jobs
- “Do It Yourself” Home Weatherization
- Green Cleaning - Make Your Own Supplies
- How to use Social Media to Improve your Organization
- Lead and Radon in your Home
- Greening Your Congregation

Calendar

Sept. 21, 2011, 12-1 pm

CRT monthly meeting
617 Main St., Buffalo

Sept. 22, 2011 2:00 pm

Buffalo Convention Center, “Sustainable Transportation” presentation at annual conference of Upstate Chapter of Institute of Transportation Engineers, by George Grasser, PFALWNY, and Dr. Wende Mix, Buffalo State College.

Oct. 1, 2011

Solar Open House Tour

Oct. 5, 2011, 9:30 am

Planning Coordinating Committee of GBNRTC, Thruway Authority, 455 Cayuga Rd, Suite #800, Cheektowaga, NY

Oct. 14-15, 2011

World on Your Plate conference,
Daemen College, Amherst

Oct. 19, 2011, 12-1 pm

CRT monthly meeting

Oct. 23, 2011

VOICE-Buffalo public meeting,
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Buffalo

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation

617 Main Street

Buffalo, NY 14203

return service requested