
CRT News

next CRT Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, September 21, 2011

12:00-1:00 pm

“Strategies and Successes for 2011-2012”

Special Guest TBA



**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

New look

Technology has a way of making older formats obsolete, and such is the case with the CRT newsletter.

After several months of tinkering with the new format, here's a new face for CRT News. Always a work in progress, readers can expect changes as the months go by.

However, the goal of Citizens for Regional Transit remains the same: to educate and advocate for improved public transit in WNY, with emphasis on expanding the Metro Rail line-- the only light rail line operating in NYS.

To that end, the CRT News will continue to speak, whether in your mailbox or email box.

Thanks for your interest.

Gladys Gifford, editor

Fast Facts...

Access to bus and rail lines reduces driving by 4,400 miles per household annually.

Americans living in areas served by public transportation save 646 million hours in travel time and 398 million gallons of fuel annually in congestion reduction alone.

...www.apta.com/mediacenter

Summer in WNY Transit News

Transportation Town Hall

The New York State Transportation Equity Alliance came to Buffalo on June 22, and led a transportation Town Hall at PUSH headquarters on Grant St.

Local co-sponsors were Green Options Buffalo, Buffalo CarShare and CRT. More than 50 people attended, including several from VOICE-Buffalo. Green Options described its many activities to improve livability and mobility in WNY, especially for bike-ped. Buffalo CarShare reported their success at short-term car rentals, especially for transit-dependent patrons. CRT outlined the campaign to change the Cars on Main Street design, as well as the effort to expand light rail transit.

During break-out sessions, many concerns were aired about the quality and future of public transit.

Cars on Main Street

The project, Cars on Main Street, continued to take up time at CRT in an effort to alert the public and community leaders about the flaws in the current design.

VOICE-Buffalo conducted a survey of transit riders at the Theater Station in early June, and found that few transit riders were aware of plans to remove that station. A subsequent meeting is planned for August 29, to hear from transit riders who use the Theater Station (*see p. 6*).

Historic Trolley Study

Congratulations to CRT and the WNYRHS are in order!

The study by Stone Consulting, commissioned on June 17, is under way. Stay tuned for the next steps, to reach the goal of a new streetcar line in Buffalo! (*see p. 3-4*)

Robert Moses Parkway

Should the Robert Moses Parkway be modified or closed to traffic? CRT offered comment on the issue, suggesting that any alternative to the present status should include rail public transit.

Buffalo Harbor Bridge

Two workshops were conducted by the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corp (ECHDC): July 12, on the Erie Street site; July 13, on the Main Street site. CRT members attended both days, and submitted comments from individuals.

The proposed bridge sets up barriers for pedestrian access to the Inner Harbor at both locations. CRT will offer a position on the proposal soon.

NYS hearing on Housing

CRT presented testimony at the NYS Assembly hearing on housing, to recommend that affordable housing be located in transit corridors. The hearing was held August 9, in Buffalo's City Hall.

Progress in Planning at NFTA

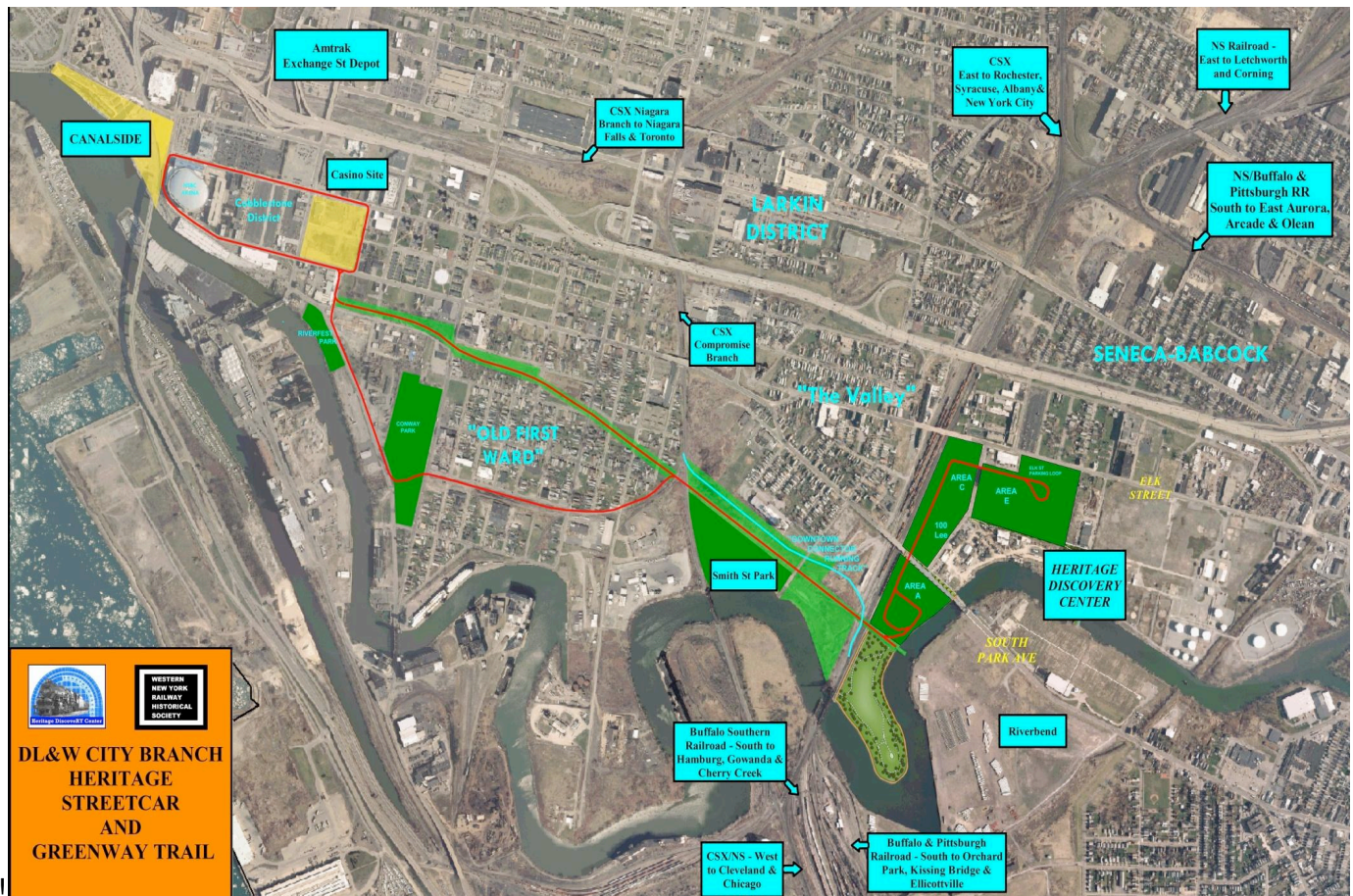
Planners at the NFTA were busy with grant applications. An application for a grant from the Federal Transit Administration for an Alternatives Assessment in regard to the UB/Amherst-Buffalo corridor was submitted. CRT and other groups submitted letters of support for the grant, July 25.

Another application was submitted to improve traffic flow for buses in high-usage corridors.

The NFTA now touts potential light rail extensions. The corridor connecting downtown Buffalo to the UB campus in Amherst, was the subject of the grant application submitted in July. The Tonawanda corridor, featured in the *News*, Aug. 11, was described by NFTA spokesman Doug Hartmayer, as being preserved for "possible light rail expansion" in the future.

Regardless of good planning, no transit system can survive any more cuts in Federal or NYS funding. Therefore, the NFTA at their Board meeting in July suggested that fares may be increased, in an effort to close their budget gap. The CRT sent a letter to the NFTA Board, with these comments: (1) any fare increase will hurt those who can least afford it and will negatively impact ridership; (2) no fare increase is acceptable during these difficult economic times; and (3) if a fare increase cannot be avoided, then the monthly pass fare should be retained at the present level.

Heritage Streetcar Study Begins, at Last!!!



On June 17, 2011, the Western New York Railway Historical Society (WNYRHS) announced plans for a Heritage Discovery Center and a Heritage Streetcar and Greenway Trail to stakeholders at the Erie County IDA, 143 Genesee St., Buffalo. Present at the meeting were representatives from OSC, Inc., UB Architecture school, ECIDA, NFTA, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, and the Old First Ward. Doug Funke, Gladys Gifford and Seth Triggs represented CRT.

Joseph Kocsis, President of WNYRHS, outlined the scope of the project. The Heritage Discovery Center reclaims brownfields in South Buffalo along the Buffalo River, at the intersection of South Park Avenue and Lee Street. (*more details, see wnyrhs.com*)

He then announced a proposal for an Heritage Streetcar line, to connect the Discovery Center with downtown Buffalo. Harvey Stone, President of Stone Consulting & Design, Inc., explained the streetcar concept. (*see above aerial view, red line within green areas*).

CRT presented a check for \$4000 to the WNYRHS in support of the study. This action culminated a long-standing project at CRT, to create a vintage trolley in Buffalo. Championed by Joseph H. Radder, the earlier project would have circulated in the Cobblestone District and be connected to Main Street. In support of this vintage trolley concept, CRT conducted a fundraising campaign, 2006-2008, raising nearly \$4000 from members and friends to be used for a feasibility study.

WNYRHS came to CRT with its concept of a Heritage Streetcar in 2009. The two groups recognized the same vision for a streetcar operation in downtown Buffalo, and reached agreement on the concept. CRT then repurposed its vintage trolley fund to support the WNYRHS project.

Stone Consulting has been preparing the study since June, and is expected to complete the feasibility study by the fall. Next step: bring back streetcars to Buffalo!



DONORS TO THE VINTAGE TROLLEY STUDY, 2006-2008

Thank you!!

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*vintage streetcar, Toronto, Canada
photo by Joseph H. Radder*

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Dr. John & Joan Bozer
Sustainable Use Fund at the Community Foundation
Resetarits Construction

Complete Streets Passes NYS Legislature

Complete Streets bill
(S5411A/A8366)



This bill has
passed the
State
Legislature on
June 24th.

Too many streets are
difficult and dangerous to
navigate on foot, in a
wheelchair, or on a bicycle
-- especially for children and
the elderly.

The bill awaits Gov.
Cuomo's signature.

[Ask the governor to sign
this bill!](#)

A Complete Streets bill
would ensure that when
roads are built or
redesigned, they
accommodate everyone.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo:

Phone: (518) 474-8390

Fax: (518) 474-1513

Taking Public Transit??

Getting around Western New York is
always easy, but sitting in a car stuck in
traffic-- even for a few minutes-- is such a
waste!

Here's a challenge, for all CRT News
readers: tell us how you traveled using
public transit, whether here in WNY or
visiting another place.

My summer so far:

taking the bus and light rail in
Portland, Oregon, for family outings;

taking Metro Rail to the Canal
Harbor station, then walk to the water
taxi or sailboat.

In the works for the fall:

take Metro Rail to Amtrak, then to
Toronto-- avoiding the horrific QEW
completely.

I'll let you know...

Gladys Gifford, editor

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.



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

Join us!

Put Cars on Main Street??

Demolish the Theater Station??



Allow cars to travel on rails?

Let's speak up!

Come to a public meeting sponsored by VOICE-Buffalo

August 29, 2011

5:30-7:30 pm

Buffalo City Council Chambers

Calendar

Aug. 29, 5:30 pm

VOICE-Buffalo meeting re Cars on Main Street, City Hall, Buffalo (p. 6)

Sept. 7, 2011, 9:30 am

Planning Coordinating Committee of GBNRTC meeting

Buffalo City Hall

Sept. 12, 2011, 4-5 pm

Transportation Regional Advisory Coalition (TRAC) meeting

617 Main St., Buffalo

Sept. 21 2011, 12-1 pm

CRT monthly meeting

617 Main St., Buffalo

Sept. 24, 2011, 8:30-1:30 pm

Environmental Summit: "Green is Green: it Makes Cents", Daemen College, Amherst

Oct. 1, 2011

Solar Open House Tour

Oct. 14-15

World on Your Plate conference, Daemen College, Amherst

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation

617 Main Street

Buffalo, NY 14203

return service requested