

# CRT News

## CRT Monthly Meeting

**Wednesday, February 15, 2012**

**12:00-1:00 pm**

### **NFTA budget crisis: the hearings and the aftermath**

Discussion led by Seth Triggs, CRT Vice-President--  
What have we learned?

**Citizens for Regional Transit meets at:**

**237 Main Street at Seneca Street, Buffalo, NY**

Follow signs, to the American Steamship conference room



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

#### ***Hundreds Cry Out-- Save Our Public Transit!***

January 12, I found a seat in an empty room, wondering if the public would arrive.

Then they came, and kept coming until the room overflowed. Assemblyman Ryan opened the meeting with his comments on the proposed NFTA service cuts, and then invited the public to speak.

Each of us had a story to tell or a complaint to vent. But the most compelling voices were those from the disabled community-- people for whom the very act of speaking before a crowd of strangers was a brave act of courage. For these people, the NFTA transit service was a life-line to full participation in our community. Access by way of the bus or train gave them hope and purpose for their lives.

The NFTA public hearings brought out hundreds more: people from every part of our counties, urban and suburban alike, sharing one compelling theme-- public transit is an essential part of our life together.

We have found our voice.

Now let's keep on singing!

*by Gladys Gifford*

### ***Citizens for Regional Transit monthly meetings have moved!***

As of February 15, 2012, monthly meetings will be held in the American Steamship conference room, 237 Main Street.

The building is on the east side of Main Street, next to Metro Rail's Seneca Street station.

Signs will be posted, to guide attendees.



## Funding Woes Hobble Transit Systems

### Toronto Faces Service Cuts

TTC chair Karen Stintz says she will recommend that the extra \$5-million coming to the transit commission from the city be used for capital investments, not to stave off planned service cuts.

The money, part of \$19-million in spending endorsed by council as part of Tuesday's budget debate, was earmarked to "prevent route reductions." But as an independent body, the transit commission gets the final call on how those dollars will be spent.

Councillor Stintz, a supporter of the mayor, voted Tuesday against using part of the city's \$154-million surplus to save service. Mayor Rob Ford urged council to protect the surplus and direct it to paying some of the \$700-million cost of new streetcars ordered by the previous council.

"To put it back on the buses will only mean that 10 months from now we will be cutting that service," Councillor Stintz said. "I don't believe that is in the best interest of the TTC. It is not in the best interest of our riders. From my perspective, this is not the way you build a sustainable transit system."

1-18-12 *Toronto Globe and Mail*

### Pittsburgh Transit

[Pittsburgh, PA's Port Authority has proposed a] 35 percent reduction in service hours that would take effect Sept. 2 -- the largest cut in the agency's 48-year history.

All of the authority's current 102 bus and rail routes would be scaled back, some ending altogether and others with deep drops in off-peak and weekend service, according to a summary released by the authority. The [proposed] reduction, coupled with a 15 percent service cut last March, would leave the region's biggest transit agency with barely half of the service it offered a year ago.

An estimated 500 to 600 jobs could be eliminated, with most of that achieved

**"This is the most partisan transportation bill that I have ever seen," Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said in an exclusive interview with POLITICO [2-2-12]. "And it also is the most anti-safety bill I have ever seen." The \$260 billion, five-year House bill would cut Amtrak subsidies and increase truck weight limits.**

through layoffs, authority CEO Steve Bland said. "If we have to go through with these reductions, my feeling is it's the beginning of the end of public transit as a significant carrier in the region," he said.

"It's absolutely not a scare tactic," he said of the proposal being unveiled today.

"The folks who use the routes we eliminated in March know how real it is. It's as serious as a heart attack."

The authority is facing a projected \$64 million deficit in its 2012-13 operating budget, which takes effect in July. Flat or declining aid from the state and Allegheny County in recent years, coupled with soaring costs of retirement benefits and fuel, have pushed the agency to the brink of insolvency.

According to the agency's most recent audit, state operating assistance decreased by \$34.2 million in the fiscal year that ended last June 30, a 19 percent drop. State aid makes up more than half of the authority's income.

The main hope for avoiding the next round of cuts rests in Harrisburg, where neither Gov. Tom Corbett nor the Legislature has acted on a panel's recommendations to raise new revenue for the state's crumbling roads, bridges and transit systems.

1-18-12 *post-gazette.com*

## House Proposes Transportation Act that Guts Transit

The new House American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act (HR-7):

Unfairly punishes current and would-be users of public transportation by ending all dedicated funding for public transportation, threatening to degrade further the service and state of repair of our transit systems;

Leaves Americans with fewer transportation options rather than more, and deeper dependence on oil rather than less;

Undermines safety and public health and takes resources away from non-motorized forms of transportation;

Does not go far enough to ensure the state of good repair of our bridges, highways, railways and other systems;

Undercuts citizens' ability to raise environmental, health and other concerns about the impact of transportation projects.

for all the details, and to take action, see [t4america.org](http://t4america.org)

## Florida's Practically Perfect Place-- needs Trolley

*Sunrise on Sanibel Island,  
Florida*



*photo and article by G. Gifford*

Florida called, and we replied with a lovely stay on Sanibel Island in late January.

The beach, the wildlife refuge, the bicycle paths...all conspired to make the vacation nearly perfect.

All went well, except when we traveled on the roads in our rental car.

We reached our destination by plane, landing at Fort Meyers. The streets from the airport were wide and bordered with big-box retail outlets: i.e., Transit Road with palm trees!

Sanibel Island had no traffic lights, and all roads were two-lane. The city had removed its rubber-tire trolley, so people walked, biked or drove to do their errands. Cars were backed up for blocks on two-lane roads, where traffic cops assisted during certain hours.

One day, we drove to nearby Venice to visit a friend. The wide roads and expressway put us in Anywhere, USA, except for the tropical vegetation.

On our return to the island that day, brown pelicans and Bonaparte gulls welcomed us to our temporary home in this most sheltered place in Florida, where cars do not rule and where people share space with wildlife.

Sanibel is protected because of the vision of leaders in the early 20th century. Could more areas of Florida follow their lead?

Citizens for Regional Transit invites You...

Join us!

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

**ACTION ALERTS!!**

**House Ways and Means Title Would Eliminate**

**Historical Funding Source**

Floor Action Expected Soon

The House of Representatives is scheduled to vote next week [2-13-12] to divert funding for public transportation from motor fuels tax revenue. The bill being put forward would jeopardize funding for public transportation in the long-term. Those who use public transportation should contact their Members of Congress immediately to let them know this proposal will severely cripple public transportation in their district.

2-8-12 American Public Transportation Association



**Tell your Representative: Vote NO on HR-7**



*...send a message with the following link...*

[http://action.smartgrowthamerica.org/p/dia/action/public?action\\_KEY=9507](http://action.smartgrowthamerica.org/p/dia/action/public?action_KEY=9507)

*Calendar*

**Feb. 15, 2012, 12-1 pm**

CRT monthly meeting, 237 Main St., Buffalo

**Feb. 23, 2012**

Partnership for the Public Good forum, "Financing Public Transportation" Call 852-4191 x110 for time and location.

**Mar. 1, 2012, 9:30 am**

Planning & Coordinating Committee of GBNRTC, City Hall, Buffalo

**Mar. 21, 2012, 12-1 pm**

CRT monthly meeting, 237 Main St., Buffalo

Speaker, Dr. Wendy Mix, Buffalo State

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation  
617 Main Street  
Buffalo, NY 14203

*return service requested*