
CRT News

Next CRT Quarterly Public Meeting:

Wednesday, April 17

12:00-1:00 pm

The State of Public Transit in Buffalo How are we doing? Where are we going?

**a discussion led by Douglas J. Funke,
CRT President**

Citizens for Regional Transit meets at:

237 Main Street at Seneca Street, Buffalo, NY

Follow signs, to the second floor Mezzanine conference room



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

Leaders for Buffalo transit, please!

A recent series in the Buffalo News offered an analysis of metro Buffalo leadership. ArtVoice offered its own list and commentary, in response.

Taken together, these discussions hold up a mirror for our region, to ask: what is our collective vision? and how do we accomplish that vision?

Lately the view in the mirror seems to be coming into focus.

Downtown Buffalo and the waterfront are seeing new attractions and better access to the water's edge. Neighborhoods benefit from civic and arts groups, along with small business entrepreneurs (food trucks, coops, gardens). UB and the Medical Campus are stimulating reinvestment in historic buildings as well as new construction.

Our leaders do well to advise and encourage such progress.

However, CRT encourages every leader to take a serious look at transportation-- the necessary glue that binds the region together. Will the mirror show a fractured region, with each piece surrounded by highways and parking lots? Or will the focus sharpen, as each piece connects through efficient and effective public transit?

CRT is on Facebook!

Friend us! and visit our website, citizenstransit.org

WNY transit advocates at the NYSTEA Conference



pictured on staircase at the Legislative Office Bldg, Albany -- Creighton Randall, Andy Graham, T.J. Colangelo, Doug Funke, Will Yelder, Al Schuster, Luc Robinson, Gladys Gifford, Marie Malinowski, Lynn Magdol

CRT traveled to Albany, March 4-5, to participate in the conference offered by the New York State Transit Equity Alliance (NYSTEA). We were joined by representatives from Buffalo CarShare, VOICE-Buffalo, and Niagara Organizing Alliance for Hope (NOAH).

Attendees came from all across NYS: Brooklyn and the Bronx, NYC, Rochester, Syracuse, Ithaca, Long Island, Albany, Schenectady...

NYSTEA “is a diverse coalition of 89 organizations that advocate and organize for more equitable transportation policy across New York State. NYSTEA draws on the experiences of transportation advocacy, environmental justice, smart growth, disability rights,

urban planning, pedestrian/ bicycle advocacy, social and economic justice, and grassroots organizing to help promote transportation equity...in New York State.”

Special INVITATION... Become a CRT member!

Benefits include: receive member alerts, support advocacy efforts, participate in education outreach.

CRT mission is 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!

- group \$50.
- 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



Insights from the NYSTEIA Conference, March 4-5, 2013

by Gladys Gifford and Lynn Magdol

The conference of the New York State Transit Equity Alliance (NYSTEIA) proved to be well worth the time and energy spent traveling to Albany.

Conference was held at the Empire State Plaza, adjacent to the legislative office building. The first day was open to the public, and featured four forums of experts. We learned about transit in relation to the economy, to climate change, to public policy. We were briefed on funding for transit and the experiences of rider representatives on upstate transit authorities and on the MTA.

One important highlight was presented by Peter Fleischer, from Empire State Future, addressing transit oriented development.

The concept of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) has been widely embraced in recent years by planners, developers, and government officials. TOD is an approach that incorporates transportation into every aspect of urban living, proposing a more holistic and ecologically-friendly environment. In essence, TOD promotes dense, mixed-use development that is located near public transportation: housing, shopping, schools, religious facilities, neighborhood centers, theatres, etc., in walkable communities clustered around transit.

Advocates cite advantages to employment, neighborhoods, and the environment, among others.

As appealing as the TOD approach has been, Fleischer noted that it has created some unanticipated negative effects. Housing near transit can become so desirable that demand outpaces supply and prices rise, driving low-income residents away. In response, the concept of equity in TOD has been introduced. Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) strives to improve urban places for all.

Examples of existing ETOD projects include Portland's Pearl District and Oakland's Fruitvale Transit Village. Examples of emerging ETOD projects include San

Francisco Bay Area's Great Communities Collaborative and Denver's Joint Development Policy and FasTracks program.

The second day was for coalition members. The morning session included a briefing from Tri-State Transportation Campaign about the NYS budget, and issues to be discussed during our legislative visits on behalf of NYSTEIA.

The rest of the day was spent in legislative visits. WNY participants rode elevators and walked stairs in the Legislative Office Building in order to meet with staff in each legislative office. Our group intends to do follow-up with each legislator, to press for actions to benefit public transit.

A major issue brought before the legislators was a proposed bill to require two rider representatives on transportation authority boards, with voting rights.

“Nationwide, people in their late teens to early 30s are **6 times** less likely to have a car than their parents and 60% of them want to live in walkable communities...”

...statistic shared at Urban Land Institute forum held March 25, 2013 at Buffalo Historical Society



Buffalo City Council hears CRT March 26, 2013



CRT President, Douglas J. Funke (pictured above, second from left) briefed the Buffalo City Council, March 26, on the work of Citizens for Regional Transit. His presentation laid out key reasons why Council support now for extending Metro Rail is critical.

- * The Buffalo Niagara Medical Center will rely on the system for bringing an additional 17,000 employees to work by 2016 without using vital land for more parking.
- * Extensions of Metro Rail provide economic and environmental benefits which stimulate sustainable urban life while promoting healthy living.

Funke also cited the many railroad rights-of-way already in public ownership, which reduces the cost of construction.

The Community Development Committee of the Council will draft a resolution based on the CRT presentation.

Calendar

April 3, 9:30 am

Planning & Coordinating Comm., GBNRTC, at NYSDOT, 100 Seneca St., Buffalo

April 17, 12-1 pm

CRT Quarterly Meeting, 237 Main St., Buffalo

April 20, Earth Day

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper cleanups various times and locations see bnriverkeeper.org/get-involved/cleanups/

Editorial Update:

CRT News will be on vacation, traveling during April and May.

Look for a special edition in June!!