
CRT News

CRT Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, May 16, 2012
12:00-1:00 pm

Heritage Streetcar Line: an update

by Joseph V. Kocsis, Jr.,
President, WNY Railway Historical Society

WNYRHS proposes an historical streetcar line to connect the Heritage Discovery Center with downtown Buffalo, along the City Branch right-of-way. Preliminary results of the feasibility study conducted by Stone Consulting will be presented by Joseph Kocsis. (see rendering of proposal, p. 3)

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

Wasting Time-- a Crime

Recent travels along major suburban highways in metro Buffalo reminded us of one simple feature of modern American life: wasted time.

Hundreds of vehicles, each carrying only one person-- the driver-- lining up and waiting for a light to change, for cars to move-- all hurrying through the landscape of concrete and parking lots to reach destinations-- only to repeat the same routine over and over every day-- spending hours wasting energy and time and money-- thousands of people in metro Buffalo are trapped in sprawl, wasting time.

We observed one NFTA bus on the same route, picking up riders. Would that the NFTA could afford to put many buses on these crowded suburban streets!

Let's put more buses on these streets. Let's bring back streetcars. Let's extend Metro Rail to the suburbs. Then people can put their travel time to good use.

Time is life.

Wasting time is a crime.

As of February 15, 2012, monthly meetings are in the second-floor 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.

NYS Action impacts Transit in metro Buffalo

by Gladys Gifford

NYS Legislature and the Governor’s office have been very pro-transit this spring, responding to pressure from our allies at NYS Transportation Equity Alliance (NYSTEA). The CRT takes an active role in NYSTEA to advocate for transit with NYS.

Here’s a summary of positive developments for transit advocates in Albany:

* Solving the funding crisis was first on the agenda. **Additional funding for NFTA operations was found**, allowing the NFTA to revise its plans for draconian service cuts announced during the winter. Instead, modest changes in transit fares and service cuts were put in place on May 1.

* However, these short-term changes could not solve the long-term structural deficits in Metro operations and maintenance expected in following years. Therefore NYSTEA supported Gov. Cuomo’s proposal in the 2012-2013 budget, to change the distribution formula for the “corporations and utilities tax.” This tax is collected state-wide and had been designated solely for support of metro NYC transit.

Gov. Cuomo proposed that this tax be designated to support all transit systems, state-wide, with funding distributed according to population. He won a **one-year agreement in the budget to make the distribution of the corporations and utilities tax state-wide, effective April 1.** Advocates now must continue pressure to make the change permanent.

* When the NFTA Board of Commissioners first considered drastic service cuts last October, the CRT observed that none on that board had first-hand understanding of the transit riders’ world. Through working with allies, a proposal was offered to seek legislation requiring a transit rider to serve on the NFTA Board of Commissioners.

With the active cooperation of the NFTA, legislation was introduced by Senator Maziarz and Assemblyman Schimminger in March. **The bill (Maziarz S6536/Schimminger A9455) has passed both Senate and Assembly, as of May 7** and awaits the governor’s signature. **The transit rider position would be a non-voting seat.** Any such appointment will be made by the governor, with Senate approval.

* A persistent problem for funding transit in NYS is the habit of siphoning funds from transit into the General Fund, as needed. These “sweeps” have occurred without regard to their negative impact on transit riders.

In 2011, Assemblyman Brennan and Senator Golden teamed up to craft a “lock box” bill, in reaction to the diversion of \$260 million in transit funds from NYC. The specific need for that bill was rendered moot by a 2011 change in the personal income tax for NYC residents. However, the bill drew strong interest from legislators and advocates statewide, suggesting that **a new bill could expand the “lock box” to the whole state.**

Key components of the Lock Box bill (A9017/S6170a):

--prohibit the director of the budget, or any other member of the executive branch, from diverting funds dedicated to public transportation systems anywhere in NY State to the general fund or to any other purpose.

--if proposed, a diversion of public transportation funds must be done by the legislature and the director of the budget shall include a diversion impact statement in the statute diverting the funds, describing in detail how the proposed diversion of funds will impact transit riders and transit agencies.

NYSTEA and allies fully support the transit Lock Box bill, and urge the public to contact NYS legislators to urge swift passage of this vital legislation.

for more info, see:

<http://nystea.net/>

www.tstc.org

citizenstransit.org



***Potential route of proposed Heritage Streetcar Line (indicated by arrows),
to be presented by WNY Railroad Historical Society
at the monthly meeting of Citizens for Regional Transit,
Wednesday, May 16, 2012, 12:00-1:00 pm,
237 Main Street, Buffalo, NY***

Citizens for Regional Transit invites You...

Join us!

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!

- 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



...heard at the League of Women Voters forum on transportation, May 9...

“Plans supported by the community are plans that will be implemented.” --Amy Weymouth, GBNRTC

“Land use drives transportation.” --Wende Mix, Ph. D

The future is now, WNY!!

www.buffaloniagara2050.com

“Let’s coordinate planning, as One Region Forward.” --Kelly Dixon, GBNRTC

“Link transportation infrastructure planning with sustainable land use.” --Sam Hoyt, Empire State Development Corp.

Calendar

May 12 National Train Day

Buffalo-Depew Amtrak station
55 Dick Road, Depew

Empire State Passengers Ass’n
display 7 am -3 pm

May 16, 12-1 pm

CRT monthly meeting,
237 Main St., Buffalo

Speaker, Joe Kocsis, WNYRHS
Heritage Streetcar (p. 3)

June 6, 9:30 am

Planning & Coordinating
Committee of GBNRTC,
NYSThruway, 455 Cayuga Rd.,
Cheektowaga

June 16, 10-3 pm

“Party for the Planet”
Buffalo Zoo

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation
617 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14203

return service requested