

CRT News

CRT Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

12:00-1:00 pm

“Rail-Volution 2011: Building Livable Communities with Transit”

a report from

Doug Funke, CRT Board

Mr. Funke attended Rail-Volution 2011, in Washington, DC.

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

Transit: Building the Future

by Gladys Gifford

In the Nov. 3 issue of ArtVoice, Bruce Fisher parses the evident impacts of climate change on WNY (more rain and snow) and on Texas (return of the Dust Bowl). Fisher describes how in millenia past, drought forced people to migrate to areas with abundant water. Is such migration happening now?

My personal hunch is that climate migration may happen rather quickly. Americans are a mobile people, ready to pick up and move for a better future.

Can WNY prepare now for an influx of population?

By the year 2050, a great migration may have happened, as Fisher suggests. Will WNY be ready, with an economic and efficient public transit system? Will we build a transit system that serves everyone?

The NFTA recently won a grant to do an alternatives analysis for the Amherst corridor, running to UB North Campus. CRT has long advocated for a light rail extension to Amherst, as well as to the Airport and to the Southtowns.

Let's get ready to welcome new residents, and build for the future with light rail, now!

Phoenix-area boosters surprised by light rail success

...9/30/11, www.washingtonpost.com

Ridership in 2010 — the [light rail] line's second full year of operation — averaged 39,000 on weekdays and exceeded projections by 51 percent, according to Valley Metro, the transit agency....

The line has generated \$4.2 billion worth of public and private development built or under construction within a half-mile of the route, according to Valley Metro....

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP ROLLS UP BEST-EVER RECORDS **30.2 million passengers and \$1.9 billion in ticket revenue for the fiscal year**

Amtrak broke ridership records with news that the rail carried 30.2 million passengers in 2011. According to the agency, it's "a total that has never been reached in the corporation's 40 years of operation." Overall, ridership for the agency has grown 44% since 2000.

Meanwhile, the FY2012 federal budget could slash support for Amtrak if the funding levels being considered by the House are adopted.

source: <http://blog.tstc.org/2011/10/17/metro-north-amtrak-report-growing-ridership/>

Rebuilt Metro Rail cars are on the way!

Two cars are now being tested on Metro Rail tracks. Two additional cars are being rebuilt at the facility in Dansville, NY.

Get ready to celebrate, and ride the rebuilt Metro Rail cars!!

--reported by NFTA at the 9-21-11 CRT meeting



Commuter Benefit for Transit Users at Risk!!

The commuter benefit is an employer provided federal tax benefit that allows working families to save money on their daily commute, saves businesses of all sizes critical dollars that can be reinvested to create new jobs, helps reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality, saves energy and enhances our national security.

However, without immediate Congressional action the future of the transit portion of the commuter benefit, at its current level, is in jeopardy.

We need your support now to preserve the transit portion of the commuter benefit.

Urge your Members of Congress to co-sponsor Senate Bill S. 1034 or the House's version H.R. 2412, which will maintain the transit benefit at its current level.

To take action, see www.commuterbenefitsworkforus.com/



On the Road with Transit: New York City

AirTrain makes JFK Airport Connections a Joy!

by Doug Funke

A few weeks ago I had the good fortune to arrive in NYC via the JFK airport and find the AirTrain in service. The AirTrain is a rail-based people mover that picks you up at JFK airport and provides direct service to the NYC subway (lines A, E, J, and Z).

By way of background, I worked on a project in NYC in the early 2000s requiring frequent trips to the city. We would arrive at JFK airport and then wait in long lines to get a cab or cram into a limo to get to our hotel in either Manhattan or Queens. The cabs were expensive (usually about \$50) and took well over an hour to get us to the city through horrible city traffic.

Today, using the AirTrain, there is very little waiting. Quick, traffic-free service to key NYC subway locations is provided right from the airport terminal complex. The AirTrain provides comfortable, no hassle, inexpensive (\$5) transportation directly from JFK to the NYC subway. Transfer to the NYC subway network is convenient and simple.

There is no excuse for not offering transit options at airports for cities that want to be welcoming to visitors.

photo by Gladys Gifford

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

NFTA agrees: Fare Increase?? Not Fair!

Fare increases plus service cuts may be proposed by the NFTA for the 2012-2013 budget year, in order to close a \$15 million gap. The budget gap is the result of a convergence of factors beyond the control of the NFTA, according to Kimberly Minkel, NFTA Executive Director.

Her message appears in an open letter to the community on the NFTA website: www.nfta.com/executive_message.asp.

She writes, “Every dollar received in fare revenue only covers approximately 25 percent of the cost of operating that service. The remaining 75 percent is made up through state and local operating assistance, which unfortunately has been decreasing over the past few years.” She then cites annual decreases in State Transit Operating Assistance [STOA] over the past three years, plus declines in revenues from the mortgage tax collected in Erie County. Rising expenses include health costs for employees and fuel costs for buses.

Tom George, NFTA’s Director of Surface Transportation added detail to the picture at the CRT meeting, October 19. The irony of the situation is stark, given the success of recent transit improvements. Ridership is increasing, largely as a result of the route and scheduling changes instituted last year. Metro Bus and Rail has improved efficiency, and the system will have rebuilt rail cars operating soon.

The NFTA’s Board of Commissioners held a special session to learn about the crisis. At their October 24 meeting the Board passed a resolution “requesting that the State of New York provide \$10 million in deficit reduction funds to the NFTA as part of the 2012-2013 state budget.” The commissioners took this highly unusual action in order to put Gov. Cuomo on alert: **be fair to WNY, and increase STOA!**

Calendar

Nov. 16, 2011, 12-1 pm

CRT monthly meeting, 617 Main St., Buffalo, “Rail-Volution” report

Dec. 7, 2011, 9:30 am

Planning Coordinating Committee of GBNRTC, at NYSDOT, 100 Seneca St, Buffalo

Dec. 12, 2011, 10 am-noon

Policy Committee of GBNRTC, Niagara Falls Convention Center

Dec. 21, 2011, 12-1 pm

CRT monthly meeting, 617 Main St., Buffalo

“Airport Corridor: possible tunnel at Walden-Union intersection” presented by Steve Goodsell

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation
 617 Main Street
 Buffalo, NY 14203

return service requested