

Let's Do Cars on Main Street the Right Way!!

Briefing to the Buffalo Common Council
Transportation Committee

24 March 2011

Citizens for Regional Transit (CRTC)

Gladys Gifford, President

Doug Funke, Board Member



CITIZENS *for* REGIONAL TRANSIT

Key Points

- Closing of Theater Station denies equal access to current riders.
- Having cars share the rail bed with trains will degrade the entire NFTA transit service.
- There is no reason to accept these impacts.
 - There is room for both cars and Theater Station.
 - There is room to separate cars from trains.
- Let's take the time to do this right – we will have to live with the results for decades.



Overview of Presentation

- Citizens for Regional Transit (an introduction)
- Data sources for this analysis.
- The impact of closing Theater Station.
- The impact of inter-mixing traffic with trains.
- There's no reason to suffer these impacts.
- Let's do cars on Main Street the right way.
- Conclusion: let's improve what we have, not degrade it.
- Next Steps.



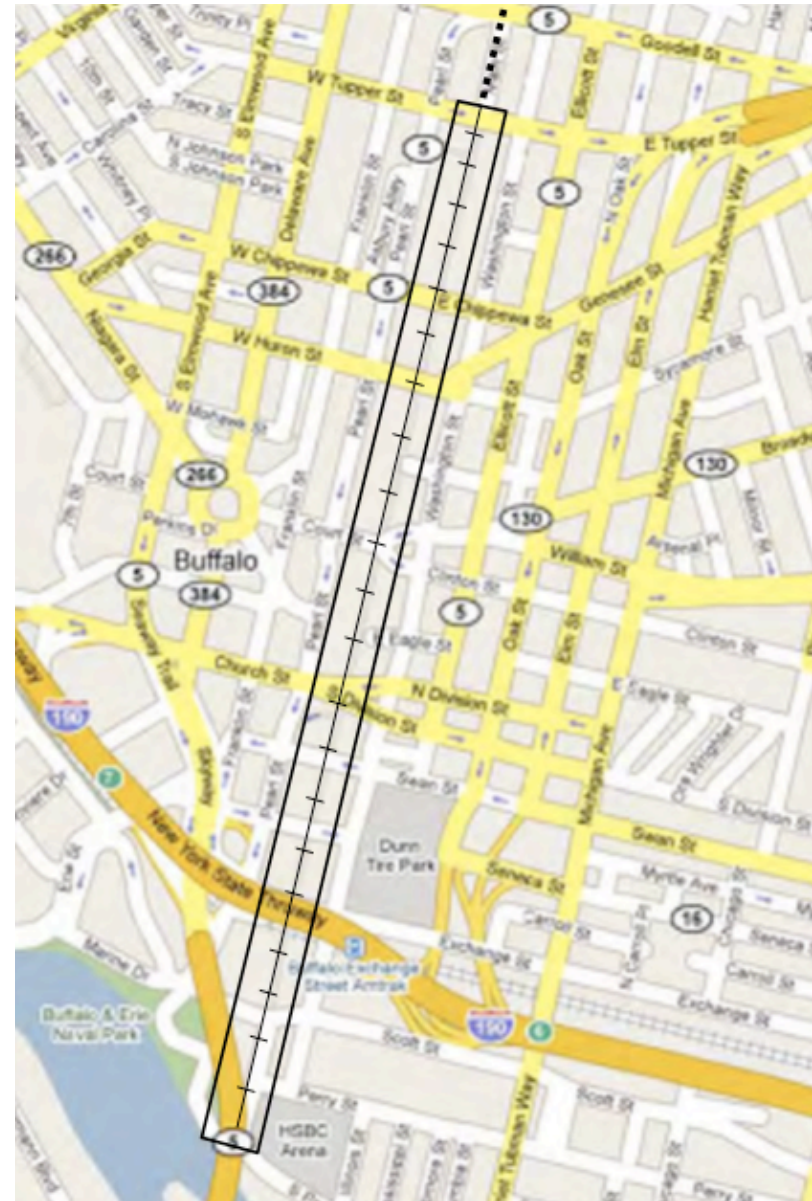
Citizens for Regional Transit

- Grass roots, citizens' nonprofit organization that promotes the expansion of Metro Rail to serve all of WNY.
- Began in 1965 as the South Towns Area Rapid Transit (START) committee. Later became the Area Committee for Transit (ACT). Now known as the Citizens for Regional Transit (CRTC).
- CRTC mission is to educate the public and community leaders about the features, functions, and advantages of a complete 42 mile Metro Rail system.



Data Sources for Assessing Design Impacts

- Buffalo Main St. Multi-modal Access and Revitalization Project – Environmental Assessment. April 2006 (draft), 2009 (final)
 - Design assessments.
 - APTA Peer Review for the NFTA. “LRT / Mixed Traffic Design”. 9 August 2006.
- NFTA Station Usage Survey. 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010.
- Buffalo Place initiated survey. “Cars Sharing Main Street – Survey of Main Street Properties and Businesses”. winter 2005 / 2006.
- CRTC Analysis.
 - Review of above surveys and reports
 - Review of applicable Literature
 - Alignment analysis

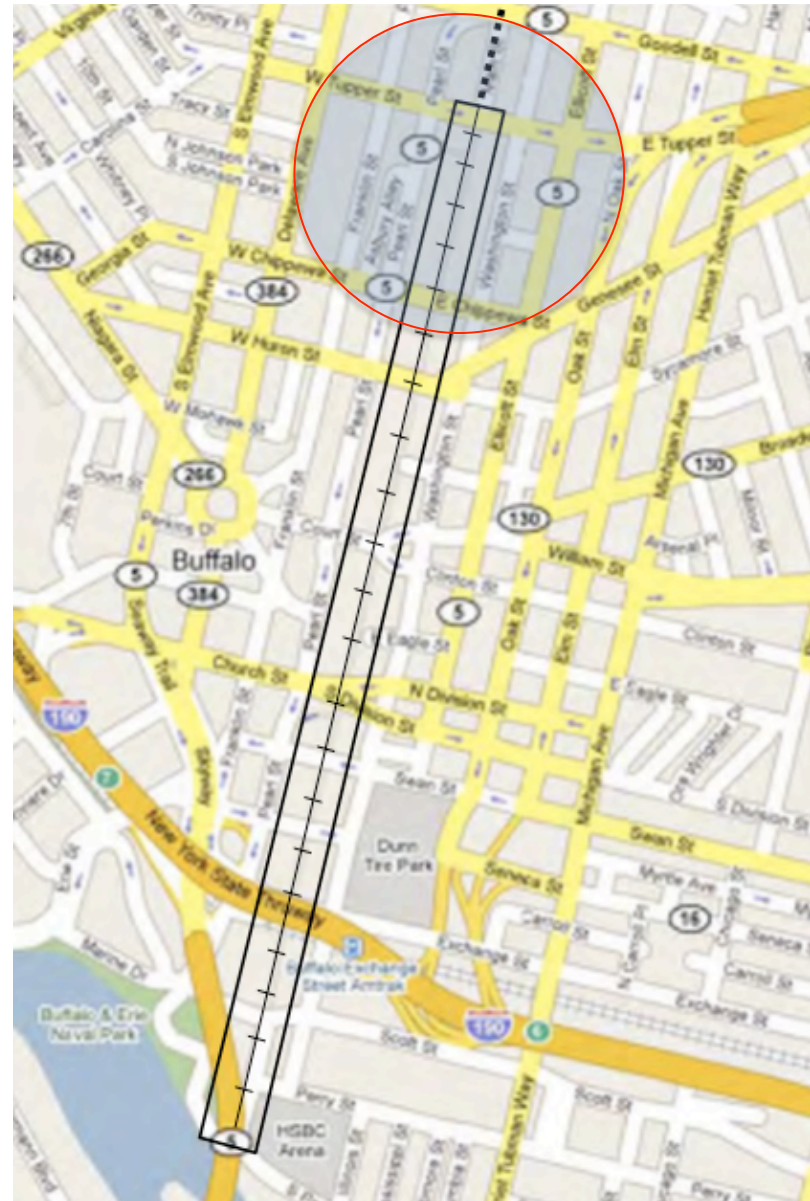


Impact of Closing Theater Station

- Access to Buffalo's light rail reduced.
 - Theater Station area judged most successful part of the mall area.¹
 - 1,898 daily riders affected.²
 - Impact acute during bad weather – can add ¼ mile to walk each way.³
 - Survey did not: (1) address Theater Station; (2) include riders outside Main Place Business district.³
- Walking distance to station is the **primary** determinant of transit use.
 - Ridership drops as distance increases.^{4,5}
 - Max. distance guidelines are typically 400 meters (1/4 mile).^{4,5}

References:

1. Cars Sharing Main Street Survey. 2005-2006.
2. NFTA station usage survey. 2009-2010.
3. CRTC analysis. 2011.
4. Biba et al. Intl. J. of Geographical Information Science. 2010.
5. O' Sullivan et al. Transportation Research record. 1996.



The Impact of Intermixing Traffic with Trains



Mixing traffic with light rail will degrade light rail service, according to an expert peer review.¹

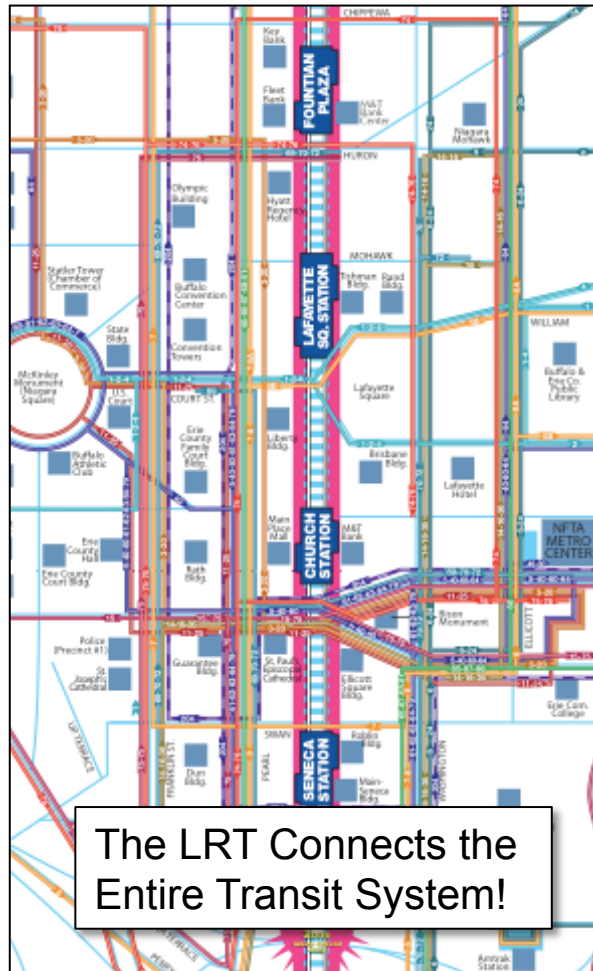
- Stopped trains may cause delays to cars.
- Safety concerns raised about motorists attempting to pass stopped trains.
- Difficult workarounds when maintenance on either road pavement or rail bed are needed; maintenance will impact service.

References:

1. APTA Peer Review for NFTA. LRT / Mixed Traffic Design. 2006



The Impact of Intermixing Traffic with Trains (cont.)



... expert peer review cont.¹

- Time and time variability of runs increased .
- Very significant train delays whenever there are vehicle accidents or breakdowns.
- Train delays can impact ability to make bus connections and complicates schedule coordination.

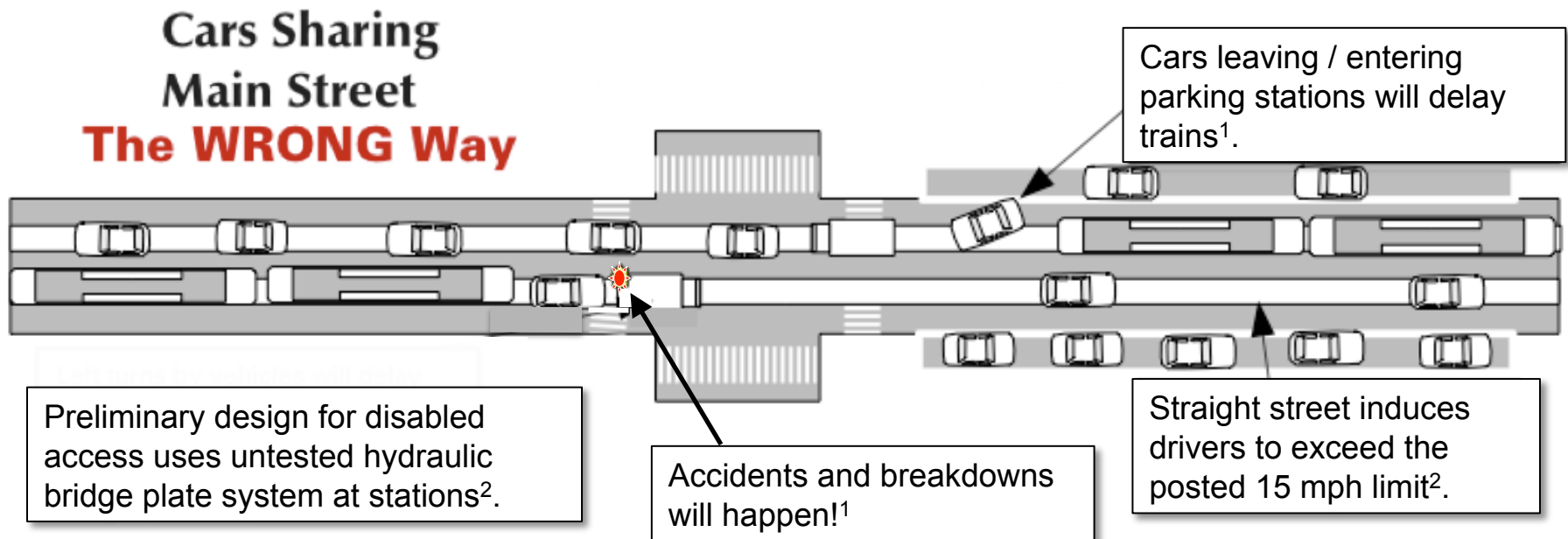
References:

1. APTA Peer Review for NFTA. LRT / Mixed Traffic Design. 2006



The Impact of Intermixing Traffic with Trains (cont.)

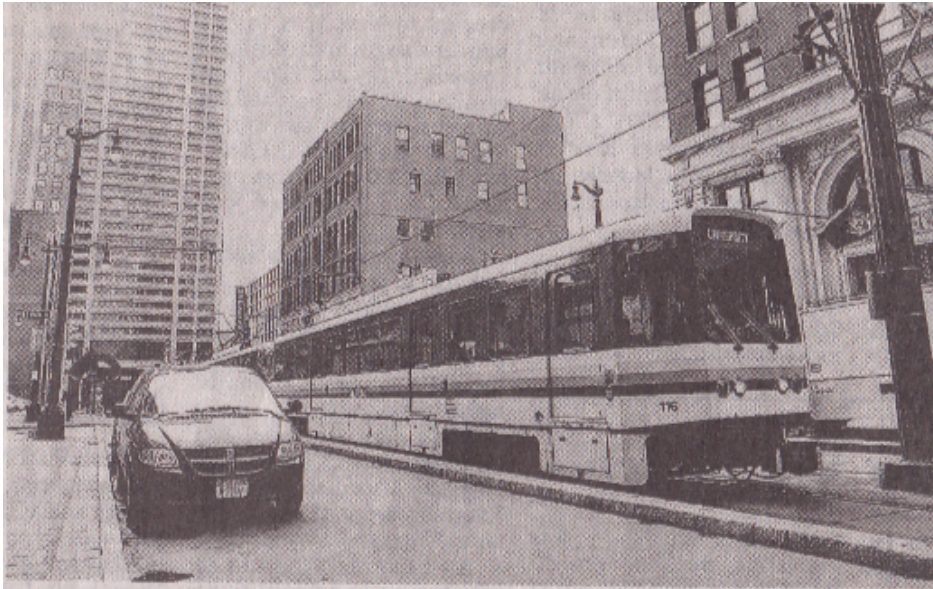
Some additional problems with mixing traffic with light rail trains (not noted in NFTA commissioned peer review):



References:

1. APTA Peer Review for NFTA. LRT / Mixed Traffic Design. 2006.
2. CRTC Analysis. 2011.

There's No Reason to Suffer these Negative Impacts!



There is room for cars, train, Theater Station, and pedestrian sidewalk!

So why suffer the negative consequences of mixing traffic with trains?

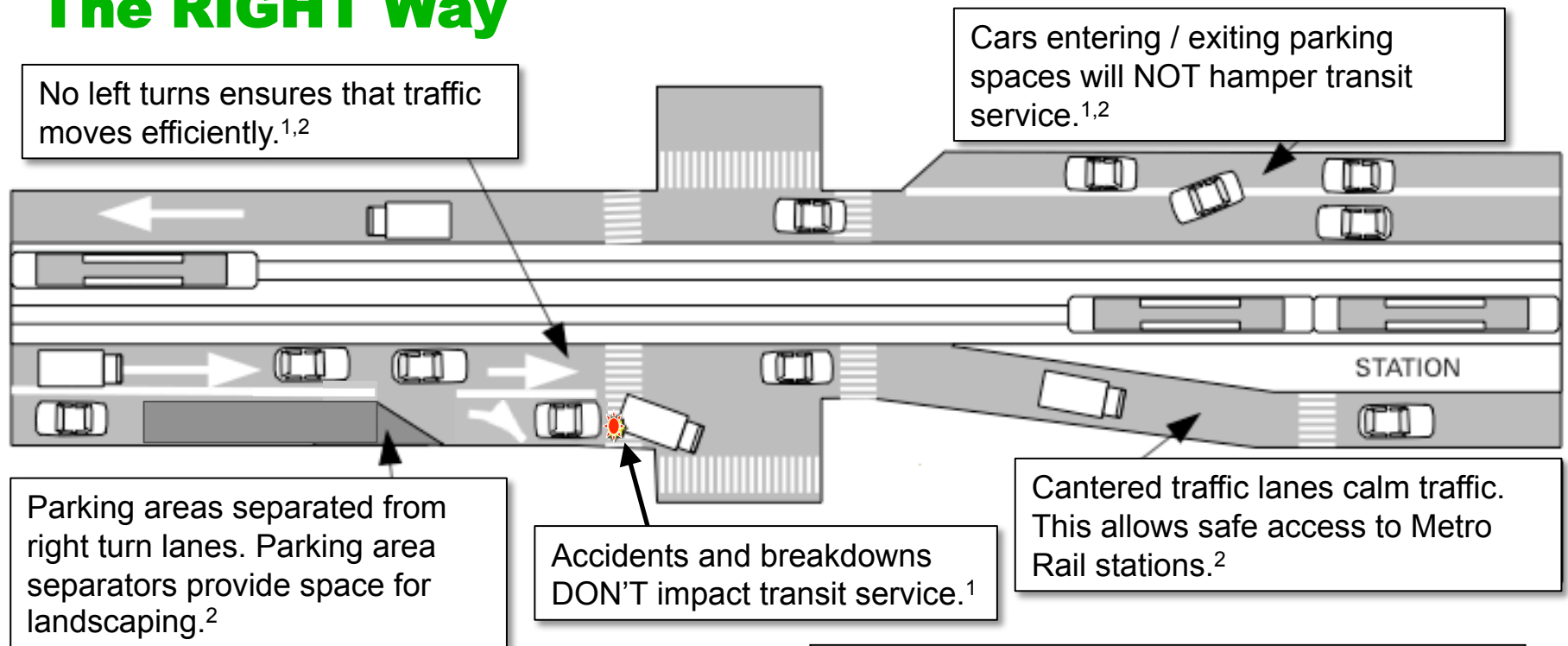
Let's do it cars on Main Street the right way.



Let's Do Cars on Main Street the Right Way!

We can achieve optimum benefits by separating traffic from trains:

The RIGHT Way

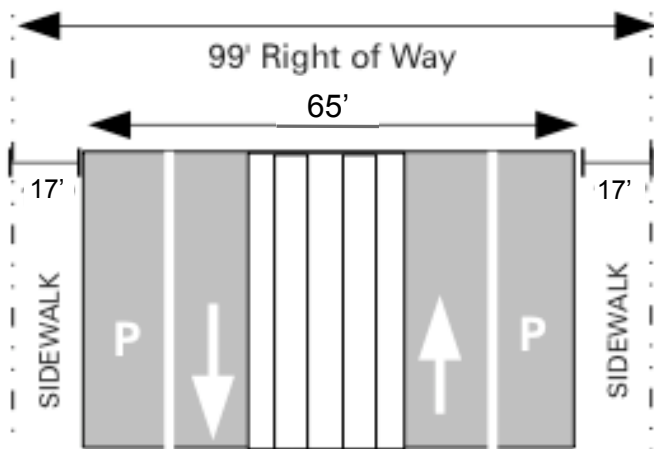


References:

1. APTA Peer Review for NFTA. LRT / Mixed Traffic Design. 2006.
2. CRTC Analysis. 2011.

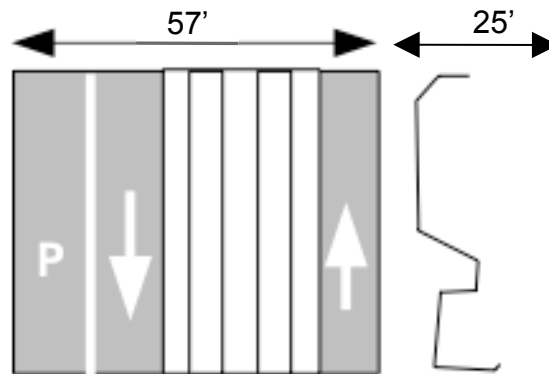


Let's Do Cars on Main Street the Right Way! (cont.)

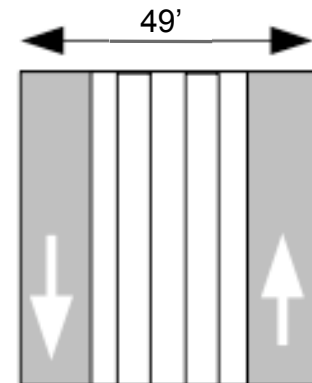


Full width available – using standard lanes of 12 feet with 8 foot parking lanes

There's more than enough space to do this project the right way. Main Street's right-of-way is 99 feet wide. If special buildings or amenities or wide sidewalks are desired parking can be removed.¹



Building or feature or sidewalk on one side extending into right-of-way



Fully restricted – travel lanes only

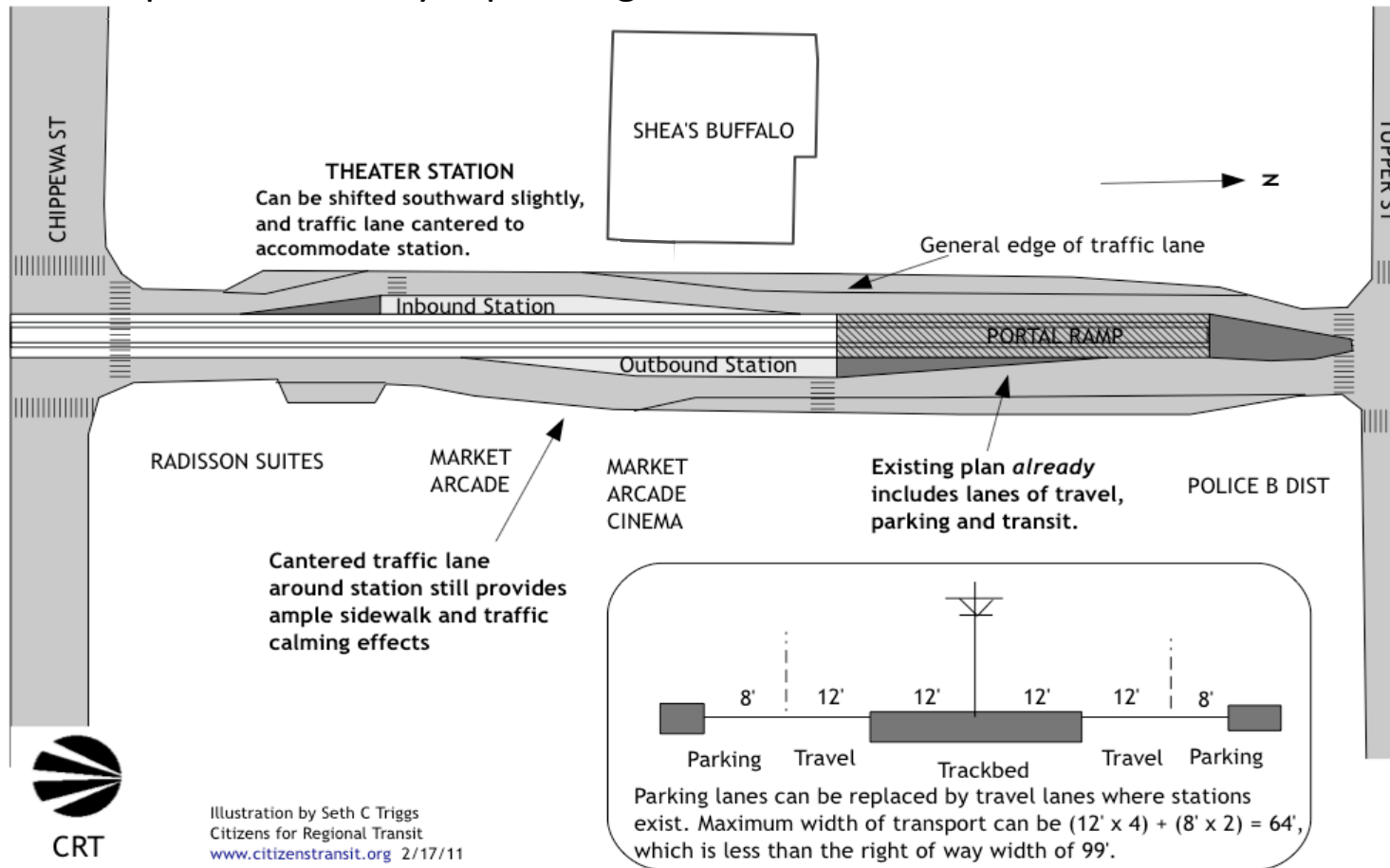
References:

1. APTA Peer Review for NFTA. LRT / Mixed Traffic Design. 2006.
2. CRTC Analysis. 2011.



Let's Do Cars on Main Street the Right Way!

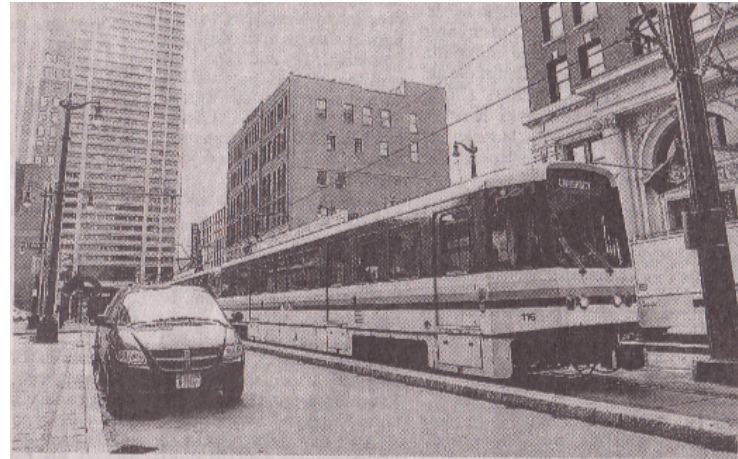
We can have Theater Station, efficient traffic movement, and unencumbered train performance by separating traffic from trains¹:



References:

1. CRT Analysis. 2011.

Conclusions



- Closing of Theater Station denies equal access to current riders.
- Having cars share the rail bed with trains will degrade entire NFTA transit service .
- There is no reason to accept these impacts.
 - There is room to separate cars from trains.
 - There is room for both cars and Theater Station.
- Let's take the time to do this right – we will have to live with the results for decades.



Next Steps

1. Revise and finalize cars on Main Street plans to:
 - Preserve Theater Station.
 - Separate traffic from light rail.
2. Implement cars on Main Street.
 - On 600 block.
 - Beyond 600 block, as funds become available.
3. Extend Buffalo's light rail to other high priority destinations using existing rights-of-way.
 - Southtowns.
 - Galleria Mall, Buffalo-Niagara Intl. Airport, Transit park-and-ride.
 - UB Amherst Campus (from South Campus and airport).
 - Tonawandas.



And on to the Future...

Let's build on what we have to develop a world class public transit system!

KEY TO MAP

- Existing Metro Rail & Stations
- Planned Expansion
- Possible Additions
- Amtrak & Future High Speed Rail
- Park & Ride at Station

Most stations would have bus connections.

A regional Metro Rail system

It's more than a dream. It's a necessity, if the Buffalo/Niagara region is to achieve its full potential in growth and prosperity.

The map shows a network of rail lines connecting Buffalo, Tonawanda, Cheektowake, and Orchard Park. Key stations include Buffalo, Tonawanda, Cheektowake, and Orchard Park. The map also shows the location of Amtrak and Future High Speed Rail lines. Three photographs show different views of a modern rail vehicle in operation.