



Opinion

Democracy in action saves Albany community center

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Sports

Lady Knights have a bitter-sweet end to their season

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Albany residents speak out against impending CDTA rate increase

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Contributing Writer

On April 1st the Capital District Transportation Authority base fare will increase 50 percent to \$1.50 per ride, the first CDTA fare increase in 14 years. Advocates such as the Stop the Hike campaign are fighting to keep bus fares affordable in the capital district, however the current state of the economy has led to the need for change.

"A weakened economy has contributed to CDTA's soaring rider ship, which will top 15 million this year. At the same time, our operating costs have increased significantly, federal assistance remained flat and state assistance was cut," Margo Janack said, Manager of Corporate Communications at CDTA.

Janack says that this increase has resulted in a sizeable budget deficit for the next fiscal year, and in order to balance the budget, "CDTA is consolidating and reducing services on lightly used routes and streamlining internal operations in addition to a fare increase," Janack said.

The Stop the Hike campaign is a coalition of individuals and organizations such as Citizen Action, Capital District Coalition for Accessible Transportation, and Citizens for Public Transportation and Capital Region Transit Advocates opposed to CDTA fare hikes.

"The bottom lines is the majority of CDTA riders simply can not afford the fare hike," Leah Golby said, founding member of Capital Region Transit Advocates. "This is a really bad time for a fare hike."

However, while many disagree with the increase in bus fares, others understand why it must be

done. "I believe that the increase will impact numerous riders. There are many who struggled to just pay the fare of a dollar. However they do offer options that can in the end help the rider, such as with the purchases of a monthly swiper card," Rachel Ramsey said, Media Specialist at Saint Rose and bus rider for the past two years.

Ramsey describes the fare increase as a necessary evil. "If people expect the company to keep up with the surge of prices for gas and having to maintain and expand to accommodate the expanding use, CDTA needs to bring the rate up to standards of the inflation," Ramsey said.

The Stop the Hike campaign hopes to seek more government funding to close CDTA's budget gap, hold CDTA accountable to its riders, and finally to plan events to build interest in this social justice issue.

Stop the Hike!

One such event took place on March 2nd on the corner of Lark and Washington. Riders and advocates joined together to express their opposition to the fare hike. According to Golby, many of the individuals involved in the demonstration were unaware of the fare hike.

Events such as this hope to inform riders of the increase and prevent any future hike in bus fare. According to the campaign another hike is planned for April 2010. Yet Janack says CDTA is hopeful all Stimulus funds will obviate the need for another fare increase in 2010.

"However, a long term commitment to transit investment is needed if we are to provide the quality service the Capital Region deserves," Janack said. For now a fare increase is necessary for CDTA's budget deficit.

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Saint Rose Safety Programs

TAXI VOUCHERS

Students can request the two part voucher from Student Affairs or Security. The voucher is filled out with the student's name and last four digits of their student ID number. They will receive a monthly bill with all of their charges. There is no cap as to how much a student can spend using the program but the college recommends only using the service within the city limits. Maps are provided to students at the time they request a voucher.

SHUTTLE YOU HOME

Provides transportation for students and staff in their home within the perimeter of New Scotland Avenue, Central Avenue, Lark Street and Breavor Street, after evening classes. The service operates Monday - Thursday from 7 to 11 p.m. Participants interested must contact transportation@strosec.edu with their name, student ID number, and class dismissal time.

SECURITY ESCORTS

Security escorts are available for students to and from campus. Escorts are usually on foot, but Security can also pick up students if they feel unsafe on their way back to campus. Students can call for an escort 24 hours a day at 454-5187 or 5187 from any campus phone.

Face the

FACTS

Total number of robberies in Albany within 1 week of March 6

10

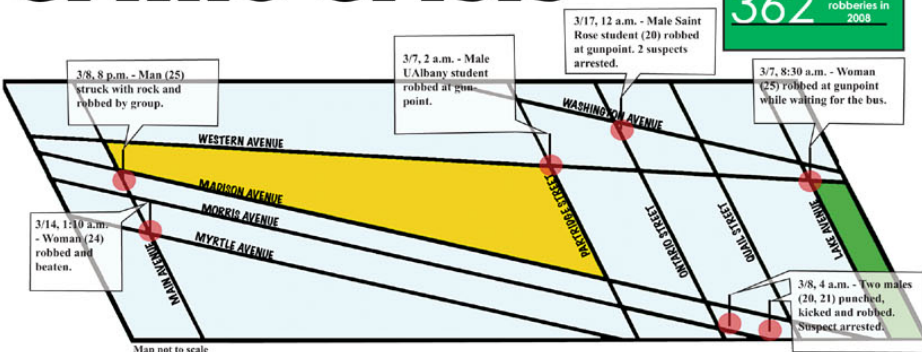
% crime dropped between 2007 & 2008

8.2

362 Number of robberies in 2008

Crime Crisis

CECELIA MARTINEZ
Executive Editor



Map not to scale

“

The man pelted with the rock was attacked on this very corner. I don't think he cares much about statistics.

Shawn Morris, mayoral candidate ”

“

It doesn't help that people get intoxicated and walk around, so definitely be smart.

Brad Cameron, as told to News 10 ”

“

We have beefed up our patrols.

Stephen Stella, director of Security ”