



# Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

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Wilton Station Re-Opening  
*October 26, 2010*

**DATE:** December 31, 2010

**TO:** Honorable Dannel P. Malloy, Governor

Honorable Andrea Stillman and Antonio Guerrero  
Co-Chairpersons of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Honorable Jeffrey A. Parker, Commissioner of Transportation

Honorable Bruce Alexander, Chairman, Transportation Strategy Board

**FROM:** Kevin Maloney, Chairman  
Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

I am pleased to submit to you the 2010 Annual Report of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission as required by the Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a(e). The eight recommendations contained in this year's Annual Report reflect public input received at the eight public hearings conducted by the Commission across Connecticut and information gathered at our twelve monthly meetings as well as the expertise and experience of our members. The Commission is cognizant of the fiscal situation currently faced by the State of Connecticut and our recommendations reflect our awareness that brand new initiatives would be difficult to implement at this time. As a result, most of the recommendations contained in this report are low cost or no cost initiatives or call for practices and policies which would be phased in over time.

Before discussing the individual recommendations in this report, I wish to emphasize that our top priority as a State should be the maintenance of our existing public transportation services and systems. Access to transportation is very often the number one barrier preventing individuals from obtaining employment. Thus, it is the availability of transportation that often makes the difference between an individual being gainfully employed or being unemployed and reliant on various forms of State assistance. The ability to access jobs with better pay and which offer an increased ability to support one's family is similarly often transportation-dependent.

Transportation services are also key both for many younger people attempting to further their skills and education at community colleges or other institutions of higher learning, and for so many individuals in Connecticut's aging population who are seeking to maintain their mobility and independence. With these considerations in mind, the Commission highlights the maintenance of our existing public transportation services as our highest priority. With that foundational consideration in place, the following overview of the Commission's eight recommendations is

offered.

### **Overview of Recommendations**

The Commission's first recommendation endorses the proposal for a dedicated busway connecting Hartford and New Britain and explains that there is no other realistic transit option available and implementable in this corridor for the foreseeable future. The busway proposal has been thoroughly studied for over a decade and has emerged as the most promising transportation option for this corridor from among a half dozen alternatives that have been evaluated.

The second recommendation calls for an extension of local bus service in Waterbury from its existing cessation at 5:30 pm through the evening hours to 11:00 pm. Waterbury is the largest city in the state without evening bus service. The lack of such service prevents residents from having access to second shift retail and manufacturing jobs and precludes local students from accessing classes after 5:00 pm at Naugatuck Valley Community College. A recently formulated local initiative to provide evening bus service at a reasonable cost is endorsed.

The need to identify a funding mechanism to support the relatively modest but very important infrastructure needs on Connecticut's freight railroads is called out in the third recommendation. Both financial and administrative measures to upgrade the often antiquated physical plant of Connecticut's freight rail lines are recommended.

The fourth recommendation reflects the most commonly expressed topic at the Commission's 2010 public hearings: the need for increased amenities and facilities to promote the use of bicycles for commuting to jobs as a way to reduce vehicle trips and alleviate the parking demand at overcrowded rail station parking lots.

The Commission heard voluminous testimony at its public hearing in Waterbury about the unsafe conditions and other deficiencies at the Waterbury train station. The Commission's fifth recommendation recognizes that the scaled back improvements now planned at the train station make more sense than the more ambitious intermodal center which had previously been proposed there, and advocates the removal of the abandoned, State-owned building at the station which causes security and public perception problems.

The need for Connecticut's transit districts to have accurate figures at the beginning of each fiscal year for the level of State support to be provided that year is highlighted in the sixth recommendation. Proper planning and the desire to operate the most efficient system with the level of funding available require that the transit districts know in a timely fashion what resources will be available to them.

The seventh recommendation asks the Department of Transportation to resume the previous practice of providing public responses to the recommendations of the Commission's Annual Report. ConnDOT's responses were very helpful to both the Commission and to other agencies and individuals reading the Annual Report in that they gave us the benefit of knowing the Department's thinking on each of the recommendations and why it agreed or disagreed with them.

Lastly, the Commission thanks the Department, in its eighth recommendation, for its prompt action to repair and reopen Wilton Station on the Danbury Branch of Metro-North. The reopening of this

station will meet local commuter needs for services and shelter, but it also demonstrates that our State government hears and responds to local needs. The Department earned much goodwill in Wilton and surrounding towns with its quick action to rehabilitate and reopen this station.

Members of the Commission welcome your comments on the recommendations contained in the Annual Report. We appreciate your consideration of these proposals and we welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss actions that can be taken to implement these recommendations. The Commission looks forward to receiving the Department of Transportation's responses to these recommendations early in 2011.

**CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

DECEMBER 31, 2010

**COVER PHOTO:**

Wilton Station on the Danbury Branch of Metro-North was formally dedicated and re-opened on October 26, 2010 after having been closed since 2007. Interior, exterior and structural renovations were completed in timely fashion to allow local commuters to once again access the shelter and amenities of the station.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Activities of the Commission in 2010 .....	1
Projects and Recommendations	
New Britain Busway .....	6
Evening Bus Service in Waterbury .....	7
Freight Railroad Infrastructure Support.....	9
Bicycle Commuting Amenities.....	11
Waterbury Train Station .....	13
Fiscal Estimates of Transit District Support .....	15
ConnDOT Responses to Commission Recommendations.....	17
Reopening of Wilton Station .....	18
Schedule of 2010 Public Hearings.....	19
Summaries of Public Hearings	
Bridgeport .....	20
New Haven.....	25
Danbury.....	27
New Britain.....	35
Waterbury .....	36
Newington.....	45
Stamford.....	49
New London.....	53
Roster of Commission Membership .....	61
Authorizing Legislation	
Legislation Establishing the CPTC, Connecticut.....	68
General Statutes, Section 13b-11a	
CPTC Guiding Principles, C.G.S. Section 13b-32 .....	71

## ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION IN 2010

Kevin Maloney was elected Chairman of the Commission and Richard Schreiner Vice Chairman at the January meeting. Frederick Riese continued as Administrative Vice Chairman. The Commission added two new members, Robert Rodman and Ronald Kilcoyne during 2010. Three members left the Commission during the year. The contributions of Robert Zarnetske, Kathleen Anderson and Jack Testani will be missed.

### Monthly Meetings

As set forth in Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a(j), the Commission met on the first Thursday of each month. In 2010, the Commission held four of its monthly meetings at Union Station in New Haven, four at the Connecticut Department of Transportation headquarters in Newington, two at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, and one each at the Connecticut Motor Transport Association headquarters in Hartford and at Connecticut Transit's new bus storage and maintenance facility in Hamden.

With the exception of the February meeting, which focused on internal planning issues, the Commission's monthly meetings featured presentations on timely transportation issues by invited speakers. James Peay, ConnDOT's Operation Lifesaver coordinator, discussed issues of safety and enforcement at railroad crossings and along railroad rights-of-way at the January meeting. James Redeker, ConnDOT's Bureau Chief for Public Transportation and Michael Sanders, the Transit and Ridesharing Administrator at ConnDOT, discussed the development and current status of the New Britain Busway along with funding and operational issues at the March meeting. In April, the Commission visited the Connecticut Motor Transport Association where President Mike Riley discussed the current state of the trucking industry in Connecticut and nationally, and the importance of that industry to the economy.

In May, in response to issues that had been raised at one of the Commission's public hearings, Connecticut Transit's General Manager David Lee outlined the issues of bus driver recruitment, training and re-training, and accident investigation procedures at Connecticut Transit. Former ConnDOT Commissioner Joseph Marie addressed the June meeting and discussed the federal and state financial picture for transportation and the major capital projects underway or upcoming in Connecticut. Stephen Gazillo, Director of Transportation Planning at URS Corporation, outlined the planning work done to date to evaluate improvements to Metro-North's Danbury Branch rail line and provided an overview of the options being evaluated in the environmental impact statement for that line. At the Commission's August meeting, Robin Stein of the City of Stamford's Bureau of Land Use, Stuart Lerner of Stantec, and Josh Lecar of Keep Stamford Moving, gave a presentation on the recently-completed study on improvements to the Stamford Transportation Center.

James Butler, Executive Director of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, gave a detailed presentation on the Council-sponsored study for a regional intermodal transportation center for downtown New London at the September meeting. The October meeting featured Michael Sanders describing the new Connecticut Transit bus facility in Hamden and proposed bus facilities for Waterbury, Torrington and Windham. He also outlined the new competitive bidding procedure for operating the five urban bus systems in Waterbury, New Britain, Bristol, Meriden and Wallingford as well as for paratransit and express bus services, and gave an update on the status of the New Britain Busway. Public Transportation Bureau Chief James Redeker and Brenda Jannotta of the Office of Rails also presented the draft State Rail Plan at that meeting. Donald Shubert, President of the Connecticut Construction Industries Association, spoke on the outlook for a new federal transportation bill to replace the previous one which expired on September 30, 2009 and discussed the impacts of the federal stimulus spending for transportation at the November meeting. Lastly, in December, Colin Pease, Vice President for Special Projects at the Housatonic Railroad, discussed that company's recently undertaken study on the feasibility of offering regularly scheduled passenger service on the Housatonic's Berkshire Line.

These speakers provided valuable insights into current developments on many of the salient issues in public transportation in Connecticut. The Commission is very appreciative of their presentations.

## **Public Hearings**

The Commission conducted eight public hearings across the state during 2010 to evaluate the adequacy of existing public transportation systems and to gather public input from transportation users and providers, local officials and planners, non-profit organizations, and others with an interest in public transportation. Hearing sites in the spring included Bridgeport, New Haven, Danbury and New Britain, while the fall hearings were held in Waterbury, Newington, Stamford and New London. These hearings, a requirement of C.G.S. section 13b-11a(b), provide information which is then used both in the formulation of the Annual Report, and also to resolve conflicts, issues and questions raised at the hearings, either by providing the information at the hearing or by facilitating the contacts necessary to achieve a resolution.

The issues of concern at the public hearings varied, and there were no issues that were brought forth statewide. However, several issues were raised at more than one hearing, and in some cases, similar local needs were raised at multiple hearings. The call for increased bicycle amenities was the most frequently raised topic. The facets of this issue included expanded bicycle storage facilities at railroad stations, more sheltered bicycle storage in particular, more bicycle lanes on roads, more access for bicycles on

Metro-North trains, the provision of bicycle racks on the new M-8 rail cars, and greater consideration for bicycle needs at the early stages in the design of transportation projects.

Adequate funding for the maintenance of existing transit services was also called out as a priority need. This applied not only to fixed route bus service but also to the State Matching Grant program under C.G.S. section 13b-38bb and to Jobs Access transportation services.

The role of public transportation as an economic development catalyst was also highlighted at multiple hearings. Repeatedly, speakers at the Commission's Bridgeport hearing illuminated the critical role that the proximity of multiple transportation services is playing in the redevelopment of downtown Bridgeport, and particularly in attracting professional residents to the city's center. The proposal for a regional intermodal transportation center in downtown New London, centered at the historic train station, is seen as key to revitalizing the downtown of that city. Transit's attractiveness for development in a less traditional sense was highlighted at the Waterbury public hearing where mention was made that plans for a Naugatuck River Greenway have prompted calls to the mayor's office from realtors interested in properties along the greenway and from businesses looking to relocate to greenway-adjacent sites.

In addition to mention of the proposed Naugatuck River Greenway as a commuting corridor that will have spurs to provide bicycle and pedestrian access to key points in the city center, multiple speakers at the Commission's Danbury hearing made mention of the potential of the proposed Norwalk River Valley Trail, which will run south from Danbury in the former Route 7 expressway right-of-way to Norwalk, as a commuting route to employment sites in addition to its recreational uses. Again, bicycles were seen as an important mode in this regard.

Another example of similar local issues arising at two locations were the calls for new New Haven Line railroad stations east of the existing downtown stations in Bridgeport and Stamford. Several speakers representing the city government and downtown development interests advocated for a new station at the intersection of Seaview and Barnum Avenues in Bridgeport to serve the east side of the city and to be a catalyst for economic development. Similarly, there was a call for a new East Main Street rail station in Stamford which it was felt would serve a similar function as the State Street Station does in New Haven and could provide stimulus for similar urban development as is occurring near State Street Station.

Of issues specific to one hearing, two issues dominated the Commission's public hearing in Danbury: highway tolls at the New York border and pedestrian safety on Route 7 in Ridgefield. Reacting to a proposal for tolls on interstate highways at Connecticut's borders as outlined in the Transportation Strategy Board's 2009 report *Connecticut Electronic Tolling and Congestion Pricing Study*, multiple speakers in

Danbury cited the congestion this idea would cause in Danbury as drivers used local roads to skirt the border tolling location. Mill Plain Road in particular was seen as an impacted area. Speakers noted the ease with which a border toll location could be avoided using local roads and the gridlock that can presently occur on local roads when a major accident blocks lanes on Interstate 84. The equity issue of tolling only at border crossings on Interstates 84, 91 and 95 was raised, as was the economic and sales tax impacts from discouraging New York shoppers, who represent a large portion of Danbury Mall patrons, from traveling to Connecticut to shop.

At least five speakers at the Danbury hearing also expressed concerns about pedestrian safety on Route 7 in front of the over-55 residential community at 638 Danbury Road in Ridgefield, particularly since the adjacent segment of Route 7 to the north has been widened. The lack of a traffic light at this location, combined with the excessive speed of many vehicles, renders this area an extremely hazardous location.

The New London public hearing elicited testimony from eleven speakers calling for increased Shore Line East commuter rail service to New London, not only to serve existing travel needs but also to spur residential development in downtown New London. However, four other speakers, representing marinas on the Connecticut and Niantic Rivers above the Amtrak bridges, cautioned that an enhanced Shore Line East schedule could impact their businesses if it results in more bridge closures which restrict the transit of boats through the moveable bridges to and from Long Island Sound. Development of a train schedule and bridge operating plan that meets the needs of boaters was advocated.

Several issues were brought up only at the Waterbury public hearing but were raised by multiple speakers there. The foremost of these was the need to address unsatisfactory conditions at the Waterbury train station. Seven speakers, including Mayor Jarjura and three state representatives, cited the user-unfriendly and unsafe conditions at the train station and the blighted appearance of the area caused by the abandoned, State-owned former SNET building which blocks the station parking area from view from Meadow Street, thereby giving cover to vandals. The need for evening bus service in Waterbury was also cited by multiple speakers including four from Naugatuck Valley Community College who spoke of the difficulties caused in accessing evening classes which run until 10:00 PM while the local bus service ceases operations at 5:30 PM. Virtually every speaker at the Waterbury hearing commended the work of the Naugatuck River Greenway Advisory Committee and all expressed excitement and support for this project. Lastly, although not a public transportation issue, Congressman Chris Murphy, Mayor Jarjura, State Senator Hartley and three state representatives spoke of the importance of advancing the plans to widen Interstate 84 through the East End of Waterbury.

Four of the seven speakers at the Stamford public hearing spoke about the need to proceed with plans to replace the older parking structure at the Stamford Transportation

Center and to expand parking capacity and make other improvements in the area of that station. The speakers represented or advocated for various development and improvement plans at and around the station.

More detailed discussion of these issues and other testimony can be found on pages 19-60 of this Annual Report.

## NEW BRITAIN BUSWAY

1. THE COMMISSION REITERATES ITS STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED HARTFORD-NEW BRITAIN BUSWAY. EXTENSIVE PLANNING AND EVALUATION EFFORTS LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRENT PROJECT CONCEPT. DESIGN WORK IS AT AN ADVANCED STAGE. THE NECESSARY FUNDING IS LARGELY IN PLACE. TERMINATION OF THE PROJECT AT THIS STAGE, AS HAS BEEN ADVOCATED BY SOME PARTIES, COULD REQUIRE THE RETURN OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS BY THE STATE TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION. NO PLANNING WORK, COST ESTIMATES, DESIGN WORK OR FUNDING APPLICATIONS HAVE OCCURRED FOR ANY ALTERNATIVE TRANSIT FACILITIES IN THE CORRIDOR, SUCH AS A HARTFORD TO WATERBURY RAIL SERVICE. FURTHERMORE, THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES THAT ANY ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS WOULD EVER BE FUNDED.

The Commission provided a letter of support for the New Britain Busway to ConnDOT in the spring of 2010. The busway concept was originally selected as the preferred transportation option to meet increased travel demand in the corridor as compared to highway expansion, HOV lanes, commuter rail or light rail, based on ridership, flexibility and cost considerations. Planning on the busway has now progressed over more than ten years. The final environmental impact statement and preliminary engineering and design work are complete. Environmental permits for the busway have been obtained. Numerous properties in the corridor have been acquired. Construction is slated to begin in 2013. The state and federal governments have already made substantial investments in this project, and final funding is highly probable.

During much of this year, busway opponents have suggested that funds for the busway project would be better spent on bridges or highways, or on developing passenger rail service between Waterbury and Hartford. While commuter rail service between these cities is a worthwhile long-term goal, such a service is at the conceptual stage at best and does not represent a reason to preempt the busway. While construction of the busway is imminent, the planning, design, regulatory approvals and funding for rail improvements would take a decade or more, if begun today, and there would be no assurance that the project could compete successfully for the necessary federal funding. In short, the suggestion that Connecticut has a choice between pursuing a rail option or a busway option in this corridor is an erroneous suggestion over the foreseeable future. The current choice we are offered in this corridor is one between the proposed busway and making no improvement. Pursuit of the latter choice offers no benefits at all. Should a rail alternative in this corridor move forward at some future date, pursuit of that plan is not precluded by building and operating the busway

## EVENING BUS SERVICE IN WATERBURY

2. THE COMMISSION ENDORSES THE PROPOSAL DEVELOPED BY NORTH EAST TRANSPORTATION, THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS OF THE CENTRAL NAUGATUCK VALLEY, THE CITY OF WATERBURY, AND NAUGATUCK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO PROVIDE EVENING BUS SERVICE IN THE CITY OF WATERBURY. PRESENTLY, BUS SERVICE IN WATERBURY TERMINATES AT 5:30 PM. EXTENSIVE TESTIMONY AT THE COMMISSION'S PUBLIC HEARING IN WATERBURY DOCUMENTED THE UNMET DEMAND FOR EVENING BUS SERVICE FOR EMPLOYMENT TRIPS, ACCESS TO CLASSES AT NAUGATUCK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND OTHER PURPOSES. THE LACK OF EVENING BUS SERVICE PRECLUDES TRANSIT-DEPENDENT PERSONS FROM ACCEPTING MANY SECOND SHIFT RETAIL AND OTHER JOBS AND PRECLUDES STUDENT ACCESS VIA PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO FOUR OF THE NINE TIME BLOCKS OF CLASSES AT NAUGATUCK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

At the Commission's September 7 public hearing in Waterbury, extensive testimony was given concerning the difficulties experienced by Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC) students due to the lack of evening bus service in Waterbury (see pp. 36-44 of this report). Twenty-five percent of the student body of 7,195 is from Waterbury, a large percentage of whom are transit-dependent. As classes at NVCC run until 10:00 pm, the cessation of bus service at 5:30 pm represents a significant obstacle to accessing classes and participating in campus activities.

Subsequent to the Commission's September 7 public hearing, North East Transportation and NVCC performed separate surveys to gauge the demand for evening bus service. North East Transportation's survey, which generated 1,500 responses, provided data on the time of evening, day of the week, purpose of trip and specific routes needed for each of the responses. Employment-related trips were the dominant need with 1,011 of the 1,500 responses indicating travel needs to access jobs. The survey demonstrated that an evening service proposal aimed only at NVCC students would not meet the majority of travel needs and would quickly be overwhelmed by users needing trips for other purposes.

North East Transportation, in partnership with the Council of Governments, the City of Waterbury and NVCC, has developed a proposal for providing evening bus service in Waterbury through 11:00 PM at an annual cost of just under \$900,000. Such service would open second shift employment opportunities to many Waterbury area residents who cannot currently access such jobs due to lack of a private vehicle. Also, with enrollment at NVCC projected to increase from the current level of 7,195 students, necessitating the increasing use of evening classes to accommodate demand within the college's existing facilities, it is more cost effective to provide transportation to campus

to maximize the use of the existing facilities through a longer academic day than it is to build additional facilities at the college.

## FREIGHT RAILROAD INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

3. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT PROGRAMS BE DEVELOPED TO ASSIST IN IMPROVING AND UPGRADING CONNECTICUT'S RAIL FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE. THE RECENTLY PRODUCED CONNECTICUT STATE RAIL PLAN IDENTIFIES THE POOR CONDITION OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE (RAILS, TIES, BRIDGES AND CULVERTS) ON MANY OF CONNECTICUT'S FREIGHT LINES. FOR BOTH THOSE LINES WHICH ARE IN STATE OWNERSHIP, WITH RAILROADS OPERATING UNDER LEASE AGREEMENTS, AND THOSE WHICH ARE PRIVATELY-OWNED BY SHORT LINE AND REGIONAL RAILROADS, SOME MECHANISMS ARE NEEDED TO SUPPORT THE UPGRADE OF THE OFTEN ANTIQUATED, UNDERWEIGHT, AND DETERIORATING INFRASTRUCTURE. AS NOTED IN THE STATE RAIL PLAN, THE EARNINGS OF THE SHORT LINE CARRIERS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT LARGE INVESTMENTS IN RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE.

The State Rail Plan serves a valuable purpose in identifying the rail infrastructure needs in Connecticut. On the freight side, many lines are not able to accommodate the current industry standard of 286,000 pounds per four axle car. Railroads on such lines and the industries they serve operate at a competitive disadvantage and are more vulnerable to diversion of freight from rail to trucks. Among ConnDOT-owned lines, the Waterbury and Torrington Branches and the Terryville Secondary, among others, are not certified for 286,000 pound cars. Several privately-owned freight lines also fail to meet this standard.

In addition to the weight standard, numerous lines have vertical clearance issues which need to be addressed if access for modern cars and more types of rail equipment is to be achieved.

Connecticut's short line freight railroads commonly operate on old or underweight track. Sections of the Berkshire Line, a State-owned line operated by the Housatonic Railroad, have rail dating back to 1876. Hundred year old rail is not uncommon, as is also the case with railroad bridges. Many freight railroads operate on rail that is lighter than 100 pounds (per yard) and therefore is difficult to upgrade to higher FRA classes to improve operating speeds.

Programs under which new or used rail can be provided to the regional and short line carriers should be developed. As noted above, many of these lines are owned by ConnDOT and, therefore, improvements to them increase the value of State assets. Reinstitution or refunding of the previous ConnDOT Rail Preservation and Improvement Program should also be considered to foster the upgrade of rail lines and encourage new rail infrastructure with State assistance and railroad in-kind contributions.

The Commission is also aware that on occasion the department has let contracts for rehabilitation and upgrade of passenger rail lines which allowed the contractor to claim the old rail and sell it for its scrap value. This is a highly wasteful use of what is typically perfectly good rail which, while it may not adequately serve for passenger rail service, would be perfectly useful to upgrade freight lines. Rail being replaced when lines supporting passenger service are upgraded under State contract should be offered to the freight railroads, perhaps at its scrap value, for use in upgrading freight lines, many of which are state-owned assets.

The Commission recognizes that there are many State needs in this difficult fiscal climate but the maintenance of our rail infrastructure must be kept on the State's radar screen if we are to be economically competitive and if we hope to successfully move more freight off our highways onto the rails.

## BICYCLE COMMUTING AMENITIES

4. THE COMMISSION RECOGNIZES THE DEPARTMENT'S GROWING INTEREST IN SUPPORTING BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION, BUT ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS IN PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE AMENITIES AND ACCESS RELATED TO ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE ARE NEEDED. BURGEONING INTEREST IN MULTI-USE TRAILS PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE TRAVEL FOR OTHER THAN RECREATIONAL PURPOSES BY LINKING THESE PEDESTRIAN/ BICYCLE PATHWAYS WITH EMPLOYMENT, RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL AREAS.

Bicycle accommodations are now included as a component of plans of development in Bridgeport, New Haven, West Hartford and Simsbury. The need for multi-use trails for pedestrians and bicycle users has been a common thread in the Commission's hearings this year.

According to testimony presented at the Commission's Danbury hearing, Connecticut is ranked at #42 of the 50 states in terms of bicycle friendliness. Recent initiatives by the General Assembly reflect a growing public policy effort to address this shortcoming and meet the needs of non-motorized transportation users. New "Complete Streets" policies mandate that roadways be bicycle and pedestrian friendly. Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-79p, passed in 2008, requires the Department to make bicycle and pedestrian access a priority. The 2008 legislative session also produced C.G.S. sec. 14-232 which requires motorists to allow at least three feet of clearance when passing cyclists on the roadway. Enacted just last year, Public Act 09-154 requires that a minimum of 1% of transportation funds received by ConnDOT or any municipality for highway or road projects be spent to provide facilities for non-motorized transportation users, including pedestrians and cyclists. ConnDOT is encouraged to seek bicycle community input into all transportation projects at an early design phase when such needs can be most meaningfully considered and easily incorporated.

These efforts are a good start in the right direction, but more can be done to improve bicycle and pedestrian access at relatively low cost. Priority accommodations for bicycle travel include sheltered and secure parking at rail stations, widening road shoulders to provide adequate and safe space for cycling, as well as reducing vehicle lane widths where feasible, and adding traffic calming measures as needed.

The development of multi-use trails such as those proposed along the Norwalk and Naugatuck Rivers was discussed at the Commission's Danbury and Waterbury public hearings, respectively, as such trails relate to bicycle commuters traveling to employment sites. This appears to be a consistent emerging issue in the planning for such facilities.

Another specific area where commuting by bicycle can be encouraged is enhancing bicycle access to Metro-North trains. ConnDOT should continue its dialogue with Metro-North to increase bicycle access to trains. While the Commission recognizes the need to accommodate all revenue passengers and is not advocating that every bicycle should be allowed on every train, testimony at the Commission's Stamford hearing indicated that the threshold for delineating which trains should have bicycles prohibited from them may be set too broadly and that there is likely room to accommodate bicycles on some peak hour trains. At a minimum, such increased access should be tested on a trial basis to see if it can be accomplished without conflict. The Commission also encourages that bicycle racks be placed on the new M-8 cars as early as possible to encourage bicycle/train intermodal trips. Each time a trip by train is accessed by bicycle rather than by automobile, a valuable parking space at a train station becomes available for another user, who also represents another passenger fare.

## WATERBURY TRAIN STATION

5. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS THE CITY OF WATERBURY FOR RE-EXAMINING THE PROPOSED INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER PROPOSAL. DURING 2010, THE CITY HAD GATHERED ALL STAKEHOLDERS AND IS SEEKING COMMON GROUND TO ADDRESS LOCAL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS IN AN INCLUSIVE FASHION.

For several years, economic development interests have called for an intermodal facility in Waterbury that would create a single facility for bus and rail transit and taxis adjacent to the Waterbury train station. The Commission supports the concept of intermodal transit facilities but had concerns about the Waterbury Transportation Center as it was proposed, particularly the requirement that all local bus service be routed through the intermodal center as the pulse point for local bus routes. In several previous Annual Reports, the Commission noted that the proposed site was physically constrained for bus use, located at a congested and difficult intersection, not near any principal ridership destinations, and that the CT Transit Waterbury Division bus service, operated by North East Transportation, would need substantial and expensive modifications in order to relocate its transfer point from The Green, and would require the increased investment of public funds just to maintain the existing service levels. The lack of a designated management agency to own and operate the new transportation center in this proposal was an indication that the idea had not been seriously thought through.

An environmental impact evaluation of the new transit center was released in 2009. This study indicated that the relocation of the bus system pulse point would require a 30% increase in operating costs for the bus system in order to maintain existing services. In view of the fact that only four of the seven daily Waterbury Branch Metro-North trains operate during the hours when the bus system is running, the Commission suggested that a better solution for those who desired to make a bus-rail connection would be to run shuttle buses between The Green and the train station at the times of train departures and arrivals.

Subsequent to the release of the Commission's 2009 Annual Report, there was a re-evaluation, led by the City of Waterbury, of the entire proposal. All stakeholders are now working to address the transit needs of the city in a comprehensive and phased approach which includes improved amenities at The Green to serve bus riders, and a scaled back development of intermodal improvements adjacent to the train station.

The Commission supports the City's position to demolish the blighted state-owned building at the current station location, improve lighting at the rail station and make improvements to CT Transit's Waterbury Division pulse point at The Green. The Commission understands that \$600,000 in project funds from the intermodal study

remains available. This money could serve to design the more appropriate improvements now envisioned for the Meadow Street site.

## FISCAL ESTIMATES FOR TRANSIT DISTRICT SUPPORT

6. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT, BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF EACH FISCAL YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT FURNISH THE TRANSIT DISTRICTS WITH A FIRM NUMBER FOR THE AMOUNT OF STATE SUPPORT THAT THE DISTRICT WILL RECEIVE THAT YEAR SO THAT EACH TRANSIT DISTRICT CAN EFFICIENTLY PLAN FOR THE AMOUNT OF SERVICE THAT IT CAN PROVIDE DURING THAT YEAR.

State transit operators often do not know how much transit operating funding will be available until well into the fiscal year. While ConnDOT staff will often make verbal estimates prior to the fiscal year, which transit operators then use in developing their budgets, the actual amounts often turn out differently. If the actual amounts of funding are higher, the transit agencies may have provided less service than they could have; while, conversely, if the actual amount of funding is lower, which is more frequently the case, it is too late in the fiscal year to take meaningful action to balance a budget. Since state subsidies cover up to two-thirds of local transit system annual operating budgets, it is essential that each state transit operator obtain information on the amount of funding available before the beginning of the fiscal year.

In odd number years, when the legislature is developing the biennial budget, this can be problematic before a state budget is signed into law by the Governor. However, if ConnDOT provided projections on how much funding would be available to transit operations (both CT TRANSIT divisions and transit districts) as each budget proposal is made public; this would be both helpful to legislators as they deliberate over the budget, and it would allow transit operators to better anticipate what might be available. Furthermore ConnDOT should issue final numbers to both CT TRANSIT and the transit districts within 30 days of the budget being signed into law for the first fiscal year of the biennium and no later than February of the following calendar year for the second fiscal year of the biennium. If the legislature makes any changes to the budget during the short session, ConnDOT would have to issue a revision within 30 days of the change becoming law.

ConnDOT may note problems with the state accounting system or due to difficulty is determining the actual amount of funding that needs to be taken “off the top” for other items included in the state bus transit operating budget. It is critical that any issue with the state accounting system be identified and addressed so that this is not a barrier to timely financial projections. Regarding the latter point, breaking the state bus transit operating budget into two separate line items, one for direct subsidies for transit operations, the other for the “off the top” items, should address this issue.

Another problem with the state subsidy program is that unspent funds cannot be carried over to the following year. This prevents transit agencies from building reserve

funds (which as a good business practice should be 10% of the annual operating budget). Allowing unspent funds to be carried over, or to be shifted between paratransit and fixed route accounts if one is in surplus and the other in deficit, will encourage efficiency (no incentive to spend so one won't lose funding) and can smooth out fiscal ups and downs between flush years and tight years. While this is not a substitute for timely announcements on the amount of funding that will be available, it could help out in years when the legislature is late in passing a budget by providing a cushion if funding turns out to be less than anticipated.

## CONNDOT RESPONES TO COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

7. THE COMMISSION RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS THAT THE DEPARTMENT RESUME THE PRACTICE OF PREPARING AND RELEASING ITS RESPONSES TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE COMMISSION'S ANNUAL REPORT. THE DEPARTMENT HAS FORMALLY RESPONDED TO THE COMMISSION'S ANNUAL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FORMATION OF THE COMMISSION IN 1983 THROUGH THE 2007 ANNUAL REPORT. THESE RESPONSES WERE VALUABLE TO THE COMMISSION IN PROVIDING THE DEPARTMENT'S PERSPECTIVE AS WELL AS HIGHLIGHTING ANY FACTORS WHICH THE COMMISSION MAY HAVE OVERLOOKED IN OFFERING ITS RECOMMENDATIONS. EXTERNAL ENTITIES SUCH AS REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES AND TRANSIT DISTRICTS ALSO FOUND THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSES USEFUL. THE COMMISSION HAS ALWAYS APPRECIATED CONNDOT'S EFFORTS TO PREPARE AND PROVIDE ITS RESPONSES.

The Commission requests that ConnDOT resume its traditional practice of providing its analysis of the annual report recommendations. Through the responses typically were only two or three paragraphs in length, they were valuable to the Commission and to readers of our annual report. Such responses can be particularly useful in issues related to ConnDOT's internal processes such as in the preceding recommendation concerning providing financial support estimates to the transit districts. The department's response would be highly useful in understanding if there are limitations that preclude it from being able to provide the requested information, to use this timely example as one illustration of the value of such responses.

## REOPENING OF WILTON STATION

8. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS THE DEPARTMENT FOR UNDERTAKING THE RENOVATION OF WILTON STATION ON THE DANBURY BRANCH IN SUCH A TIMELY FASHION. DUE TO THE FAST TRACK ACTION TAKEN BY CONNDOT ON THIS PROJECT, WILTON STATION HAS BEEN RENOVATED AND WAS REOPENED TO THE PUBLIC ON OCTOBER 26, 2010.

Beginning with a public hearing held by the Commission in Norwalk in May 2009, the Commission was made amply aware of the pressing public need and desire to see Wilton Station, which had been closed since 2007, reopened. Local train riders from Wilton, Weston and Ridgefield were often forced to wait in their cars during inclement weather until the train arrived due to the station being closed. In addition, the station rest rooms were also not accessible.

The Commission wrote to former Commissioner Joseph Marie in June 2009 pointing out the local frustrations that were brewing because of the inaccessibility of the station to commuters and requesting that this project be undertaken expeditiously. The Department concurred that this project should be undertaken on a priority basis and it quickly conducted two site assessments to determine the extent of the required repairs. Stimulus funding that had been more broadly designated for minor station improvements at multiple locations was reprogrammed to fund the necessary work at Wilton Station.

The reopening of Wilton Station not only meets a pressing regional transportation need but also demonstrated to the public that their State government hears their concerns and is able to address them. The Commission believes that State government in general, and ConnDOT in particular, derived a significant amount of goodwill from this project at a relatively modest cost of \$393,000.

## **2010 Public Hearings Schedule**

### **SCHEDULE AND SUMMARIES**

In accordance with C.G.S. Section 13b-11a(b), the Commission is directed to hold public hearings in each of the metropolitan areas within the state, as determined by the Commission, for the purpose of determining the adequacy of rail, bus, motor carrier, and other public transportation services and facilities.

The Commission conducted a schedule of eight public hearings, as listed below, during the spring and fall of 2010. Summaries of the testimony given at these public hearings are located in the following section.

<u>TOWN</u>	<u>MODERATOR</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Bridgeport	Richard Schreiner	March 16	Bridgeport City Hall
New Haven	Fred Riese	March 24	New Haven Hall of Records
Danbury	Gail Lavielle	April 20	Danbury City Hall
New Britain	Kevin Maloney	April 27	New Britain City Hall
Waterbury	Fred Riese	September 7	Chase Building
Newington	Alan Sylvestre	September 29	Newington Town Hall
Stamford	Gail Lavielle	October 5	Stamford Government Center
New London	Kevin Maloney	October 20	New London City Hall

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

**Public Hearing**

Bridgeport City Hall  
Council Chambers, First Floor  
45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, CT 06604  
Tuesday, March 16 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Yvonne Loteczka  
Richard Schreiner

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Richard Schreiner opened the hearing at 7:34 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate. He then introduced Commission members and ConnDOT staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Paul Antinozzi**, co-chairman of the Downtown Plan Task Force, provided testimony on a number of issues. The Task Force was organized by Mayor Fabrizi to see that the new master plan moved forward. The Task Force has met 30 times thus far. It has several members who are part of the city administration. The group is determining how best to allocate \$2 million among a priority list of projects for the city’s intermodal district. This \$2 million is a portion of a \$7 million grant, of which the other \$5 million has been designated for a parking garage at the ferry terminal. The Task Force has applied for an FTA enhancement funds grant. It also has a subcommittee on mobility to address parking and zoning issues. One of their long term goals is to create a smart card system that would work on parking meters and on the GBT bus system. Mr. Antinozzi sees a need for more public education concerning the availability and value of the intermodal connections present in Bridgeport.

**Kim Morque** of Spinnaker Real Estate Partners, a developer based in Norwalk, spoke about the need to increase commercial and residential market share in the city. His firm has purchased nine buildings in downtown Bridgeport, totalling 300,000 square feet of space. Public funding for downtown revitalization is not adequate for the second-tier urban centers like Bridgeport. Bridgeport possesses a compact, walkable downtown with many good transit connections. The downtown also benefits from active stakeholders who are doing their part to oversee the rebirth of the city center. Mr. Morque also complimented the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority for doing an excellent job.

**Nancy Hadley** spoke on behalf of the Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce. She spoke about the Bridgeport B Green 2020 Sustainability Plan. The plan looks at the reduction of the carbon footprint in the city, and is endorsed fully by the Chamber. The plan covers everything from public transit to the use of grey water. Some key transportation components of the plan are a reduction in VMTs, more mobility options for city residents, and a call for a second train station

at Seaview and Barnum Avenues. She noted that the Chamber also endorses the high speed ferry service which will be doing a demonstration run to Bridgeport later this year.

**Kim Lorch**, also from the Bridgeport Chamber, spoke on several transportation related points. Interstate 95 has capacity and congestion issues. She would like to see continued efforts to open up I-95 as far as Branford to deal with the congestion. She expressed support for GBTA's efforts to extend routes and for ConnDOT's Connecticut Highway Assistant Motorist Program (CHAMP) which has helped deal with incidents on I-95. Lastly, she felt that the dredging of Bridgeport Harbor should be expedited.

Speaking as an individual rather than on behalf of the Chamber, **Nancy Hadley** noted that she was the first tenant in the refurbished CityTrust building, which is now fully occupied by residential and commercial tenants. The building has 117 units, including 12 units of Section 8 housing. The City is encouraging other projects such as the Arcade to further increase the number of downtown residents. Currently there are 700-800 residents who have moved into the downtown district.

Ms. Hadley related that some years ago, the Bridgeport Office of Planning and Economic Development requested that the Urban Land Institute take a look at the economic development climate in Bridgeport. The Institute found that Bridgeport lacked a good economic development climate and a coherent plan. Today, the City has developed a new master plan focusing on public transportation and a low carbon footprint. The City's new master plan encourages transit-oriented development (TOD), bicycle use, and alternate transportation modes. The City has, as of January 1, 2010, adopted a Downtown Village District zone with drastically reduced parking requirements for new development. Developers have been given the message to place new development downtown or on major transit corridors. She suggested that since the city has taken these steps to create a groundwork for smart growth, the state should reward Bridgeport with a greater proportion of funding. She also still sees a need for more parking along the New Haven Line if our efforts to encourage train use instead of driving are to bear fruit.

Hadley spoke of GBTA's need for a \$40-50 million expansion of its repair and maintenance facility. She also endorsed the concept of ParkSmart chips that will function both in parking meters and for fare payment on GBTA. She mentioned the need for an improved transit connection between the 60 Main Street redevelopment area and downtown, and sees potential for a New Starts project to link those two areas.

On the subject of the feeder barge service proposal to Bridgeport Harbor, Hadley says that is not part of Bridgeport's plan and should not be considered any further.

Hadley recommended that all non-Amtrak rail services in Connecticut be run as one system as opposed to having Shore Line East and the New Haven Line under separate auspices. The parking facilities should be under the same jurisdiction. Bridgeport has proposed that a second New Haven Line station be sited in the city at the intersection of Seaview Avenue and Barnum Avenue. Unlike other municipalities along the rail line which don't welcome more parking, Hadley said Bridgeport would welcome thousands of parking spaces at this new station site.

**Andrea Kovacs** of the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA) Board of Directors read testimony written by the system CEO Ron Kilcoyne. The system is actively involved in two city wide efforts, the Downtown Plan Task Force and the City's Sustainability Plan.

The Downtown Plan Task Force oversees the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan which has the goal of creating a dense, pedestrian-friendly, active and vibrant downtown. One strategy, which GBTA proposed but which has received broad support, is to broaden the scope of the parking authority to go beyond managing the supply of parking to become a mobility manager for the central city. As such, it would have authority to manage the demand for parking through such strategies as coordinating car sharing, setting parking pricing, promoting shared use lots and pedestrian amenities, and instituting a universal pass program which would operate on both parking facilities and the GBT system.

The Bridgeport Sustainability Plan seeks to make Bridgeport the greenest city in New England by reducing VMTs, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. Downtown Bridgeport contains 15% to 20% vacant but previously-developed land, providing opportunities for dense infill development as an alternative to sprawl.

GBTA is pursuing federal and state funding for the expansion of its maintenance and administrative facility which is operating at capacity now. GBTA CEO Ron Kilcoyne is in DC right now pursuing funds to expand this facility. To date, GBTA has received four appropriations totaling \$2.6 million toward this project. Preliminary design and environmental work is underway on this project.

On financial matters, GBTA is now in the 9<sup>th</sup> month of its fiscal year and still does not know how much State financial support it will receive. All the transit districts in Connecticut are dealing with this same situation. Since State support accounts for 60-66% of the GBTA budget, this uncertainty makes it very difficult to plan and operate the system as the year progresses. Transit districts need to know before the fiscal year begins, or at least within 30 days of the start of the new fiscal year, how much funding to expect from the state. In addition to the operating support that comes through ConnDOT, continued funding from all programs including Federal Transit Administration's Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) funds and the DSS Transportation for Employment Independence Program monies are also critical. These funds need to be increased and to be received in a timely manner.

GBTA has completed installation of an advanced communication system that provides real time information, automatic stop announcements and passenger counts on its fixed route and paratransit fleets. In July 2009, GBTA received \$2.8 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding through ConnDOT for the repowering of 70% of its fixed route bus vehicles. This project will reduce maintenance costs, extend the life of these buses and improve fleet reliability. In addition, fuel efficiency will increase by 11% while particulate emissions will be cut by 80%. This work is underway and is already about 10% complete. In addition, GBTA has received a \$7,000,000 grant to installed more than 80 bus shelters and to replace current farebox equipment. None of these projects would be possible without state matching funds and ConnDOT's participation.

GBTA is using more information technology to communicate with its riders. This spring, GBTA will introduce a new website that includes a trip planner and live bus tracking to enable riders to make better use of the system. GBTA has also entered the world of internet social media through its Facebook page and its upcoming Twitter feed to engage and interact with its riders.

Kovacs mentioned the 2007 Transit for Connecticut report which identified the need to increase annual statewide transit investment to over \$63 million. Realizing that the current economic situation precludes implementation of these service expansions, GBTA advocates new sources of revenue need to be developed.

Kovacs concluded by recommending four topics for the CPTC to highlight in its Annual Report. These topics are:

- 1) ConnDOT should specify to each transit district the level of State support it will receive before the fiscal year begins or at least within 30 days of the start of the fiscal year.
- 2) Existing levels of funding for public transportation must be maintained and increased each year to maintain all existing services.
- 3) New sources of funding need to be instituted so that Transit for Connecticut's recommended service levels can be implemented.
- 4) State funding should keep pace with all federal grant prospects that require a match.

**John Weldon** of GBTA noted that if the DSS TEIP funds are eliminated, as has been proposed, it would impact interregional services like the Coastal Link and GBTA's Route 15 service to Shelton and Derby.

**Don Eversley**, Director of Economic Development and Planning for the City of Bridgeport, highlighted transportation connections as one of the core assets that Bridgeport possesses. The city has two rail lines, ferry services, taxi stands, a bus depot, Interstate 95 and Route 8 all within a five minute walk of downtown. The city is easy to get to with more modes than any other urban area in the state. Eversley supports the concept of a second train station on the east side of Bridgeport and thinks it would spur development. Such a station, located at Seaview Avenue, would serve the industrial infrastructure located on the east side which is an asset for future development. The station would also be an economic development engine in itself.

Eversley would like to see an increase in ridership on Amtrak and Metro-North. He would like to see the service frequency of trains maintained and to see ACELA Express trains stop in Bridgeport. ACELA Express does not currently stop in Bridgeport due to track curvature at the existing station. The proposed Seaview station is on a section straight track that would allow for ACELA Express trains to make a Bridgeport stop. The currently ongoing study of train service on the Waterbury Branch could also benefit Bridgeport if it recommends more frequent service on that branch.

The historical paradigm of rail service being oriented from Connecticut to NYC is less relevant today. There is more intrastate rail ridership today and, therefore, more intrastate service is needed. Eversley takes the New Haven Line about three times per week. He sees many

eastbound riders get on the train in Stamford to job sites between Stamford and New Haven. This trend should be encouraged. His assistant planner takes the train to make his very short commute from Stratford to Bridgeport. His trip is so short that very frequently his ticket is not even collected.

The feeder barge service proposal is no longer on Bridgeport's radar screen. It would not reduce local traffic volumes on Interstate 95. The feeder barge concept may have merit if the eastern terminus is put in New Haven or at Quonset Point or even in Providence, but not in Bridgeport.

However, being a deepwater port is very important to Bridgeport. The nature of the port is transforming from an industrial one to a port whose principal uses are transportation and recreation. One example of this is Derektor Shipyards, a manufacturer of large yachts supporting 400 jobs. Derektor is currently building the world's largest privately-owned yacht. So Bridgeport does have a vision that includes a deepwater port harbor as an important asset. With that vision in mind, Eversley stressed that the dredging of the Bridgeport Harbor is critically needed to allow it to compete with other cities.

Eversley said a major deal is in the works for the industrial re-use of the Cilco facility at Bridgeport Harbor. This facility was formerly used by Turbana to import bananas.

Another transportation asset Eversley emphasized is the importance of is the Port Jefferson ferry service. The Bridgeport end of this trip is within walking distance of downtown. Another upcoming development is a high speed ferry service demonstration to Stamford and NYC which will take place by the end of the year.

Also by the end of this year, 200 new residential units will be constructed downtown, within 4-5 blocks from City Hall. This is part of Bridgeport's plan to increase the population residing in the downtown district, and this 200 resident increase does not count the Spinnaker Development units which are in process now. Bridgeport is also seeing an influx of commercial activity from adjacent towns, as the city is very competitive price-wise. The city will continue to become more competitive for development as its post-industrial image improves.

The 16-acre waterfront site previously proposed for the feeder barge service is now slated for commercial development including a retail shopping plaza. This site is one of the less desirable ones on the harbor in terms of water-dependent uses.

**Paul Antinozzi** spoke again to highlight the benefits that having Housatonic Community College right in the heart of downtown Bridgeport brings to the area. Housatonic is one of the most vital community colleges in Connecticut. The college currently has 6,000 students and it is planning to expand enrollment to 8,000. Thirty-six per cent of the enrollment is full-time students. Antinozzi further mentioned that the University of Bridgeport has an enrollment of 5,900 students. Antinozzi cited the attractiveness of a downtown Bridgeport location as having led him to move his architectural firm from Stratford to downtown Bridgeport, which allows him to attract more talent for his firm.

Moderator Schreiner closed the hearing at 9:15 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

**Public Hearing**

Hall of Records

Hearing Room G-2

200 Orange Street

New Haven, Connecticut 06510

Wednesday, March 24, 2010 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Yvonne Loteczka  
Russ St. John  
Richard Schreiner

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS** **CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Fred Riese opened the hearing at 7:45 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the Commission and of the purpose of tonight's hearing. He then introduced Commission members and ConnDOT staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Mary Johnson**, a New Haven resident and a member of the Coalition for People, raised concerns about CT TRANSIT bus drivers. The mission of the Coalition for People is to help low income people overcome powerlessness. The Coalition, which was organized in 1995, works in many areas, not just transportation, though transportation is one of the core issues with which it deals. On November 17, 2008, a member of the Coalition was driving her scooter near the intersection of Temple and George Streets and was struck by a CT TRANSIT bus. She was injured, but recovered, but has no memory of the accident. She was thrown from the scooter by the impact, and the scooter ended up mangled under the bus. The scooter has yet to be replaced.

A month or two after that, a Yale medical grad student was struck and killed by a bus at the intersection of Frontage and College Streets. At the time, Ms. Johnson contacted Phil Fry of CT TRANSIT and was told that as a result of these incidents, all drivers were being put through enhanced training and retraining.

On March 12 of this year, a 14-year old girl was struck by a bus in Meriden. This third accident prompted Ms. Johnson ask if the retraining has corrected the problem of bus/pedestrian accidents and just what are the requirements and the training that CT TRANSIT drivers must pass to perform their jobs.

Ms. Johnson did not know which party was at fault in the three accidents. She also mentioned that lighting and signals could be an issue at the New Haven locations, and that the city had made improvements at the Frontage Street intersection after the accident there. She does know of another woman who was almost struck by a bus at the Temple and George Streets intersection. Lighting is particularly poor at this intersection.

**Barry Diggs**, an 11-year employee of CT TRANSIT, responded to the issues raised by Ms. Johnson. He was an acting training supervisor when the first two incidents occurred. In that position, Mr. Diggs had the responsibility to classify every accident as to whether it was a preventable or non-preventable one. The first accident was classified as preventable and the driver was disciplined. In the fatal accident at College Street, the victim had crossed the street against the Do Not Cross signal as the bus made a left hand turn. However, the driver was discharged from CT TRANSIT. In response to these and other bus-pedestrian accidents, CT TRANSIT implemented a system-wide campaign to address the issue. Both New Haven accidents described involved left hand turns. CT Transit also examined replacement and movement of mirrors on buses to address blind spots, but results were not strong enough to warrant a change of mirror positions on all the buses.

It was pointed out that the Meriden bus service, though branded as CT Transit, is not actually operated by CT Transit but rather by North East Transportation.

As part of the hiring process, CT TRANSIT drivers go through criminal background checks and pre-employment drug and alcohol screenings. They are required to have a CDL with the appropriate endorsements. Each new hire goes through a 5-6 week training course. If their performance does not meet expectations, they are discharged.

**Cindy Zabski** is employed by the New Haven Division of CT TRANSIT in the scheduling area. She mentioned that the Division's Sunday service is the most productive in terms of passengers per mile operated. The Sunday service connection to Waterbury in particular has been doing very well with increasing ridership. Most evening service is funded Jobs Access and Reverse Commute funding or DSS TEIP funding. Zabski is concerned about the effect of the potential loss of DSS funds on evening employment bus service. The Governor has removed this funding in her budget proposals. If funding is lost, service may be cut if ConnDOT can't make up the difference. Most of the evening service after 8:45 or 9:00 pm is run with Jobs Access and TEIP funding.

CT TRANSIT staff is anticipating a move to the new garage facility at some point this summer. No definite date has been set for the move but a date of early July has been mentioned.

**Mary Johnson** made the additional comment that there was poor public notice for this hearing. More than just a legal notice is needed. She suggested perhaps notices of the hearing could be placed on the buses. She also expressed that more bus service is needed in general and particularly for employment trips.

**Geraldine Poole**, also a member of the Coalition for People, echoed Ms. Johnson's concerns. The survivor of the accident at Temple and George Street, who had previously led a very active lifestyle, has been housebound since the loss of her scooter. They have been struggling to get her a replacement.

In response to a question about the adequacy of snow removal at bus stop and curb cut locations, which has been cited as problem at previous hearings in New Haven, all four speakers said that this continues to be a problem.

Moderator Fred Riese closed the hearing at 8:36 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

**Public Hearing**

Danbury City Hall

Council Chambers

Danbury, Connecticut

Tuesday, April 20, 2010 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Gail Lavielle  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Kevin Maloney  
Russ St. John  
Richard Schreiner

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS** **CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Moderator Gail Lavielle opened the hearing at 7:42 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the mission of the Commission and the purpose of tonight's hearing. Commission members and ConnDOT staff introduced themselves.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**JONATHAN CHEW**, executive director of the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) was the first speaker. Mr. Chew exhibited a copy of the Waterbury Republican-American front page story describing the Commission's criticism of the proposed Waterbury Intermodal Transportation Center. He called the proposal political and not a sound transportation project and praised the Commission for helping to put the brakes on it.

HVCEO is pleased that the Section 13b-38bb municipal dial-a-ride program has been maintained. The program brings about \$300 thousand in transportation funds into greater Danbury.

Chew cited the three Harlem Line commuter shuttles operated by HART as a benefit to the region. One issue with these shuttles has been finding property owners in Connecticut willing to lease parking lots for use by shuttle passengers. This process has been substantially easier in New York State, which is at least partially attributable to the higher rate of reimbursement that New York offers to property owners.

The Danbury Branch Phase II Rail study is evaluating land use issues in connection with the proposed rail service improvements. Chew feels ConnDOT and its consultants are doing a good job of integrating land use issues, including transit-oriented development, into the study. In this vein, Bethel will be unveiling a TOD plan for the area around the Bethel rail station on June 7.

**RICHARD CREETH**, Selectman from Wilton and a member of the Wilton Energy Commission, suggested that the Commission should focus on opportunities to reduce the number of cars on the road. He advocated four strategies to work toward this goal. First, he favors improvements to the Danbury Branch rail service including rail shuttles to office parks on the Branch. He also supports commuter-accessible bicycle trails such as the proposed Norwalk Valley Trail for pedestrians and cyclists. Thirdly, the Danbury Branch rail service should be extended to New Milford. Lastly, Creeth advocated the exploration of highway tolling to reduce the number of cars on the roads and to provide funding for energy efficient means of transportation. Such tolls must be instituted in an equitable fashion and with a clear statement of the purpose of the tolls including the environmental goals they would be designed to support.

**JOHN MARCY** owns a local business on Mill Plain Road (Route 6) in Danbury. Border tolls on I-84 in Danbury would divert traffic onto Mill Plain Road, which is a two lane road parallel to the interstate. He feels a toll on the border would destroy Mill Plain Road.

**BOB BOSE** supported Mr. Marcy's statement. There are other access points between Connecticut and New York in the area, notably through New Fairfield via I-684 and NY Route 22. These alternate roads are very narrow and the movement of vehicles to avoid tolls could result in considerable congestion on them.

**VALARIE BOSE** hopes not to see a reinstatement of the toll house on King Street, which is now a residence but does date to colonial times when it served as a toll house. The implementation of tolls would divert traffic onto local Danbury Roads including King Street, which is a two lane road with rock walls on the margins. Instead, she endorses improvements to the Danbury Branch rail service to increase ridership on the trains.

**DAVID CAMPBELL** is a resident of Ridgefield in an over 55 community at 638 Danbury Road (Route 7) near the intersection with Route 35. The complex entrance has no light. Since the improvements to Route 7 were completed, traffic speeds are very high on this four lane section. Ridgefield police gave out 200 traffic tickets to speeders in the first week that the widened section of Route 7 was opened. At some point, there is going to be a very nasty accident there.

**KATHY MIVILLE** is a Danbury resident and a proponent of multi-use trails. She used to live in Oregon where such trails were plentiful. She feels the Norwalk River Valley Trail is an amazing opportunity, and thinks it makes a lot of sense. It's difficult to find places in this area to safely ride bicycles. Miville believes that Danbury residents would ride their bicycles to Wilton on the trail.

**RAY RAUTH** is Chairman of the State Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board and of the Southern Connecticut Bicycle Recreation Club also, but offered his remarks speaking as an individual. He thinks transit-oriented development is a splendid concept which can encourage both bicycle and pedestrian trips, but he is concerned about the potential traffic generated by TOD projects in Norwalk and Georgetown. The Norwalk project will generate 30,000 additional automobile trips. Thought must be given to projects that reduce traffic. Tolling could control traffic if it is handled well, with modern tolling technology.

Rail parking areas should include adequate sheltered parking for bicycles. Cyclists would pay for secure parking at rail stations. Such parking costs a small fraction of what it costs to provide auto parking. Pedestrians and cyclists need safe access to streets. Connecticut was recently rated 42 out of 50 states in bicycle friendliness, up from 44th, but still has a long way to go. New complete streets policies (SB 735) mandate that roadways be pedestrian/bike accessible. Rauth likes the sidewalks along Route 7 in Wilton, but pedestrian accessibility to the rail station is dangerous. As one who conducts clinics for the walking club at the senior center in Weston, Rauth observed that unsafe pedestrian conditions become super unsafe for senior citizens.

**PAUL ROTELLO** is a 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Councilman in the City of Danbury, representing the southwestern portion of Danbury. He is opposed to border tolls on Interstate 84 as they would be very easy to avoid and the level of revenue generated by the tolls may not make up for the loss of Federal funds that will occur when tolls are installed. Route 6 makes it easy to bypass a border toll on I-84. Motorists will figure out alternate routes such as Mill Plain Road. The implementation of border tolls could also affect receipts at the Danbury Fair Mall meaning that sales tax revenue could be lost.

An opportunity was lost in the construction of Route 7 from Ridgefield to Danbury by not installing a median between the northbound and southbound lanes as was done on Route 7 in Brookfield. Rotello cited much speeding on this segment of Route 7 and believes that this section of the road is a potential disaster. The increased capacity on Route 7 is good but a safety issue has been created by the design. In Brookfield, electronic signs were installed that tell motorists their speed. These signs have been effective in slowing traffic speed. This may be one measure that could improve safety on Route 7 south of Danbury. The lack of sidewalks on the widened section of Route 7 is another lost opportunity as these would have been beneficial for pedestrian and other uses. The state should require sidewalks along state roads.

**BEN CHIANESE** is also a 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Councilman. He also expressed concerns about the potential effects of border tolls on Mill Plain Road. Mill Plain Road is a two lane road. In 1992, the state had developed plans to widen Mill Plain Road and there was a zoning change to allow for commercial development there in anticipation of the road widening. That widening project did not happen, nor did a subsequent planned widening in 1999. In 2008, the state actually advertised for bids to widen Mill Plain Road, but again budget cuts led to a cancellation of the project. The road remains very congested and definitely needs to be widened to four lanes.

Chianese suggested that border tolls could harm sales tax collections and state revenues because of their effect on the Danbury Fair Mall. He suggested putting tolls where they cannot be avoided such as between exits 10 and 13 or on the Rochambeau Bridge on the Housatonic River.

Lastly, Chianese cited Route 37 going from Danbury to New Fairfield as also needing widening. This road handles more traffic than Mill Plain Road. He also advocated for a mass transit solution to regional traffic demand. While the Danbury Branch rail line is a valuable north-south asset, at some point an east-west rail line will be needed to handle trips from Danbury to Waterbury and Hartford. In lieu of adding another lane to the highway, perhaps light rail or a monorail could make use of the I-84 median to provide east-west service.

**RICHARD GENELLI**, a resident of Danbury, supports efforts to improve and expand the Danbury Branch rail service. He cited a specific need for more parking along the line. As a commuter on the Harlem Line, which he uses because of its better service, he used to pay for parking at the Brewster Station but has given up his parking pass there and now uses the HART Danbury-Brewster Shuttle. The shuttle has several pick up locations along the highway where you can park for free and it helps take traffic off the road. Ginelli feels that the Danbury Branch needs to be extended from Danbury to New Milford, which would reduce traffic volumes along Route 7.

Border tolls would place an unfair burden on Danbury residents, Ginelli said, as trucks would use local roads to bypass the toll, thus tying up local roads and causing congestion that would only affect the local residents.

**MARGARET MITCHELL** is also concerned about the border toll proposal. Accidents on I-84 cause gridlock in downtown Danbury as traffic diverts around the accident site. Tolls would have the same effect on a permanent basis, she fears. Tolls are a terrible safety hazard and will lead to accidents both on and off the highway. Interstate 84 cut the city in two and, consequently, the highway is used as a local street.

**MICHAEL McLACHLAN** is a State Senator representing the 24<sup>th</sup> District in Danbury, Bethel, New Fairfield and Sherman. McLachlin credited former Congressman Jim Maloney for having the foresight to get the ball rolling on an electrification study of the Danbury Branch. Commencement of work on the CTC signal system is great news. Extension of line to New Milford would allow access from north of Danbury to the Gold Coast and would be a cost effective transit solution. The Hartford-New Britain busway translates to a capital cost per passenger of about \$114,000. The extension to New Milford translates to a capital cost of about \$20,000- \$58,000 per daily passenger and would be a good use of tax dollars. McLachlin is not supportive of the busway.

McLachlin cited HART as a good regional partner in transportation. HART's Harlem Line shuttles are a very important service for local commuters as are the other services HART provides in the region.

McLachlin has publically opposed tolls on at least a dozen other occasions. He sees a negative impact on local roads from the border toll concept. When the Transportation Strategy Board held a meeting here, there was strong opposition to tolling. There are 20 local roads in Ridgefield, New Fairfield, Danbury and Sherman that would be negatively impacted by a border toll. On a broader level, he sees tolls as bad public policy. The Federal government is highly unlikely to allow for the addition of tolls to an established highway. If they did go along with it, the State might have to reimburse federal funds going back to 1984. And any toll revenue that is raised can only be used to maintain or improve the particular facility upon which it is collected. Pennsylvania was just denied permission to install new tolls on its highways. Further, a border toll would negatively impact local sales revenue generated from New York consumers, and thus would negatively impact sales tax revenues.

ConnDOT recently deferred a number of projects in the Danbury area due to budgetary considerations. One project that is moving forward is at I-84 Exit 6 which will improve a bottleneck. However, the Danbury Branch CTC project and the recent upgrade of Super 7 are favorable developments for the area. The widening of Mill Plain Road is still a local priority. The Quinnipiac River Bridge and the New Britain Busway are the two major projects chewing up most of the State's roughly \$600 million in annual capital project funding for transportation.

McLachlin would like to see more happen to support the use of rails for freight movement. When the Poughkeepsie Bridge was damaged in the 1974 fire, it changed the dynamics of rail freight movement in southern New England. ConnDOT needs to be a player here to remedy this situation. Locally, Danbury has seen a mini-success story for rail freight use as a significant amount of construction and demolition debris is shipped out of Danbury by rail. This construction and demolition waste moves north to Pittsfield and then out to Ohio for disposal.

**JIM OSTRIVE** is a Danbury resident who operates a business on Mill Plain Road. He is opposed to border tolling. Every exit along Interstate 84 feeds into Route 6 so it would be very easy to get around any border toll station. Mill Plain Road is already a nightmare. If tolls are to be installed, don't just put them in border communities, but distribute them fairly across the state. A toll in the Danbury area would better be located east of Danbury than at the border where it would lessen New Yorkers shopping at the mall.

**SAM BLOCH**, Ridgefield resident, lives in the same 75-unit complex as David Campbell, an earlier speaker. The traffic conditions on Route 7 near the intersection of Route 35 are very dangerous for pedestrians. There are multiple facilities including an assisted living complex, the Laurel Ridge nursing home, and an over 55 community at this location. People cross Route 7 to get to the luncheonette across the street. There is a lot of traffic, much of it moving at high speeds and it is dangerous. A new light could be added and synchronized to the existing lights to regulate the speed of traffic.

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT GODFREY**, (110<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT), Deputy Speaker of the House and representing Danbury, spoke on several issues. He is the chairman of the Council of State Government's Transportation Task Force and is the son of a railroad brakeman and the grandson of a train engineer. In his recent constituent surveys, traffic congestion was the single most frequent issue raised. He sees so much truck traffic on Interstate 84 as he drives to Hartford. There are no good rail options to get freight across the Hudson River and into Connecticut and New England. Rail freight has made a big comeback over the last 20 to 30 years. ConnDOT needs to work with state and federal legislators to look for multi-state solutions to congestion and to get goods across the Hudson River and into New England.

Service on the Danbury Branch needs to be extended to New Milford. Godfrey mentioned that Governor Douglas of Vermont is interested in restoring passenger rail service all the way up the Route 7 corridor and ultimately to Montreal.

On the subject of tolls, Rep. Godfrey said tolls will not happen on his watch. There is substantial unfairness to the border toll proposal. There is also the risk of the loss of \$600-700 million in Federal funds. A toll based on vehicle miles of travel (VMT) would be a much fairer method of

collection. Any specific tolling location other than perhaps the bridges over the Connecticut River can be avoided by motorists. However, we need to look at other revenue streams. As fuel efficiency goes up, money coming in for mass transit through the gas tax goes down. A perpetual danger is the legislative tendency to get around limitations on the use of dedicated funding sources such as the Special Transportation Fund and to employ these funds for other purposes.

**TONI BOUCHER**, State Senator from the 26<sup>th</sup> District, said that she has received many communications from New York residents and lawmakers about the need for Connecticut to invest in its rail infrastructure so that Connecticut commuters don't take up all the parking and passenger capacity on the Harlem Line. The Danbury Branch has often been ignored at the state level and, at one point, there was even talk of discontinuing the service altogether. Commissioner Marie has changed this and the Branch is now a top priority. Senator Boucher has worked on getting the funding in place for the CTC signal system. She believes the Branch line has a higher ridership potential than predicted, as many riders drive down to the main line or go to the Harlem Line due to the current limitations of the Branch service. Boucher supports the extension of Danbury Branch service to New Milford. Boucher also believes that electrification of the Danbury Branch would be beneficial in that it would allow seamless transportation service onto the New Haven Line, just as the New Canaan Branch currently allows, which attracts New York riders.

She is supportive of an additional stop on the Danbury Branch at Georgetown, perhaps alternating stops with the Branchville station to maintain travel time. Boucher also mentioned the possibility of a parking structure being added at Wilton Station.

Stations stops should be managed more uniformly. The condition of the stations along the New Haven Line varies. The Danbury Branch has greater ridership potential than the Waterbury Branch or Shore Line East due to the amount of economic activity in the region. Even with the economic downturn, there is still pressure on parking at the stations.

Boucher pointed to a 'chorus' of new members on the Transportation Committee who generally favor rail service. This is an encouraging sign.

Boucher concluded her remarks by discussing the constraints of tolling and the need for other revenue options to support transportation. Fuel economy improvements limit the revenue potential for the gas tax as a funding option for transportation. But tolls are not a good direction to go in pursuit of transportation revenue. There is the issue of geographic fairness if border tolls are proposed. And even with new technologies such as an E-Z pass, tolling can still cause congestion problems because not everyone has the transponders to use the technology. If a license plate photo system is used to identify cars without transponders, the subsequent billing has about a 30% non-payment rate. There is also the factor that the federal government has turned other states down for approval of tolls.

Moderator Lavielle briefly noted the receipt of the following nine written or e-mailed comments and the topics they discussed before she closed the hearing at 9:55 PM.

**Rudy Marconi**, First Selectman of Ridgefield, wrote that Ridgefield is participating in the planning for the Norwalk River Valley Trail, a 27-mile trail from Tarrywile Park in Danbury to Calf Pasture in Norwalk. This trail could connect to several train stations, bus routes and business centers in the corridor, thus facilitating an intermodal approach to commuting. Such a trail would also help address the lack of safe walking and cycling routes in the area.

Wilton First Selectman **William Brennan** also endorsed the Norwalk River Valley Trail as a core element in the Wilton Plan of Conservation and Development as well as a means to expand access to pedestrian and bicycle travel and to mass transit, and to reduce carbon emissions, local traffic congestion and obesity.

**Mayor Richard Moccia** of Norwalk cited the considerable regional enthusiasm and support enjoyed by the Norwalk River Valley Trail. The trail could facilitate alternative transportation by connecting walkers and cyclists to train stations, bus routes and business centers and would reduce roadway congestion and fuel emissions.

**Judy Rummo**, a resident at The Regency at 638 Danbury Road in Ridgefield, spoke of the dangerous condition at the entrance to her development from Route 7 between the Route 35 intersection and Laurel Lane. The four lane profile of Route 7 here and the high rate of speed of many vehicles create dangerous conditions for both pedestrians crossing the road and for vehicles making left hand turns into the drive which serves The Regency, the Laurel Ridge nursing home and the Ridgefield Crossings and Ridgefield Harbor assisted living developments. Riders, including staff, discharging from southbound HART buses directly across Route 7 from the access drive are among the pedestrians at risk. Also, the Ridgefield Fire Department EMT team vehicles respond to one of these facilities daily and often have trouble making the left hand turn across traffic into the access drive, or exiting across traffic from the drive. She requested a traffic light at this intersection before a fatality occurs there.

**John Tartaglia** of 638 Danbury Road in Ridgefield cited the “impassible river” of traffic volume on Route 7 at the Laurelwood development, which includes The Regency, as creating unsafe conditions for the older or otherwise impaired drivers seeking to make left hand turns, or even right turns, onto Route 7, especially during the morning and afternoon rush hours. He strongly stated that a light is necessary at this intersection, and cited several other intersections on Route 7 which are signalized but have less traffic on the side streets than at this location. As an interim measure, he suggests proper sequencing and timing of the existing lights to the north and south of Laurelwood to create a gap in the flow of traffic on Route 7.

**Dr. Alvin Spindler**, also a resident at The Regency, wrote of the dangerous conditions which older drivers face trying to enter Route 7 southbound from this development.

**Dan Landau** recommended that the Norwalk River Valley Trail study include a link from the trail to the proposed relocated Merritt 7 train station to allow access by pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Gina Carey** of Ridgefield wrote in support of infrastructure upgrades on both the New Haven Line and the Danbury Branch to meet commuter needs for faster, more reliable mass transportation.

**David Carmichael** of Wilton expressed several concerns related to the implementation of highway tolls. He suspects that the initial toll locations, be they border tolls or otherwise, will soon proliferate to more locations. As all tolls impede the flow of traffic, our present congestion on the highways will become gridlock with tolls. He feels that border tolls would be unfair to Fairfield County and would negatively impact business and commerce there. He also understands that Connecticut would lose some federal funding if we reinstate tolls. For all these reasons, he opposes HB 5474 which proposes to reinstate tolls in Connecticut.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

New Britain City Hall  
27 West Main Street  
New Haven, Connecticut  
Tuesday, April 27, 2010 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Kevin Maloney  
Russ St. John  
Ed McAnaney  
Richard Sunderhauf  
Gail Lavielle  
Alan Sylvestre  
Yvonne Loteczka

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Kevin Maloney opened the hearing at 7:40 PM and read an opening statement about the Commission and the purpose of tonight's public hearing.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

There being no members of the public present, moderator Maloney recessed the public hearing. Following a discussion among members of several topics including measures to improve public notice and participation at the Commission's hearings and a discussion about testimony received in Danbury on the topic of the potential implementation of a tolling system on Connecticut highways, moderator Maloney reopened the hearing at 8:38 PM, noted for the record that no public comment was offered, and closed the hearing at 8:39 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

Chase Building  
236 Grand Street

Waterbury, Connecticut

Tuesday, September 7, 2010 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Kevin Maloney  
Russ St. John  
Richard Schreiner  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Richard Sunderhauf

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Fred Riese opened the hearing at 7:36 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the Commission and of the purpose of tonight's hearing. He then introduced Commission members and ConnDOT staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**U.S. Representative Chris Murphy (5<sup>th</sup> District)** spoke of the potential of mass transit and transportation in general for providing personal and economic benefits. However, he feels that the Waterbury area does not get its fair share of transportation funding within the state. Although Connecticut receives \$1.60 in federal transportation funding for every \$1.00 it sends to Washington, this area of the state gets the short end of the stick.

Regarding rail transportation, we are not realizing the full potential of our rail assets locally. Waterbury Branch service does not offer a good schedule, does not have enough trains, and is not sufficiently reliable to meet local needs. Improvements to the Waterbury train station are also necessary. Since only 78% of Waterbury residents have access to a car, these shortcomings in the rail service have significant impact. Murphy expressed how rail line improvements have been studied to death; major infrastructure improvements are needed now.

Murphy mentioned the 7-mile urban greenway corridor running along the Naugatuck River. This project has received several federal grants but it needs a robust State commitment also.

Waterbury needs an intermodal transportation center. Waterbury is one of the largest cities in the Northeast without an intermodal center, Murphy related. The federal government is ready to help pitch in on this project. This has got to get done, and the state and local governments must cooperate to get it done.

The Interstate 84 widening project in eastern Waterbury must not be delayed. With the adjacent two widening projects now completed, we are two-thirds of the way there to improving Interstate

84. We must get this project finished. That includes moving the Harpers Ferry Road pump station, which is the first element of the I-84 project.

**State Representative Selim Noujaim (74<sup>th</sup> District)** thanked the Commission for coming to Waterbury. He said the Commission was wise to hold this hearing in the evening because if the hearing was held in the afternoon, Commission members would have encountered Interstate 84 jammed with traffic. The final phase of the Interstate 84 widening project was supposed to have been completed this year. ConnDOT Commissioner Parker has been invited to come to Waterbury to speak about Interstate 84. \$20,000,000 is needed to relocate the Harpers Ferry Road pump station. This funding had been allocated at one time but it has now disappeared.

Noujaim often goes down to the train station to meet the train as it comes in. He cited the case of one family in the East Mountain neighborhood who moved to Waterbury but the father works in New York City and commutes by train. The parking area at the train station needs to be opened up and lighting needs to be added. Also, the train itself needs to be cleaned up; it is usually filthy.

Noujaim also wrote to Commissioner Parker about the traffic light at Scott Road and Reidville Drive. The lack of a left hand turning arrow for Reidville Drive creates a dangerous situation where there will eventually be a very serious accident.

Lastly, Noujaim supports the proposed greenway along the Naugatuck River.

**State Representative Jeffrey Berger (73<sup>rd</sup> District)**, who is House Chair of the Commerce Committee, thanked the Commission for coming to Waterbury and encouraged the Commission to carry its concerns to the Legislative committees and the Executive Branch. Transportation limitations constrain growth in Waterbury. The boarded up building and the blighted appearance of the train station hurt Waterbury's image. The \$60 million to build the Waterbury transportation center is probably not available, but the abandoned building should be taken down and the lighting and parking at the train station should be improved. We need to move forward to make this improvement.

Berger also advocates the implementation of the Naugatuck River greenway project.

**Mayor Michael Jarjura** of Waterbury thanked the Commission members, Congressman Murphy and the State legislators from Waterbury for their attendance. He also expressed his thanks for the fleet of new buses scheduled to arrive in Waterbury shortly. Mayor Jarjura feels that North East Transportation does a good job running the bus service in Waterbury and he hopes their contract is renewed.

Mayor Jarjura said that the Commission's Annual Report of last year jolted him as concerns its recommendation on the proposed Waterbury Transportation Center proposal. As a result of the Annual Report, all the stakeholders sat down and have since had some real communication going on concerning the best way to address local transportation needs. The City is now backing a phased approach for improvements. This will first involve the demolition of the abandoned, State-owned building at the train station, a building which he feels brings down the city's image.

Improvements to the bus system's pulsepoint at The Green also need to be made as an early element of any planned improvements.

Moving on to Interstate 84, the mayor said that the widening project across the East End needs to happen. The \$18-20 million that had been set aside to move the Harpers Ferry Road pump station has disappeared. It will take two years to relocate and rebuilt the pump station so we should start that project now to have the pieces in place for the highway widening. Expansion and improvement of the highway will help economic development in Waterbury.

The restoration of evening bus service is another major need in the city. Other major cities in Connecticut have bus service in the evening; only Waterbury does not. Waterbury's demographics show a need for evening bus service.

Lastly, Mayor Jarjura expressed that the proposed greenway is a very exciting project which has generated a lot of local enthusiasm. Five million dollars have already been received to support the proposal. The greenway will be an economic development engine as well as a recreational asset.

**State Senator Joan Hartley (15<sup>th</sup> District)** appreciated the remarks of the previous elected officials. Sen. Hartley said she was also jolted by the Commission's previous Annual Report, with which she disagreed. She faulted herself and local officials for not doing a better job of communicating the merits of the Waterbury Transportation Center. She mentioned that there has since been a consolidated effort in Waterbury to move forward with a phased approach for improvements.

Waterbury has had the state's highest unemployment rate for 29 consecutive quarters. A lack of transportation is often the key element preventing people from accepting jobs, especially a lack of transportation home from jobs or school. This forces people to be dependent on friends for rides. Improved mass transit is the answer to these needs.

Sen. Hartley also echoed the earlier remarks about the Interstate 84 project. She can understand the reluctance to commit funds for moving the pump station when there is uncertainty concerning the overall project timetable, but this project is very important to Waterbury.

Sen. Hartley served on the planning committee for the greenway project. She saw a lot of passionate, energetic people getting involved in this project.

Lastly, Sen. Hartley called for the installation of a signal system along the Waterbury Branch of Metro-North and for the addition of passing sidings on the Branch. She cited the growing Yeshiva population in Waterbury. These people are used to mass transit and have ties to New York City so they depend on Metro-North service to get back and forth to the City.

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese then read into the record written comments submitted by **State Representative Tony D'Amelio (71<sup>st</sup> District)**. His comments addressed the topics of Interstate 84 and the dated conditions at the train station, both of which he cited as conditions that adversely affect Waterbury's ability to attract and retain businesses. Traveling across

Waterbury from Exit 25A to Middlebury can take 30-45 minutes. The highway needs three complete lanes in each direction.

Regarding the transportation center planned for Meadow Street, Rep. D'Amelio said the current facility is outdated and not friendly to commuters or travelers. The bus and train stations are at a distance from one another, making it difficult to transfer between the two modes. The proposed transportation center will consolidate transportation services allowing riders to pick up a train or bus from the same location.

**James Troup**, Dean of Administration at Naugatuck Valley Community College, spoke of the pressing need for more bus service, particularly evening bus service, to that institution. Naugatuck Valley Community College is a rapidly growing school with 7,000 students, which will grow to 7,100-7,200 students in the new year. Twenty-five percent of the student body is from Waterbury. Many of these are dependent on public transportation. In fact, there are two designated bus stops at the NVCC campus. There is a good frequency of service during the day but there is no service after 5:30 pm, so that transit-dependent students can't access many of the school's classes. Three or four of the nine time blocks of classes require bus service after 5:30 pm. Another time block at 6:30 am may be added to address overcrowding. This block would also be inaccessible by public transportation, which would mean that as many as five of the ten class blocks would not have bus service available. Classes at NVCC run until 10:00 pm so a 10:15 or 10:30 pm bus is needed.

NVCC student **Walkiria Gautier** has no driver's license and relies on bus service. She lives on Austin Road in the East End. She gets up at 5:30 am to catch the 6:40 am bus to get to campus by 8:00 am and she stays at school until 3:00 pm. The lack of any evening bus service precludes her participation in after-school activities or taking advantage of tutoring services. It also prevents her from taking a job. Gautier noted that only one bus does not go into campus but uses the Chase Parkway stop in front of campus. The use of this stop involves a long climb to campus. Sometimes buses are full and there is a need to turn students away. She recommends that a bigger bus or two buses be used at the end of the day.

**Cheyenne-Sky Mawdy**, also a student at NVCC, discussed her difficulties with using the bus service. She also finds the buses to be unreliable. She must take afternoon classes because of the lack of evening service. On Thursdays, her last class ends at 5:20 pm and she catches the last bus downtown but is then stuck there by the lack of continuing bus service, and needs to walk home or get a ride. Due to unreliable bus service, she is often late for classes. She also mentioned one friend who walks to and from campus every day from Willow Street.

**Bonnie Goulet** is assistant work site coordinator at NVCC. She expressed that more bus service is needed to benefit students and to secure employment. More bus runs to the school are needed to avoid overcrowding. She also administers a grant program to expose students to new experiences such as, for instance, the Waterbury Symphony. But the lack of bus service limits options she can offer.

**Reverend Waldo Landquist** has lived in the Waterbury area for 38 years and believes that the amount of cars on the road has doubled during that time. He offered two suggestions concerning Waterbury traffic flow.

- Leave the Mixmaster interchange (Routes 8 and 84) alone. He has never experienced a problem on either Route 8 or Interstate 84 which was due to the Mixmaster.
- The eastbound Interstate 84 merge at Hamilton Avenue causes severe traffic back-ups. He suggested posting highway signs to merge left before the actual merge point, and placing the orange and white highway barrels to force the leftward merge before Hamilton Avenue. He suggested that this be tried on a trial basis to see whether it solves the problem. He also cited those who avoid the merge-related back-ups by taking the Exit 23 off ramp, crossing Hamilton Avenue and re-entering the highway as adding to the problem when they create a second merge point just east of Hamilton Avenue.

**Ron Napoli** is chairman of the 18-member Greenway Advisory Committee. The committee was formed two years ago and received a \$230,000 grant from United Way. The committee contracted Alta Planning + Design to do the greenway plan. The greenway proposal enjoys a terrific level of community support. The facility will get people outdoors and exercising, and will help address the problem of childhood obesity.

The committee has worked very closely with ConnDOT and the City of Waterbury and is currently developing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the greenway design. Napoli cited the national experience that properties adjacent to a greenway appreciate in value.

Napoli recognized the efforts of Terry Calderone, Sam Gold, and Kathleen McNamara who have been valuable supporters of the project. The greenway will support walking, jogging, cycling, dog walking and stroller use. It will incorporate boat and kayak launches at intervals along the river and it will also feature artistic displays. In addition, it will serve a transportation function as it will offer connections to other destinations.

**John Steponaitis** offered several comments concerning the local train service. The old SNET building at the train station needs to be removed; it shields vandals from view from Meadow Street. The train station itself is not fitting for a city the size of Waterbury. Steponaitis disagrees with Rep. Chris Murphy about the trains being unreliable. He works where he can see the trains go by and they do go by right on time all day. Also, the train schedule is really pretty good with service up to 11:30 pm, roughly every two hours.

Steponaitis also agrees with Reverend Landquist that the Mixmaster interchange is very adequate.

**Terry Calderone** is legal counsel to Mayor Jarjura and is also a member of the Greenway Advisory Committee. She commended Greenway Committee chairman Ron Napoli and vice chairman Kathleen McNamara for their work to advance the proposal. Sam Gold of the Central Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments has also done a great job on this. The Greenway Committee is currently pursuing a SAFETEA-LU grant for additional planning. Alta Planning + Design teamed up with Fuss and O'Neill to do the Greenway plan. The Greenway Committee

had two very successful public hearings at Kennedy High School. The greenway project is about to enter into the design phase. Terry also mentioned that the greenway plan has been submitted for a national planning award.

Calderone has worked for the City of Waterbury since 1998. In this time, she has never seen such strong support for any project as for the greenway. Realtors have called her office interested in property along the greenway. Businesses have also called expressing interest in relocating to sites in the greenway area.

Yankee Gas has also been a big supporter of the greenway proposal and is allowing 2,200 feet of pipeline right-of-way to be used for the greenway. Another donor has given a 7-acre parcel near Platts Mills for the greenway. A \$500,000 grant from DEP was also received. Ultimately, it is hoped to tie the Waterbury segment of the greenway into a 44-mile long corridor stretching from Torrington to Derby.

**Sam Gold**, senior planner with the Central Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, cited the biggest local transportation issue as being the maintenance of funding to preserve existing transit services including local bus service, commuter rail service, ADA and non-ADA paratransit service, and Dial-a-Ride service.

Based on 2006-2007 data, 17% of Waterbury households do not have access to a motor vehicle. Gold sees too many government and public services moving from urban sites which are served by transit to suburban locations without transit service. Gold agreed with other speakers that the abandoned SNET building at the train station needs to be removed and other improvements are needed to improve security and appearance. Gold also mentioned that ConnDOT has completed its study of the Waterbury Branch and is recommending that two passing sidings be added to the line to provide more operating flexibility.

Concerning other bus-related topics, Gold commented on several projects and proposals. The long-awaited bus garage for North East Transportation has been stalled due to funding. Commuter bus service between Hartford and Waterbury is needed now, even in advance of the construction of the New Britain Busway. The Council of Governments did a study that verified that many NVCC students need transportation. In particular, more evening bus service is needed to meet the needs of students.

The new bus stop signs around Waterbury and surrounding towns went into service last fall due to the assistance of North East Transportation and the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission. They have improved the efficiency of the bus system for both drivers and passengers. Local bus ridership has increased by 11% over the period from 2001 to 2009.

Other transportation improvements have gone into effect thanks to funding from the New Freedoms Program. These include expanded 211 Info Line service, Monday to Saturday evening non-ADA paratransit, and some Sunday non-ADA paratransit. New paratransit service to Gaylord Hospital has been added.

Gold also mentioned that new security cameras have been installed at the train station.

Sam Gold also read into the record three concerns forwarded to him by Middlebury First Selectman Tom Gormley. First, Gormley was interested in the timetable to correct the lane constriction on Interstate 84 by the Mall, which he cited as a terrible situation. Second, he wants to see the intersection of Routes 63 and 64 in Middlebury corrected and asked where this project stands. Lastly, Route 64 from the 63/64 intersection to Tucker Hill Road is a total mess and is completely broken up.

Lastly, Gold mentioned that Representative Murphy had secured a \$500,000 earmark toward the transportation center and had indicated that there is a potential for more funding in the future.

**Dr. Yvonne Smith-Isaac**, Chairman of the Greater Waterbury Transit District, thanked the Commission for coming to Waterbury. She gave testimony covering a broad range of topics:

- Public telephones are being taken out of public transportation facilities. She still sees a need for public phones in bus and rail stations.
- The Section 13b-38bb Municipal Matching Grant program has been funded at a level of \$5,000,000 per year since its inception. Operating costs keep going up but the funding does not, which means services need to be cut. Smith-Isaac would like to see an increase in the funding for this program.
- There is a big demand for evening bus service in Waterbury, particularly for employment, students and visitors. While paratransit service does operate at night, there is no fixed route bus service.
- People with disabilities often cannot make night hearings like this one. She suggested an afternoon session to go along with the evening hearing.
- Two New Freedoms programs began locally recently and ConnDOT did not inform her or the transit district of the programs which provide service to Gaylord Hospital in Wallingford and service on Sundays.
- The Naugatuck River Greenway design needs to take the needs of the disabled into account. The greenway needs to have a paved trail that can be navigated by wheelchairs.
- The train station needs to be accessible.
- Trains from New York City to Waterbury need to be on non-peak fares.
- ConnDOT should provide North East Transportation with more money for marketing of new services including New Freedoms services.
- It is dangerous for pedestrians, particularly disabled ones, to cross streets of up to six lanes of traffic. Drivers often jump lights, even at crosswalks. Pedestrian overpasses or underpasses are needed on wide streets.
- There is a need for public transportation to surrounding towns, especially to Southbury, Southington, Meriden and Naugatuck.
- There is a need for transportation from Waterbury to other larger cities including Danbury, Hartford and Bridgeport. Peter Pan does offer such trips but the prices are not affordable.
- Phone calls to make paratransit reservations should be recorded to verify requests when service does not materialize or when riders do not show up and later say they never called.
- Paratransit companies should update and enforce policies on no-show riders.

**Kevin Taylor** spoke as a representative of the Waterbury Development Commission and as a Waterbury resident. As a bicyclist and a walker, he supports the Naugatuck River Greenway proposal. Taylor, who is an architect by trade, suggested that the Commission needs to hear more viewpoints concerning the Waterbury Transportation Center proposal. He noted that any expansion of the local bus service, as was discussed at this hearing, would lead to additional congestion at The Green. This congestion, along with the need for restrooms for the public, are concerns of the organization Renaissance Downtown, which is in the process of formulating a downtown economic development plan. Taylor acknowledged that the Meadow Street site proposed for the Waterbury Transportation Center also has its problems. All stakeholders are now working together toward a solution.

**Barbara Kalosky** of North East Transportation cited the primary local need at the moment as maintaining adequate funding levels to support current bus service. Priority #2 is to add evening bus service. This second need would not involve any new capital funding since the necessary vehicles are already in place. Only additional operating funding would be needed. The extra operating funding that would have been necessary to relocate the bus system hub to Meadow Street would be sufficient to support evening bus service.

Kalosky also pointed out that, contrary to the assertion of some other speakers, other Connecticut cities do not operate all their bus service out of any intermodal hubs. North East Transportation remains willing to operate a shuttle service to connect the train station to The Green. She also concurred in the need to demolish the abandoned SNET building at the train station and to install more lighting there. Additional bus shelters are also needed at Exchange Place.

Kalosky highlighted the continuing need for a new bus storage facility for the Waterbury bus and paratransit fleet.

Regarding the earlier-cited overcrowding issues at Naugatuck Valley Community College, Kalosky said she will look into providing more service to the campus. North East Transportation does work closely with the college. If necessary, a back-up bus could be kept in reserve on-site or at The Green.

Lastly, she mentioned that North East Transportation has operated in Waterbury since 1925.

**Sam Gold** added that the developers of the Renaissance project in Naugatuck want to incorporate transit-oriented development components into their project with these features tied in to the Naugatuck train station.

Moderator Fred Riese closed the hearing at 10:15 PM.

Subsequent to the close of the hearing, **Michael Jedd**, who had attended the hearing but to had to leave before he had an opportunity to speak, submitted written comments dealing with a number of transportation issues. He concurred with other speakers concerning the deficient conditions at the Waterbury train station and said he will go to Danbury, Brewster, Bridgeport or New Haven to catch a train to New York City rather than use the Waterbury station. He faulted the parking situation at the Waterbury station but agreed that better lighting and the removal of

the abandoned building would improve the facility. He also concurred with the need to proceed with the Interstate 84 widening project to address the frequent highway congestion, especially on Fridays.

Mr. Jedd expressed his support for completing the limited-access highway links on Route 7 from Danbury to Norwalk and for extending Route 9 from Interstate 84 in Farmington through Windsor to link up with Interstate 91. He also would like to see Interstate 384 completed from East Hartford to Providence and also a bridge built across Long Island Sound from either New Haven or Bridgeport to Long Island.

Concerning commuter rail issues, Jedd feels Metro-North should employ a kiosk system for ticket sales such as is used by the Metro system in Washington, DC or by BART in San Francisco. He opposes the implementation of a high speed rail service between New Haven and Springfield as too expensive and benefitting too few riders.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

Newington Town Hall

Room 202

131 Cedar Street

Newington, Connecticut 06111

Wednesday, September 29, 2010 – 7:30 P.M.

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Morton Katz  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Kevin Maloney  
Russ St. John  
Richard Schreiner  
Richard Sunderhauf  
Alan Sylvestre

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Alan Sylvestre opened the hearing at 7:37 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate. Commission members and ConnDOT staff introduced themselves.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Jennifer Carrier**, Director of Transportation Planning at the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), was the first speaker. She explained that CRCOG reviews all major transportation projects in the region and conducts transportation corridor studies. CRCOG is a strong supporter of the New Britain Busway and is working with ConnDOT to help get that completed. Award of the Full Funding Agreement from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to ConnDOT is expected later this year. Development potential around each proposed busway station has been evaluated. Recognizing the potential for transit-oriented development, several communities along the busway have already begun amending local land use plans around the busway stations to accommodate TOD.

In early August, ConnDOT submitted an application for \$220 million in High Speed Rail funds for the Springfield Line commuter rail project. ConnDOT has not yet heard from FTA but expects some information in the next week. Carrier feels that the Springfield Line commuter rail project is a very exciting proposal.

CRCOG manages the Capitol Region's \$2.5 million Jobs Access program. All told, the program carried 4,100 individuals last month, the highest ridership total in many months. In its first year of operation (1997), it was transporting about 400 people per month. Carrier said the Hartford to Mohegan Sun jobs access route is in jeopardy. Funding for this service runs out at the end of

December. CRCOG is evaluating options with vanpooling organizations and the Mohegan Sun to accommodate the 30 individuals who are impacted. Recently announced layoffs at Mohegan Sun further complicate the outlook for this Jobs Access service.

Asked about the Northwest Corridor Study undertaken by CRCOG a year ago, Carrier said more study of the Day Hill Road area in Windsor has taken place but the project has not been actively advanced to date. As to the option of creating a bus hub at Union Station, she noted that this idea becomes more feasible if the rail alignment through Hartford were to be shifted northward as an element of the Interstate 84 viaduct replacement project.

Regarding that latter effort, CRCOG secured funding about a year ago to look at the least expensive, most cost effective option for replacement of the Hartford I-84 viaduct. There are four alternatives being evaluated, including a baseline proposal that repairs but maintains the existing configuration, a skyway, construction of a tunnel, or replacing the viaduct with a boulevard. It may be advantageous to relocate the rail line. A meeting tomorrow night will seek community input on these alternatives. CRCOG has a website with preliminary graphics of the alternatives. Carrier also noted that there is some planning money in the Springfield Line proposal funding to look at rail and highway options for the new viaduct.

**Joseph Tindal** has lived in Connecticut since 1996. He moved here because it is a good place to work, but the cost of living is high. Many of his friends have moved elsewhere to places that have a lower cost of living, less expensive housing, and better transportation options. His sister recently moved to Portland, Oregon.

When Tindal was a student at CCSU in the late 1990s, he drove to classes from east of the river. He saw a lot of traffic on Interstate 84 then and it is no better now. He does not like the idea of the busway and does not feel it will have a significant impact on highway congestion. Nor does he see the HOV lanes on Interstate 84 as alleviating congestion. He would prefer to see light rail on I-84 in the HOV lanes. Similarly, he does not believe that the Springfield Line rail service will improve the traffic situation on Interstate 91. He feels more progress would be made by converting a lane of that highway to rail service.

Tindal sees no comprehensive approach to public transportation in the state.

Tindal feels that input from cyclists and pedestrians should be incorporated at the design level on all transportation projects. Lastly, he expressed the idea that ConnDOT should have one week per year designated as a Walk or Bike to Work Week for its employees. This would encourage more awareness of these modes of transportation and of the needs that cyclists and pedestrians have, which would filter into their work on transportation projects.

**Mary-Ann Langton** made some comments on behalf of the Connecticut Council of Development Disabilities (CCDD). The CCDD feels strongly that disabled persons should have transportation access that is equivalent to that of able-bodied individuals. Many citizens with developmental disabilities cannot ride the accessible fixed route public transportation systems because they cannot get to and from the bus lines. CCDD would like to see 5310 vans used as a feeder system to coordinate with other modes of transportation.

CCDD is working with Housatonic Area Regional Transit (HART) to examine the feasibility of a same day on-demand accessible transportation service in Danbury. CPTC Commissioner Richard Schreiner and CPTC liaison Dennis King are involved with this project.

Langton expressed her feeling that ADA standards for handicapped parking should be enforced. She also feels that sensitivity training needs to be included for railroad employees when Hartford-Springfield service is implemented. Train personnel do not always know how to serve people with disabilities.

CCDD has been actively involved in planning meetings about the New Britain-Hartford Busway. The Council believes the Busway and the Springfield Line rail service would enhance the opportunities for riders with disabilities and others for getting to and from desired locations.

**Francis Pickering**, Senior Planner at the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA), provided several comments. Paratransit users in the Central Connecticut Region are faced with a fragmented system with multiple 5310 operators. There are eight operators of 5310 vans in his region. All have different hours of operations, phone numbers and work rules, and they have separate garages, separate maintenance, and separate reservation procedures. These services are not at all coordinated and they are very inefficient. Some consolidation, maybe of back office functions, would be helpful.

Paratransit operations in the Central Connecticut Region continue to grow. The region is working with ConnDOT to expand geographic areas so that providers don't need to drop passengers off at regional boundaries. Curb-to-curb service and more flexible schedules provide paratransit riders with a higher level of service than is available to the general public. However, even with the expanded geographic boundaries, Bristol to Hartford service still involves a transfer in New Britain. Why can't a way be found to eliminate this transfer?

Making bus services more user-friendly would help instill a culture of transit ridership. He sees a problem with long distance trips that require many transfers. Service from the Central Connecticut Region to Middletown involves DATTCO, CT Transit and Middletown Area Transit. Buses between New Haven and Hartford and between New Britain and Middletown buses should be through routed.

Google trip planning for the Central Connecticut Region is not yet on line. ConnDOT has asked his region to hold back on submitting data. Connecticut Transit's own trip planner system is not working well and he would like to see the state jump on to Google's online trip planning program.

The Central Connecticut Region has no designated bus stops and no bus stop signs. It is an 'invisible' bus system with a low degree of public awareness in the towns it serves.

Plymouth, Terryville and Southington would all benefit from bus service. There is a high incidence of low car ownership in these areas. Much of Southington's growth is auto-centric growth. This is what will happen when no transit service is available.

The Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency board endorses the New Britain Busway, the Springfield Line commuter rail service proposal and the proposed improvements to the Waterbury Branch of Metro-North. Many riders (approximately 15%) of the Waterbury Branch service come from the Central Connecticut Region.

Regarding Bristol's preference for a rail option between Waterbury and Hartford rather than the New Britain Busway, Pickering said Bristol wants to look west, not east. They see New York City-related growth as more beneficial to them than Hartford growth, and they therefore desire to be connected to Metro-North service via Waterbury. The presence of ESPN also drives this desire for better connections to New York. Transportation constraints in the region definitely hinder growth.

Pickering feels that the New Britain Busway should ultimately be extended eastward, through Hartford, and east on the HOV lanes to Manchester and Buckland Hills.

Responding to a question about the broadened geographic area for paratransit services from the Central Connecticut Region, Pickering said that trips from the region can now extend to most of Farmington, and all of West Hartford, Hartford, Cromwell, Middletown, Rocky Hill and Meriden. The Greater Hartford Transit District will work reciprocally with the Central Connecticut Region paratransit to provide these trips. For bus service, Pickering said that Bristol to Hartford direct service (no transfers) should be available although perhaps the whole trip would not be on the same bus.

Bristol has just released a new downtown redevelopment plan for a 17 acre site. The plan includes high density development and 750 units of housing with a focus on the young residential market. ESPN, with its 5,000 employees, is one of the markets this redevelopment plan is counting on to provide demand. More and better transit is important to these constituencies, and such service will be an important factor in determining the success of this project.

In response to a question as to whether there has been any move on the part of the region's towns to help fund public transportation, Pickering said that the towns assist in funding Dial-a-Ride service but not the fixed route service. The towns simply can't afford to do that.

Pickering mentioned that a 5-mile long multi-use trail is a component of the New Britain Busway proposal. The trail will extend from downtown New Britain to Route 173 in Newington. The Central Connecticut RPA would like to see spur routes off this trail, perhaps to Central Connecticut State University and to West Farms Mall.

Moderator Sylvestre closed the hearing at 9:06 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

Stamford Government Center  
888 Washington Boulevard  
Stamford, Connecticut  
Tuesday, October 5, 2010 - 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Yvonne Loteczka  
Kevin Maloney  
Gail Lavielle

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CONNDOT**

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Gail Lavielle opened the hearing at 7:45 pm. Ms. Lavielle welcomed the attendees and gave a brief description of the purpose of the hearing and the function of the CPTC. She then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff in attendance.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

**Vincent DiMarco** of Greenwich pointed out the danger present on Route 1 in Greenwich near Byram Road where a pedestrian was killed attempting to cross traffic trying to get to a bus stop. There is no crosswalk in the area of the bus stop, which has lead to many pedestrian/motor vehicle accidents.

DiMarco requested that the Department of Transportation discontinue the Old Greenwich bus route from Stamford. It only carries 10-15 people a day and the services could be used on the 11 and 11a routes instead. DiMarco also supports undertaking the U. S. Route 1 corridor study of the feasibility of bicycle lanes.

**Frank J. Steinegger** owns property near the Stamford Transportation Center and parking garage. The stairs from the train platforms to the tunnel are both narrow and steep. As morning trains arrive, there are serious slip and fall accidents waiting to happen. He also feels that the electric doors from the tunnel into the station building should be removed immediately. They narrow the opening to 1.5 people while streams of 3 or 4 people are trying to get through to catch their shuttle vans on time. Steinegger believes the shuttle van system is hugely overloaded and chaotic. Some of the vans should be re-assigned to pick passengers up in the first opening where the MTA police park or in the public bus opening.

During morning rush hour, the inbound passengers detraining from the east and the outbound passengers going to NYC simply cannot safely fit on the platforms. This is the most ridiculous capacity situation imaginable. The platform needs to be extended in the easterly direction, not westerly, and as soon as possible.

Steinegger feels that the entire parking situation and passenger pickup by private car arrangement in Stamford are both disasters. ConnDOT has had decades to locate and construct additional parking for Connecticut's busiest train station yet nothing has been done. Meanwhile, the original parking garage is structurally unsound. There are 1.5 acres of land diagonally across the street southeasterly from the station. This property could accommodate 1,100 vehicles with a walkway constructed over Atlantic Street to connect the platforms to the parking structure.

**Rev. Jean L. Cineas**, pastor of the Haitian American Christian Center, has been a taxi driver for 25 years. Rev. Cineas expressed his disappointment with ConnDOT concerning his recent application for a taxi permit. He questioned the fairness of the process and wants the Department of Transportation to review the number of permits denied in the Stamford area. Rev. Cineas will be sending a letter to the Commissioner questioning the number of additional vehicles given to certain companies while denying applications for just a single vehicle to others. He wanted to know how it was possible for someone to have knowledge of his denial weeks prior to a judgment being rendered.

**Ed Czesnik** owns a business at 39 Manhattan Street in Stamford near the train station. Although he is not a Metro-North commuter, he expressed his concern about the inadequate parking situation at the train station because he is affected by the illegal parking in front of his business driveway. Czesnik requests that ConnDOT give serious consideration to the Stantec Study prior to making any decisions on the renovations. He thought the Stantec Study was very thoroughly done. Other properties which are farther away and more difficult to get to are being considered for station parking. Regardless of what plan is used to renovate the station, ground crossings to the station should be kept to a minimum due to the large volume of traffic of commuters racing for parking. Crossing a five lane road to access the station is very dangerous for pedestrians.

**Richard Stowe** of New Canaan is in full support of the Stantec Study for the train station and he hopes ConnDOT takes its recommendations seriously. He noted that the Stamford station has the largest passenger volumes on the New Haven Line outside of Grand Central Terminal itself. He would like to see housing built on the vacated parcel when the old train station garage is removed, with a requirement that the residents of that housing do not own cars.

Another important rail-related issue is the addition of an East Main Street train station. He has advocated for that station since a 1999 hearing in this very room. He feels this station would serve a similar purpose as the State Street Station in New Haven and would spawn similar development as the 360 State Street project in New Haven, which was developed because of the presence of the State Street Station.

Stowe also suggested that timed shuttle services at the Stamford Transportation Center meet the trains. The I-Bus schedule should also be better coordinated with the train schedule.

Stowe also addressed several bicycle-related points. Bicycle access to Stamford Station needs to be improved. There are only 'third world bicycle amenities' at the station now. Indoor bike racks similar to those at New Haven should be installed.

Fairfield has a bicycle and pedestrian committee which did a survey of where people want bicycle lanes and amenities. It found that 67% of respondents wanted bike lanes on Route 1.

Stowe sees some progress on the issue of bicycles on the trains. He did his own survey, watching passing trains from the 125<sup>th</sup> Street Station and he noted how many peak hour trains had empty space on them. These are trains from which bicycles are precluded because of the supposed lack of room.

He thanked Governor Rell for her efforts to integrate bicycle racks on the new M-8 rail cars. A manufacturer has been selected for the M-8 bike racks. The chosen company, Sportworks, also builds the bicycle racks used on Connecticut Transit buses. Metro-North is excited about installing the bike racks, not only on the New Haven Line but on the Harlem and Hudson Lines and on the M-7 cars on the Long Island Railroad. But there are no funds for a pilot program to test the bike racks. The Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Board wrote a letter to support doing this testing as soon as possible.

The Regional Plan Association is in favor of the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) proposal for high speed rail service from Penn Station to Grand Central Terminal, then to Westchester County Airport and continuing on to Danbury, Waterbury, Hartford and Boston. Stowe believes this would be a good route for freight but not for high speed passenger rail service. Freight service should be re-incorporated into the new Hudson River tunnels proposal. For passenger service, the Stamford-Bridgeport-New Haven-Providence corridor serves more people.

Stowe mentioned the Complete Streets movement to design streets that are friendly to all users. In other cities, bicycle routes have been incorporated into very crowded streets.

Stowe clarified that funds are available to test the bicycle rack designs for Metro-North trains but there is presently no money for the racks themselves. There are two Sportworks rack designs to review. He also would like to see early planning for the Springfield Line commuter rail service incorporate bicycle racks.

Lastly, Stowe discussed other aspects of the enhanced rail service on the Springfield Line. He would like to see true high speed service by eliminating at-grade crossings and skipping some local stops. For instance, Stowe favors running the 18 miles between Meriden and Hartford non-stop, while creating a New Britain corridor on the western track which would serve local stops like Newington Junction and would also access New Britain via existing corridors.

**Phyllis Pugliese** of Stamford said bicycle racks have been added at the Springdale Station on the New Canaan Branch. She is thankful she doesn't have to get on her train at the Glenbrook Station because there are no seats left by that point. And, contrary to what is sometimes reported, people do use every available seat, including middle seats. Even with two extra cars on tonight's New Canaan Branch train, there were eight standees on her car. Ridership on the New Canaan Branch is up. She also mentioned that barriers for rain protection are going up at the Springdale and Glenbrook platforms.

**Nick Kurianos** represents Atlantic Center at Stamford Station. His entity owns four acres immediately north of the train station and bounded by Henry Street, Garden Street, Atlantic Street and the Transitway. He has worked for ten years designing a new station and has been meeting with ConnDOT over the last two years. His proposed development is a mixed use development with an ‘urban fabric’ of residential, commercial, retail, office, entertainment and hotel land uses. The plan includes a 1,000 car garage, public atriums and accessways, which in effect will create a mini-Grand Central Terminal atmosphere. The parking garage would allow for weekend use by non-transit users. Further work on the proposal has been put on hold due to funding constraints until legislators have had the opportunity to review and approve the plan. Kurianos said his proposal responds to all mandates and directives from the State.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:56 PM

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

New London Public Hearing  
New London City Hall  
Council Chambers  
Wednesday, October 20, 2010 -7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Kevin Maloney  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Russell St. John

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CONNDOT**

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Kevin Maloney opened the hearing at 7:40 PM. Mr. Maloney welcomed the attendees, gave a brief description of the purpose of the hearing and the function of the CPTC, and then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff in attendance.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

**State Senator Andrea Stillman (20<sup>th</sup> District)** wants to see Shore Line East service to New London expanded, with more trains going west from New London. Former ConnDOT Commissioner Joe Marie came down every few months to meet with the local committee on rail service. The recent increase in ridership on Shore Line East is greater than even ConnDOT expected. But there are holes in the Shore Line East schedule. The last train leaves at 7:00 AM and then there is not another train out until 7:30 PM. A late morning train is needed, especially for trips to New Haven and New York City. More people work untraditional hours today so at least one more train in each direction is needed.

An article in today's New London Day speaks of the Shore Line East ridership increase but says there will be no more trains added until two years of ridership data are available. She feels this is a travesty. This is not what former commissioner Marie had indicated and she feels it is absurd to wait two years to add service.

Stillman also sees a need for more weekend Shore Line East service. She is not sure how many weekend trains are needed but there is a need.

In other issues, Stillman feels there is very little mention of New London in the draft State Rail Plan currently out for review. She also mentioned the terrible parking problem at the Old Saybrook train station. If more Shore Line East service were available out of New London, this would help relieve the parking pressure at Old Saybrook as some commuters could travel out of New London, which has a large parking garage, rather than drive to Old Saybrook to catch the train.

Lastly, Stillman addressed several Interstate 95 concerns. Safety on I-95 is an issue between the Baldwin Bridge and New London. There is safety-related work currently being done on the median between exits 72 and 75 but the full project to widen I-95 over this stretch, a \$300 million project, is now unfunded. This is a very dangerous stretch of the highway and is a frequent bottleneck to traffic flow. She feel that Interstate 95 expansion should be a higher priority than work on Interstate 84.

**Rep. Ed Jutila (37<sup>th</sup> District)** represents East Lyme and Salem and his district includes the section of Interstate 95 between exits 72 and 75. A tragic tanker truck accident occurred here in 2007. A complete reconstruction of exit 75 is necessary including the tie-in for Route 11. Widening of the highway should be a higher priority than the resurfacing of the roadway.

Moving on to rail issues, Jutila said that the local legislative delegation had fought for the M-8 rail cars as a design that could also be used on Shore Line East. The local delegation also successfully pushed to have the initial Shore Line East expansion include not only Phase 1, the addition of weekend service, but also Phase 2, which added service to New London. The schedule of service to New London is not ramping up as quickly as many had been led to believe it would. Ridership on Shore Line East is up but has not yet reached a critical mass on the service to New London. A schedule offering more travel options timewise is necessary to get to that critical mass. And more weekend service is needed. Jutila feels there is a synergy between the weekend and daily Shore Line East services such that once riders begin to use one of these services, they will be inclined to use the other. We need to get cars off of Interstate 95. He also sees a need for more publicity for Shore Line East. Jutila acknowledged that there are some conflicts between more frequent rail service and the needs of the marine industry but feels the parties can work together to solve this issue.

Jutila also urged the State of Connecticut to work with the owner of the New London train station for the betterment of New London commuters.

**First Selectman Dan Stewart** of Waterford thanked the Commission for coming to Southeastern Connecticut. He said this area sometimes feels like a lost corner of the state. He cited the Interstate 95 corridor study of 10 years ago which found a need to widen that roadway from New Haven to Rhode Island. He feels this work needs to get done.

As chairman of the Route 11 Greenway Commission, he reported that the work of that group has been suspended since the Route 11 project itself has been placed on the back burner.

**Bob Stuller** is chairman of the Conservation Commission, a member of the Shore Line East Coalition and is a New London resident. He supports expanded Shore Line East service for New London. He reported that business at State Pier is down as the housing slump has reduced the demand for lumber, a major cargo handled at the pier. He feels more diversity of cargo is needed at State Pier. This would also assist in getting more trucks off the highway. The rail siding at State Pier, which had been shut down, is being reopened.

**Jim Butler** is Executive Director of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments which represents twenty municipalities containing 250,000 residents. He welcomed the Commission to Southeastern Connecticut. Last weekend Butler had driven his daughter to Old Saybrook to get the train to New York City. While there, he met several other college students on the station platform. If the train came to New London, all these people wouldn't need to be driven to Old Saybrook.

Butler spoke of the many transportation modes which service New London. These include Amtrak, Shore Line East, local SEAT bus service, the Cross Sound Ferry to Long Island, the Block Island ferry, the Fisher's Island ferry, coach services, casino shuttles and taxi service. The Council of Governments recently completed a study of how to better integrate these services at an intermodal center focused on the train station. ConnDOT provided funding for this study. However, State investment is needed if the intermodal center is to become a reality. New London's train station is the only one with no State support for its upkeep and operation. He believes Union Station is the "hub of transportation" in the region and should be receiving some funding from the State.

Butler next discussed the Southeast Area Transit District (SEAT) which serves nine towns. He cited an inequality in how Connecticut's bus systems are funded. The CT Transit systems have 100% of their operating deficits covered by the State. But for the transit districts, such as SEAT, only 70% of their deficits are covered by the State, leaving the towns responsible to cover the remaining 30% of the deficit. This 30% is a huge expense for the towns, and is a target for cuts in times of tight budgets.

**Tiu Propfe** of Uncasville is a frequent Shore Line East and Metro-North rider. She is grateful for the steps that have been taken to improve local train service. These improvements don't help her personally, but she is grateful for them nonetheless. Weekend service to New London is needed on Shore Line East to serve tourists and casino traffic. She noted that 25% of casino revenue comes back to the State. Also, more parking is needed at Old Saybrook station.

She sees Interstate 95 as a mess. More rail service is needed to relieve the highway overcrowding but it is unclear who is calling the shots on this: Amtrak, ConnDOT or the boating interests?

**Sandra Chalk**, Director of New London Landmarks and a member of the City Landmarks Commission, provided a little history of New London. First the city depended on the whaling industry. Then railroads reached the city. Then local trolley service began along with ferry service. The city became a thriving center of transportation. But when the highways came, New London was bypassed. This impacted New London's economic vitality. Now the city is reviving again. Improved rail service and more ferry service have led this revival. Now more commuter trains are needed. Interstate 95 is terribly overcrowded and out of date. New London has many assets including a lovely city center and a big parking garage. But it needs more Shore Line East service to move people in and out. She is pleading for a recognition of the role of good public transportation to support the economic vitality of the city.

After Commission member Russ St. John noted that no speaker had yet mentioned transportation needs east of New London and asked if anyone had comments related to connections to Mystic or to Rhode Island, Chalk said area residents have been hesitant to stretch our 'asks' too far but that she would love to see service extend to T. F. Green Airport, or even just to Westerly.

**Tony Silvestri** is the project manager for Harbor Towers, a 52-unit condominium complex. He lamented that he forgot to bring his marketing t-shirts tonight that read "New London is the capital of New England". If you are going to have train service, you need to have hourly service, or maybe every 2 hours off peak. Three trains per day is not service. He exhorted, "Let's try to get this right."

**Tim Harrington** of West Mystic has a daughter in New York. He noted that New London is the local transportation hub until you get to New Haven, but New London has very little commuter train service. There are diminishing returns to spending money east of New London, so the State should concentrate on improving service to New London. The train service improvements that locals are asking for will happen sooner or later. Weekend service is needed when Interstate 95 is clogged and also to get to New York on weekends. The marinas should not be able to block rail service. He lives next to a marina so he appreciates the importance of the marina industry, but there are more train riders and potential riders than there are boaters. Improved train services would take the burden off Interstate 95.

Harrington feels that highways have destroyed our cities. Highways tore up New Haven and Hartford. He also noted that bus service can connect to train service to improve the efficiency of the transit system.

**Frank McLaughlin** is the New London Development Corporation Coordinator. He echoed Sen. Stillman's comments on adding trains to support more ridership. He says New London feels a little bit set up by the two-year timeframe to gather ridership data. He has friends and neighbors who would take the train if it was available. He agrees with Russ St. John about train service to Westerly. But he also agrees with Sandra Chalk that area transportation advocates are paranoid about asking for too much. He noted that the Northeast Rail Initiative to institute service to Quebec would add ridership.

**Laura Cordes** of New London is a member of the Shore Line East Coalition and a New London City Center District Commissioner. The Shore Line East Coalition has a mission to bring all 21 weekday and 8 weekend trains that currently run between New Haven and Old Saybrook out one more stop to New London. She asked the Commission to include a recommendation that ConnDOT provide the level of service to New London that was envisioned in the department's 2007 report on Shore Line East expansion. The limited train service undercuts the economic development opportunities in the region. Also, better train service is needed to keep the young population here.

**Todd O'Donnell**, a member of the New London City Council, is also a partner in the ownership of New London's railroad station. He mentioned that since he is speaking 'deep into the line-up' at tonight's hearing, many of his points have already been made. He attended the Transportation Strategy Board meeting earlier today in Groton where the proposed Springfield Line commuter

rail service was the major topic of discussion. He feels that the potential of another line, the Central New England Railroad's line leading north from New London is being overlooked. He was at a recent meeting of the Central Corridor Coalition at which the potential of this line to serve both freight and passenger needs was discussed. Thirteen colleges are located along this corridor between New London and Brattleboro, including colleges in Storrs, Amherst, and Palmer, Mass. The line passes through the Norwich Transportation Center.

Moving on to Shore Line East, O'Donnell noted that 65% of New London's Shore Line East passengers are coming to New London, while only 35% are outbound from the city. This is in contrast to a typical commuter rail service where inbound and outbound boardings are a split 50/50. There is a lot of weekend demand to get to New London by train.

Since 2002, O'Donnell has been one of the partners owning Union Station. The station is an architectural gem. It is also well located to serve the transportation needs of New London. His partner and he want to work with ConnDOT to support more rail traffic and to help the station serve as an intermodal center, bicycle center, and to provide very short-term office suites for meetings of people coming by rail to New London to connect, perhaps from Boston and New York, for example. But he said he has been extremely unsuccessful in getting any cooperation from ConnDOT. Unless ConnDOT is willing to speak to him about getting some support for any increased Shore Line East traffic, he does not support increased Shore Line East service. If ConnDOT is not willing to work with him, he will evict Shore Line East from his station and will sue them if they try to sell tickets in his building. The platforms are public space but the building is a private facility. He said all he wants is some rent from ConnDOT for the services that Shore Line East riders use at his station, namely the rest rooms and the ticket counter. He mentioned that his current tenants are Amtrak, which is by far his most important tenant, Greyhound and two small tenants.

**John Johnson** is vice-chairman of the Connecticut Marine Trades Association. He is not opposed to increased train traffic but is opposed to increasing the number of commuter trains to 20 in one shot. Currently there are five daily Shore Line East trains to New London. The 1,945 passengers to New London carried by Shore Line East in August, though it was a 41% increase, represents nine passengers per train.

Johnson said that if Amtrak could give boaters and marinas a regular schedule of bridge openings, they could deal with that. But they aren't getting that. The marine trades industry is hurting. There is no longer any waiting list for slips, so boaters from marinas north of the moveable bridges can easily move to marinas south of the bridges. He is willing to work with Amtrak and Shore Line East to come up with a schedule. The Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency is doing a two year study of bridge openings and boat crossings. Johnson said that Shore Line East is able to hold to a train schedule so that bridge openings are predictable but Amtrak cannot or does not do this.

**Terry Hall**, a former member of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission, said he was here to paint a bigger picture to pull together the pieces of the transportation situation to a resolution. While Amtrak is a federally-supported entity, anything ConnDOT does depends on money from the state. The Feds have dumped increasing transportation responsibilities onto the

states. Hall put his remarks in the context of the Northeast Corridor. While we used to define the Northeast Corridor as extending from Boston to Washington, today it really extends from Portland, Maine to Richmond, Virginia. South of New York City, all kinds of trains are operating. In addition to Amtrak, you have New Jersey Transit operating to Trenton, SEPTA operating down to Wilmington, Delaware or perhaps even to Dover, and Maryland DOT operating service up into northern Maryland, which in a few years will probably connect up to the SEPTA service.

In the northern end of the Northeast Corridor, you have good commuter service from New York to New Haven, and some commuter service out as far as New London, but no service between New London and Providence, except for Amtrak. But Rhode Island is extending service in short jumps, first to T. F. Green Airport and then with a planned extension to Wickford. These small steps waste money. Connecticut and Rhode Island should get together to plan for service to meet up. Hall thinks Westerly is the best place to do this as it has space and has extra tracks available. Once you connect up the service, ridership on both systems goes up. Westerly also offers free parking, so Hall takes the train from there rather than from New London. Hall, a Mystic resident, notes there is a definite demand for weekend Shore Line East service to Mystic, but also on weekdays too.

Although Shore Line East riders with monthly passes can ride on Amtrak trains at the Shore Line East fares, the Amtrak trains do not stop at all stations. Also, Amtrak trains are on time 60% of the time, with on time defined as being within 30 minutes of schedule. By contrast, Shore Line East trains are on time 95% of the time, with on time meaning being within five minutes of schedule.

Hall also reported that the contractor on two Amtrak bridge projects in Stonington was fired yesterday for being behind schedule.

**Walter Schieferdecker**, President of the Essex Island Marina in Essex, asked where the ridership numbers came from that were cited in today's New London Day article. Dennis King said he would provide Mr. Schieferdecker with the Shore Line East ridership figures. Schieferdecker then discussed the federal and state coastal zone management programs which favor water-dependent land uses at waterfront sites. Under this program, New London essentially took away his property rights by restricting him to water-dependent uses for his property. He noted that while marinas have to be on the water, railroads do not and are therefore not water-dependent uses.

Schieferdecker said that the Connecticut Marine Trades Association negotiated the agreement with ConnDOT to require two years of Shore Line East ridership data to verify the demand for the commuter service. He noted that he has 200 sailboats at his marina in Essex and every one of them requires an opening of the bridge to reach the Sound. He said he has reliable information that the Connecticut River Amtrak bridge is at its maximum number of openings now. Further increases in the number of trains will significantly impact the marine trades.

**Jan Lindberg** of Norwich stated that the clearance needs at the Connecticut River bridge should be considered before a new bridge is designed to determine how much clearance should be provided at the new bridge.

**Don MacKenzie** of Niantic owns Boats, Inc. There are 200 slips at his facility and 2,500 slips in the Niantic River which are affected by openings at the Niantic River Bridge. His clients are not Donald Trumps or Thurston Howell IIIs but are family boaters. A lack of access to the Sound is the number one reason people leave the area. He repeated Mr. Schiefendecker's comment that marina owners have no other option for a business as zoning is very restrictive.

**Rep. Ed Jutila** concurred that the marina industry is an importing one in his town of East Lyme. Therefore we all need to work together to come up with workable solutions. He appreciates the benefits of having a thriving marine industry. We need to keep the lines of communication open.

**Martin Olsen**, a member of the New London City Council, said that the area's citizens had expectations for significantly more train service coming into and out of the city. He feels the Springfield Line service is getting all the attention and Shore Line East is not in the picture. He noted that all passenger railroad service is subsidized; this is just a fact of life. The New London City Council supports the expansion of Shore Line East service.

**Jim Brown** of Brewer Boat Yards said he owns three boat yards on the Connecticut River with over 650 boats. These boat owners are not the Trumps or Rockefellers, but everyday families who own an average 22 foot boat. He said he does not deny that rail service is very important but his industry is greatly impacted by the lack of bridge openings. He noted that the clock at the Niantic River Bridge is supposed to provide a countdown to the next bridge opening but the clock is never on. There is no predictable schedule for the opening of the Amtrak bridges.

Moderator Kevin Maloney closed the hearing at 9:50 PM.

Subsequent to the hearing, additional comments were provided from **Susan Masino** who was unable to attend any of the Commission's hearings. Masino moved to Simsbury from Denver, Colorado seven years ago. After her move here, it was five years before bicycle racks were placed on the buses, despite assurances she received from ConnDOT before her move that the bike racks would be added soon.

Masino has children in elementary school. The last morning bus to Harford departs at 8:23 AM, too early for her to get her children on their school bus and then take a bus herself. This is a problem for everyone in her town who has children in elementary school. The few times she has taken the bus, she found it full, as was the parking lot. Conversations she has had with other riders on the bus revealed that they would also take a later bus if it were available. She also noted the lack of weekend bus service. She would like to be able to take her family to Hartford to the Bushnell, the Science Center or the Carousel by bus.

Masino feels that the bus schedule is built to serve the 9-5 job market, a model which has become out-dated. Bus service should also serve markets beyond just the commuter market.

She would like to see bus service for cultural events, shopping trips, and weekend travel. She cited Route 10 in Avon and Simsbury as an example of a major corridor lacking bus transportation.

## **CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP**

As constituted by Section 13b-11a(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission is composed of eleven gubernatorial and eight legislative appointees, as well as ex-officio representatives of the Commissioners of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Protection, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, and the co-chairmen of the Transportation Committee of the General Assembly. Current members, including the designees of the State agencies, are listed below.

### **Christopher Adams**

Chris has been an attorney in the Connecticut General Assembly for over thirteen years, working closely with legislators, agencies and members of the public, taking policy initiatives, and making them work in practical ways. He is interested in transportation of all types, including bicycling (he's a licensed Category 3 racer), and he serves on the Old Saybrook Bikeways Committee. But his passion is railroad transportation. He has served on the Board of Directors of the New Haven Railroad Historical and Technical Association, and currently serves as its photo archivist. He also serves on the Board of Trustees for the Railroad Museum of New England. His background and interest in railroad history have given him some understanding of railroad operations and culture, and he's one of the few attorneys in Connecticut that has taken and passed the Northeast Operating Rules Advisory Committee exam. Chris joined the Commission in 2007.

### **Kathleen Anderson**

Kathleen Anderson is an advocate for people with disabilities and seeks to raise awareness of the ever-increasing need to provide accessible public transportation to all residents of Connecticut. Ms. Anderson's experience in caring for a child with a neurological disability, as well as her experience as an advocate for people living with disabilities, brings a valuable perspective to the Commission.

Ms. Anderson has served as a chair of the Town of Berlin Commission on Persons with Disabilities for seven years and is a member of the Connecticut Portal Advisory Committee, the Connecticut Cancer Pain Initiative, and the State of Connecticut Core-CT Accessibility Committee. She is also a former director of governmental affairs for the American Society for Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy and has been an active participant in the Gift of Opportunity, a conference sponsored by the state Department of Labor to advocate for employment for persons with disabilities. (Note: Ms. Anderson resigned from the Commission during 2010.)

## **Richard Carpenter**

Mr. Carpenter is the former Executive Director of the South Western Regional Planning Agency, a position he held from 1966 until his retirement on March 31, 1999. In this position, he was involved in land use and transportation planning for that eight town region of one-third million population. Previous to being appointed to the CPTC, he was a member of the Governor's Railroad Advisory Task Force from 1974 to 1983, serving as its Chairman from 1974 to 1981. Mr. Carpenter's chief interest is the improvement of passenger and intermodal rail freight service. He served on the East of the Hudson Rail Freight Operations Task Force as the invited representative of Congressman Jerrold Nadler of New York. He is also a member of the Interstate 95 Coastal Corridor Transportation Investment Area Committee, one of five such committees working with the Transportation Strategy Board.

Mr. Carpenter is also the author of the book: "A Railroad Atlas of the United States in 1946 – Volume 1, The Mid-Atlantic States", published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2003. Volume 2, covering New York state and New England, was published in spring of 2005. Volume 3, which covers Indiana, Ohio and the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and which was published in December 2008. Volume 4, which covers Illinois, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, is expected to be published in 2011.

## **Thomas Cheeseman - Transit District Representative**

Mr. Cheeseman is the Administrator of the Middletown Transit District. He was District Manager for both Trailways of New England (1980-1986) and Greyhound Lines (1971-1979). Prior to that, he worked at United Technologies in East Hartford. From 1961 to 1969, Mr. Cheeseman served in the United States Air Force. He was past president of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation and the Connecticut Bus Association. He currently serves on numerous boards and committees throughout Middlesex County. Mr. Cheeseman was appointed to the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission in May of 2000, and currently serves as its chairman.

During 2005, Tom was appointed chairman of the Transportation Committee of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. He is serving as vice president of the Connecticut Association of Community Transportation and has just been named as the Connecticut delegate to the Community Transportation Association of America.

## **Morton N. Katz - Bus User**

Attorney Morton N. Katz of Avon has been a consistent user of the Avon-Canton commuter bus to and from Hartford since its inception. His stop in Hartford is two blocks from Superior Court. He uses bus travel extensively to go to New York. The bus

line to Springfield takes him to the bus terminal three blocks from the Amtrak station where he can catch the North Shore Limited to Cleveland. He makes frequent trips via Amtrak through the Northeast Corridor to New York, Delaware and Pennsylvania. He serves as a Magistrate in a number of G.A. Courts and is a Special Public Defender and a Justice of the Peace. Morton has twice received the Secretary of the State's Award for Dedicated Public Service.

Mort serves with Connecticut Legal Services providing *pro bono* legal services to indigent clients. He is the 2010 recipient of the Hartford County Bar Association Pro Bono Award.

### **William C. Kelaher – Rail Labor Representative**

Mr. Kelaher is the Assistant International Representative for the Transportation Communication Union AFL-CIO. He represents the Railroad Clerks in New England, New York and New Jersey. He is also a former District Chairman of Lodge 227, New Haven, Connecticut that represents members of Amtrak and Metro-North in the states of Connecticut and New York. Bill resides in West Haven.

### **Ronald Kilcoyne**

Ron is the chief executive officer of the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority. Ron serves in several capacities in the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) including as vice chairman of the Small Operators Steering Committee, as chairman of the Systems Planning and Operations Management Committee as a member of the Legislative Committee, the Policy and Planning Committee and the Intergovernmental Issues Committee. Ron is also a member of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation executive committee and the Transit for Connecticut steering committee. Ron is also a member of Bridgeport's Downtown Task Force and is the chairman of the Mobility Subcommittee of the Task Force.

### **Gail Lavielle**

Gail Lavielle is a Wilton resident and former commuter who believes strongly in the importance of public transportation as a key to maintaining and improving Connecticut's economic viability. Having spent more than twenty years as a finance, communications and marketing executive, she now splits her time between teaching undergraduates at UConn and public service. In addition to the Commission, she serves on several state and local boards and commissions, including the Wilton Board of Finance, the Wilton Energy Commission, and the Connecticut Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards. Gail was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly from the 143<sup>rd</sup> House District in November 2010.

### **Yvonne A. Loteczka - Mobility Impaired Transit User**

Ms. Loteczka is chair of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Task Force. Yvonne was Co-chair of the Special Act 90-10 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Subcommittee. She also served on a subcommittee of the Wethersfield Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities that compiled and completed the first Directory of Services for the Disabled for the town of Wethersfield.

### **Kevin Maloney – Trucking Company Management**

Kevin Maloney is the President/CEO of Northeast Express Transportation, Inc. which operates NEXTAir, NEXTCourier and NEXTDistribution. He presently serves on the Board of Directors of the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut and, during 2010, he was reelected as the president of the Connecticut Messenger Courier Association. He served on the Board of Directors of the Air and Expedited Carrier Association for over twenty-five years and was its president from 1987 though 1991. He has served on a variety of air freight industry committees formed to establish standards of performance and communication for the non-integrated, door-to-door air freight product.

### **Edward McAnaney**

Mr. McAnaney is a Magistrate of the Superior Court and practices law in Suffield. He has a life-long interest in railroading and is a conductor and brakeman for the Naugatuck Railroad.

### **Russell St. John - Railroad Company Management**

Mr. St. John is the former President of the Connecticut Central Railroad, now a part of the Providence and Worcester Railroad, a regional freight carrier for whom he acts as a consultant. Russ is intimately involved in the rail freight business in Connecticut. He has worked with several groups to preserve rail freight lines in this state. Russ is active on the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce where he serves on the Legislative Committee and the Rail Council. He currently serves as a member of Connecticut's Operation Lifesaver Program. He represents Granby on the Board of Directors of the Greater Hartford Transit District and has been interested in rail and bus commuter issues.

### **Richard Schreiner – Transit District Representative**

Mr. Schreiner is Director of Service Development for the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) in Danbury. He has expertise in the areas of transit operations, transportation planning, service design, procurement, public relations and regulatory requirements. He is the former Executive Director of the Long Island Sound Taskforce

(now Save the Sound), a non-profit environmental organization. Mr. Schreiner resides in Derby with his wife and children.

### **Richard Sunderhauf - Bus Labor Union Representative**

Mr. Sunderhauf, appointed to the Commission in 1998, is active in the affairs of the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 425, AFL-CIO, which represents the bus operators and mechanics of Connecticut Transit's Hartford Division. Richard is a bus operator for that company. He is particularly interested in system and equipment improvements, increased service and ridership on public transportation, and decreased congestion on our roads. Richard resides in Rocky Hill with his wife Brenda.

### **Alan Sylvestre**

Mr. Sylvestre brings a perspective that is informed by thirty years of using public transportation to get around the Greater Hartford area. Al is an American Planning Association-certified land use planner and works as an economic geographer at the Connecticut Department of Labor. His knowledge and experience are further enriched by his roles as board chairman and client of the Board of Education and Services for the Blind, and as a music student who often finds himself having to schlep his guitar, amplifier, and books on the bus.

### **Jack Testani**

Jack and his wife Suzanne have resided in Trumbull since 1989. Jack is employed by Icon International where he has served as Senior New Business Director since 2002. He is also chairman of the Trumbull Republican Town Committee, again serving since 2002 in this position, and was formerly a member of the board of directors of the Connecticut Student Loan Foundation. Jack is active in several local youth sports leagues either as a coach or a volunteer. These include Trumbull Youth Lacrosse, Trumbull Little League, AYSO soccer, Pop Warner football and Jump Rope for the Heart. Jack and Suzanne have two sons. (Note: Mr. Testani resigned from the Commission during 2010.)

### **Robert Zarnetske**

Mr. Zarnetske is an attorney in Norwich. He is a member of the Norwich City Council and was the former City Manager of Norwich. He serves as the secretary for Southeastern Area Transit (SEAT). Before returning to Connecticut in 2003, Bob spent more than ten years in Washington where he served as the Acting Assistant Director of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics at USDOT. Bob also served as a transportation policy advisor to U.S. Senators Paul Sarbanes and Christopher Dodd. Bob resides in Norwich with his wife and two children. (Note: Mr. Zarnetske resigned from the Commission during 2010.)

## **John Zelinsky**

Mr. Zelinsky is a member of the Stamford Board of Representatives, on which he has served for 30 years. He serves as chairman of the Operations Committee and is a member of the Legislative and Rules, Public Safety and Health, Transportation, and Steering Committees. Mr. Zelinsky is a past commissioner and chairman of the Stamford Human Rights Commission, and he serves on numerous local civic, political, and charitable organizations. He is an Independent Insurance Agent and a real estate broker.

## **Ex-Officio Members**

### **James Redeker**

Mr. Redeker is the Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Public Transportation of the Department of Transportation. He joined the Department in 2008 after a 31-year career in public transportation in New Jersey, culminating with the position of Director of Capital Planning for New Jersey Transit.

### **Senator Donald J. DeFronzo**

Senator DeFronzo represents the 6th Senatorial District which encompasses New Britain, Berlin and a portion of Farmington and also serves as a co-chairman of the Transportation Committee.

### **Representative Antonio Guerrero**

Representative Guerrero represents the 29th House District, which encompasses Rocky Hill and portions of Newington and Wethersfield, and serves as co-chairman of the Transportation Committee.

### **Frederick L. Riese**

Mr. Riese is the designee of Commissioner Amey Marrella of the Department of Environmental Protection. Mr. Riese is a Senior Environmental Analyst with the Office of Environmental Review. He has served on the Commission since its inception in 1984, acting as Interim Chairman from 1997 through early 2002. He had previously served for five years on both the Connecticut Public Transportation Authority and the Governor's Railroad Advisory Task Force.

## **Philip L. Smith**

Mr. Smith, a resident of Bridgeport, represents Secretary Robert Genuario of the Office of Policy and Management. Mr. Smith was appointed Under Secretary for Policy and Management on March 17, 2003. His areas of responsibility include transportation, housing, economic development, and labor and employment issues. Prior to his appointment as Under Secretary, Smith served as Director of Federal Programs at the Department of Economic and Community Development and Director of Strategic Planning and Coordination at the Department of Labor.

## **Connie Mendolia**

Connie Mendolia is an environmental analyst in the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Pollution Prevention. She works on a wide variety of issues with a focus on planning, outreach, and assistance. Connie was a member of the Connecticut Climate Change Coordinating Committee responsible for developing Connecticut's Climate Change Action Plan. She promotes the use of mass transit as a better way of commuting to work and developed the DEP's Commuter Connections website and bulletin board to promote transit use and ridesharing.

## **C.G.S. Sec. 13b-11a. Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

Sec. 13b-11a. Connecticut Public Transportation Commission. (a) There shall be in the Department of Transportation a Connecticut Public Transportation Commission which shall be a successor to the Connecticut Public Transportation Authority and which shall consist of nineteen members, who are electors of the state. Eleven of such members shall be appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be a representative of business and industry and a regular user of railroad or truck freight service; one a regular commuter using railroad passenger service; one a regular bus user; one who is permanently mobility impaired and a frequent bus user; one a working member of a railroad labor union; one a working member of a bus labor union; one a representative of railroad company management; one a representative of trucking company management; two representatives from separate local transit districts and one a person sixty years of age or older. The remaining eight members shall have a background or interest in public transportation and be appointed as follows: Two by the president pro tempore of the Senate; two by the minority leader of the Senate; two by the speaker of the House of Representatives; and two by the minority leader of the House of Representatives. The Commissioner of Transportation, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the cochairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to transportation, or their respective designees, shall serve as nonvoting, ex-officio members of the commission. The term of each member of the commission shall be four years. The term of any member who was appointed by the Governor and who is serving on the commission on October 1, 1985, shall expire December 31, 1985. The term of any member who was appointed by any legislator and who is serving on the board on October 1, 1985, shall expire December 31, 1987. Vacancies on said commission shall be filled for the remainder of the term in the same manner as original appointments.

(b) The commission shall advise and assist the commissioner, the Governor and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to transportation in the performance of their functions and duties relating to the planning, development and maintenance of adequate rail, bus and motor carrier facilities and rail, bus and other public transportation services including the adequacy of such services for elderly and disabled users in the state and any other matters affecting the quality of public transportation facilities and services in the state. At least once each year, the commission shall hold public hearings in each of the metropolitan areas, as determined by the commission, within the state for the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of such rail, bus, motor carrier and other public transportation facilities.

(c) The commission shall assist the commissioner in developing regulations to formalize arrangements between the department and local transit districts, between local transit districts and transit system operators and between local transit districts.

(d) Repealed by P.A. 77-33, S. 1.

(e) On or before January first, annually, the commission shall submit in writing to the commissioner, the Governor and the Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board, established pursuant to section 13b-57e, (1) a list of public transportation projects, which, if undertaken by the state, would further the policy set forth in section 13b-32, including projects specifically for

elderly and disabled users; (2) recommendations for improvements to existing public transportation service and projects, incorporating transportation service and projects relative to the needs of elderly and disabled persons and including proposals for legislation and regulations; (3) recommendations for disincentives to free parking, including urban and suburban employment centers; (4) off-peak transit services; and (5) the establishment of urban center loop shuttles. The commissioner shall notify members of the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to transportation and finance, revenue and bonding, on or before January first, annually, of the availability of the commissioner's comments and analysis of priorities. A written copy or electronic storage media of such comments and analysis shall be distributed to members of such committee who request them. The commissioner shall meet with the commission at least once during each calendar quarter.

(f) The commission may, upon its own motion, undertake any studies it deems necessary for the improvement of a balanced public transportation system within the state, including the improvement of such system for elderly and disabled users. The commission shall have other powers and shall perform such other duties as the commissioner, the Governor and the General Assembly may delegate to it.

(g) Subject to the provisions of chapter 67, and when authorized to do so by the commissioner, the Governor or the General Assembly, the commission may appoint such officers, agents and employees and may retain and employ other consultants or assistants on a contract or other basis for rendering legal, financial, technical or other assistance or advice as may be required to carry out duties or responsibilities. The staff of the department shall be available to assist the commission.

(h) The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services as members but shall be reimbursed for the expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them in the performance of their duties. No member of the commission who is otherwise a public officer or employee shall suffer a forfeiture of his office or employment, or any loss or diminution in the rights and privileges pertaining thereto, by reason of such membership.

(i) A quorum of the commission for the purpose of transacting business shall exist only when there is present, in person, a majority of its voting membership. The affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum shall be required for the adoption of a resolution or vote of the commission.

(j) The members of the commission shall elect one of the members as chairperson with the responsibility to act as presiding officer at meetings of the commission. Regular meetings shall be held at least once in each calendar month and as often as deemed necessary by a majority of members. Any member absent from (1) three consecutive meetings of the commission, or (2) fifty per cent of such meetings during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from the commission, effective on the date that the chairperson notifies the official who appointed such member.

(k) The commission shall have access through the Department of Transportation to all records, reports, plans, schedules, operating rules and other documents prepared by rail and bus companies operating under contract with the state of Connecticut which pertain to the operations of such companies and to any documents that the commission may require from the department

to carry out its responsibilities under this section and sections 13b-16, 13b-17 and 16-343, provided this subsection shall not apply to any plans, proposals, reports and other documents pertaining to current or pending negotiations with employee bargaining units.

The Connecticut Public Transportation Commission is charged with the annual task of presenting a list of recommendations which, if undertaken by the State, would further the policy set forth in Section 13b-32 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

**SECTION 13b-32**

“IMPROVEMENT IN THE TRANSPORTATION OF PEOPLE AND GOODS WITHIN, TO AND FROM THE STATE BY RAIL, MOTOR CARRIER OR OTHER MODE OF MASS TRANSPORTATION ON LAND IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE CITIZENS OF THE STATE AND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS RESOURCES, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY. THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A MODERN, EFFICIENT AND ADEQUATE SYSTEM OF MOTOR AND RAIL FACILITIES AND SERVICES IS REQUIRED. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF SUCH FACILITIES AND SERVICES AND SHALL PROMOTE NEW AND BETTER MEANS OF MASS TRANSPORTATION BY LAND.”