

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Minutes of April 7, 2016

ConnDOT Headquarters, Conference Room B
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington

Attendance: Members: Kevin Maloney, Richard Sunderhauf, Russ St. John, Robert Rodman, Mort Katz, Francis Pickering, Robert Hammersley, Alan Sylvestre. **Ex-officio members:** Fred Riese (DEEP). **ConnDOT staff:** David Elder, Peter Calcaterra, Jim Stutz. **Guests:** Stephen Troster.

Chairman Maloney opened the meeting at 1:38 p.m. The minutes of the meeting of March 3 were accepted as written.

Featured Speaker

David Elder and Peter Calcaterra from ConnDOT's Bureau of Policy and Planning provided a comprehensive overview of the 30-year Let's Go CT transportation initiative. David Elder began the presentation and noted that work on this strategic plan began two years ago and involved substantial public and stakeholder outreach both via the Transform CT outreach effort and 126 meetings with metropolitan planning organizations, councils of governments, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, rail advocates, businesses and many other groups. Elder noted it was Governor Malloy himself who coined the name Let's Go CT for this transportation initiative.

Our road network in Connecticut consists of 21,500 miles of state and local roads (7,800 miles of which are State roads) and 5,300 state and local bridges. Fifty State highway maintenance garages house the equipment and supplies to maintain this system. Though bridges today, using modern construction techniques and improved materials, can be expected to last 75-80 years, most of the bridges on our road system were built for a 50-year design life and many are now past that mark.

The initial 5-year ramp-up phase of Let's Go CT (2016-2020) involves \$10 billion of projects, which are in addition to projects previously scheduled and regular on-going maintenance work. \$2.8 billion of the State ramp-up funding has been approved by the Bond Commission to supplement the \$7.2 billion of Federal and State funding already programmed for the 5-year period. Although most capital projects for transportation have an 80/20 Federal/State funding split, Connecticut has overmatched its Federal funding. The use of the extra State funding gives us greater flexibility by avoiding many Federal restrictions. Project design work in particular has been speeded up through the use of State funds.

Peter Calcaterra provided a breakdown of the \$10 billion in 5-year ramp-up spending. Sixty-two percent of the initial 5-year spending is slotted for rail projects, 22% for highways, 10% for bridges, 4% for bicycle and pedestrian projects and 2% for bus transit expansion. Much of this initial ramp-up funding is for design work. Calcaterra said Connecticut now has the necessary funding to get started on many projects. He also quantified that there are 34 projects in the initial ramp-up package. Ninety-six percent of the ramp-up funds have already been

bonded including 100% of the bus project funds and 98% of the rail project funds. One specific bus project mentioned is the roll out of real time data on the location of all CT Transit buses. This data can be accessed by smartphone allowing riders to know precisely how soon a given bus will arrive at their stop.

Calcaterra then showed the Let's Go CT dashboard which displays all 34 projects by region and by mode, and provides funding information and timelines for major project milestones. Replacement of the Norwalk River rail bridge was the example project used to display the dashboard. There was some discussion as to how accurate the project milestone timelines shown are, and whether they are too optimistic in some cases.

Following the Let's Go CT project dashboard primer, David Elder gave an update on progress on the Statewide Freight Plan being developed pursuant to a MAP -21 provision which encourages states to develop such plans in return for eligibility for 90% Federal funding for projects contained in approved plans. Elder noted that seven on the top 100 truck freight bottlenecks nationally are in Connecticut, and seven of New England's top ten bottlenecks are in this state.

ConnDOT is working with the MPOs and with stakeholders to do multimodal freight planning. The initial task is to identify the types, volumes and modes of freight movements in Connecticut. The desire ultimately is to make improvements to make Connecticut's freight-dependent businesses more competitive.

In response to a question as to whether the plans of surrounding states are incorporated into Connecticut's freight planning, Elder said Connecticut meets with other New England states quarterly. He then gave one example of the need for such regional planning, noting that most petroleum products entering New England come in via the port of New Haven. These products must be able to move efficiently throughout the region.

Concerning whether the information highway or 'electronic freight' is considered as part of this study, Elder said it is not. However, the study is very comprehensive, even going so far as to consider drones for freight delivery.

The study will ultimately produce a financially-constrained freight action plan. Under the FAST Act, Connecticut will receive \$14,000,000 annually for freight projects. The State Freight Plan is expected to be completed in July 2017.

Comments from Operating Entities

Rich Sunderhauf distributed the March issue of CT Transit Connections which focused on the one-year anniversary of the beginning of CTfastrak service. Rich also said that a new 3-year labor agreement had been reached at CT Transit.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Maloney reported that, per a Manchester Journal Enquirer article, ConnDOT is budgeting \$17,500,000 for CTfastrak service next year, the same figure as this year. Fare revenues of \$4,900,000 are anticipated in the next fiscal year, the

same level as was achieved for this year. Though this year's fare revenue actually ran \$300,000 ahead of the projected amount, costs ran had of projections by the same \$300,000 margin. Farebox and other revenues covered 21.9% of *CTfastrak's* budget, with the \$17,500,000 subsidy covering the remaining 78.1%. Ridership for the first three weeks of March averaged 14,000 per day. *CTfastrak* system ridership has ranged from 16,500 daily rides in September and 16,300 daily rides in October to 13,000 rides per day in January.

Old Business

Fred Riese gave an update on one facet of the Federal Railroad Administration's NEC Future environmental impact statement. Due to public and municipal concerns about the Old Saybrook to Kenyon, Rhode Island bypass proposed in FRA's Alternative I, FRA is now evaluating crossing the Connecticut River and much of Old Lyme via a tunnel, as opposed to a bridge across the river and an at-grade alignment crossing Old Lyme.

Spring Public Hearings

The three spring public hearings are set for May 10 at Bristol City Hall, May 23 at Windham Town Hall and June 7 at West Haven City Hall, at starting at 7:00 pm. Kevin asked Francis Pickering to moderate the Bristol hearing. Nick Lownes has previously volunteered to moderate in Windham. Kevin encouraged members to attend one or more of the spring hearings, a point he will again hit at the May 5 meeting when he will also ask for commitments to attend.

New Business

Kevin mentioned that Don Shubert of the Connecticut Construction Industries Association has offered to speak at an upcoming CPTC meeting. Since we now have a new Federal surface transportation act in place, this would be a good time to schedule him. Kevin will reach out to see if Mr. Shubert can speak at the May 5 meeting in New Haven.

As CT Transit is now beginning to track costs for *CTfastrak* service separate from those of other CT Transit routes, it was suggested that perhaps Mike Sanders could provide a *CTfastrak* update at the June meeting at ConnDOT. Jim Stutz said he would attempt to arrange that.

Kevin mentioned that the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut has a new president, succeeding Mike Riley. Mike is still active in lobbying on trucking issues but is no longer doing the day-to-day administrative work for MTAC. Kevin suggested that the new MTAC president would be a good future speaker.

Chairman Maloney closed the meeting at 2:56 p.m.