

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Minutes of August 6, 2015

Connecticut Department of Transportation, Conference Room B
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington

Attendance: Members: Christopher Adams, Bill Kelaher, Yvonne Loteczka, Kevin Maloney, Robert Rodman, Russ St. John, Richard Schreiner, Richard Sunderhauf and Alan Sylvestre. **ConnDOT staff:** Sherry Osterling, Michael Sanders and Jim Stutz. **Guests:** Steven Troster and Ryan Visci.

Chairman Maloney called the meeting to order at 1:35pm. The minutes of the meeting of July 9 were approved as written.

Featured Speaker

Michael Sanders, Transit Administrator of the DOT's Division of Transit and Ridesharing, spoke about CTfastrak. Mr. Sanders distributed a ridership summary for the months of May through June. Service started March 28 and there were 9 free days of service in April. Ridership figures for April were not presented for trend analysis due to the free trial period and some start-up issues associated with the calibration of the automatic passenger counter (APC) technology used to track rides on the service.

Average weekday total corridor passenger trips ranged from 13,205-14,200 by month with the highest numbers in June at 14,323. Based on modeling, the initial expectation for ridership was 11,200 trips per day in the corridor, with projected ridership of 16,000 per day by 2030. Some days have already seen boardings in excess of 16,000.

There is ridership growth on CTfastrak, but with some loss showing on local CTTRANSIT routes in the corridor. Overall they are pleased with current trends. In looking at numbers over the three month period, there is some impact of seasonality; transit trips typically drop off in the summer with the months of greatest ridership being in spring around March and April with a secondary peak in and around October. Sunday ridership is high. The state is very confident in the general accuracy of the counts. Ridership is validated by checkers and "secret shoppers."

Recent rider surveys show something like 30% of the riders on CTfastrak are new to the system.

DOT will be preparing a comparison to last year's numbers to get a better sense of the impact on local transit services but there have been service changes outside of the implementation of CTfastrak and so this won't be precisely apples to apples. APCs will be installed in the CTTRANSIT system starting with the Hartford division and moving forward will allow in-depth analysis by route, some of which could be completed automatically.

They are hearing dozens of anecdotes about how CTfastrak has positively impacted people's lives. The new service is providing better access to employment and recreational opportunities.

The compliance rate for the proof of payment fare system is very high. There are ticket vending machines installed on platforms and seven persons are employed as fare enforcement agents. The expectation for rates of fare payment on similar services is 95%; compliance on CTfastrak is around 99%. Mr. Sanders theorized that the relatively high rate of purchase of prepaid fare media on CTTRANSIT prior to CTfastrak (62%) might be a factor in the high success rate.

The agents are authorized to issue \$75 tickets for non-payment of fares. If a citation is issued, the state police are called and are present. There have been very few confrontations over fare evasion. Initially people are escorted to the farebox or to a TVM and asked if they need any instruction on how to pay the fare.

Within about a year platform validators will be installed. Green CTfastrak buses have new Scheidt and Bachmann fareboxes installed. New fareboxes on the entire CTTRANSIT system including express services will be installed by late Winter 2016, and by next August the state will be introducing contactless smart cards for fare payment. Down the road, the state is looking at a mobile app. payment system.

A rewards program for riders was rolled out with 25-30 vendors providing discounts or other benefits to CTfastrak riders.

When asked about disabled access, Mr. Sanders explained that each bus has a gap filler and a bridge platform that drivers employ to allow for wheelchair access. Bus ramps cannot be deployed at the high-level CTfastrak platforms. There is also a rear facing wheelchair securement position on the CTfastrak buses with a back board that allows for faster boarding. Video and audio stop announcements are provided at station stops and on vehicles.

Parking demand at the stations has been greater than anticipated but there isn't much room within the existing footprint of the facility for lots. DOT is working with municipalities and local landlords for off-site options.

Bike use on buses is a popular option, with some complaints about the maximum two bikes per bus rule.

Towns in the region are working with the COG to adjust zoning requirements for parking in the area around the facility. Interest in TOD around CTfastrak is growing – West Hartford is setting up a housing project near a station stop and New Britain is looking at redevelopment of their old police station as a TOD.

Comments from the Public

None

Comments from Operating Entities

Rich Sunderhauf mentioned that new driver bids were going into effect. There have been over a hundred new hires as a result of the busway.

Rick Schreiner related that Naugatuck Valley Community College and HARTransit are finalizing a Upass agreement. It is anticipated that a program will be in place in time for the fall semester. Discussions between Peter Pan and the university are ongoing.

Chairman's Report

In a humorous attempt to put overcrowding on Metro-North trains into perspective, Chairman Maloney exhibited a photo of a railroad in Bangladesh.

Old Business

Chairman Maloney went over the upcoming fall schedule of special meetings. Tentative assignments for meeting chairs were:

Derby	Rick Schreiner
Old Saybrook	Chris Adams
Windsor Locks	Fred Riese*
Stamford	Francis Pickering*

(*pending confirmation)

New Business

None

Chairman Maloney adjourned the meeting at 2:55pm.