



## Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

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Connecticut Commuter Rail Running Repair Shop  
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## **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 11 gubernatorial and 8 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.

### **Dorothy F. Adamson – Senior Citizen Representative**

Before retirement, Dorothy was a professional librarian/ media specialist. Beginning at W.F. Kaynor Vo-Tech School in Waterbury, she subsequently held positions at the American Community School (Cobham, England), Robert College (Istanbul, Turkey) and the American School in Japan (Tokyo). In the course of traveling in Europe and Asia, she and her husband, Robert, experienced a variety of transportation modes, giving rise to her interest and, often, admiration for some of the systems they encountered. Dorothy and Robert reside in Bethlehem.

### **Linda M. Blair**

Originally from Upstate New York, Linda M. Blair moved to New Haven by way of Atlanta, Georgia in 1989. She quickly became involved as an advocate for users of the Greater New Haven Transit District's Transportation for Disabled Persons Program and the CT Transit bus system. In 1991, she was appointed to the City of New Haven Commission on Disabilities, becoming chair in 1993. In 1992, she was appointed to the Connecticut Citizens' Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC). Linda has also served as a board member and officer of several organizations including serving as president of the more than four thousand member Connecticut Union of Disability Action Groups for which public transportation is a primary issue. She has served on state and local legislative panels and was appointed to the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission in 1998.

### **Arroll Borden**

Mr. Borden is a project coordinator with the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council. He previously worked as a research associate with the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, where his work included developing transportation corridor plans and working on regional planning issues. Mr. Borden is a member of the American Planning Association, and holds a certificate in access management planning.

## **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 currently serves 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. Currently, he is working on Volume 3, which will cover Indiana, Ohio and the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

## **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.

## **N. Terry Hall**

Mr. Hall, a retired large scale systems programmer, is presently vice chairman of the Finance Committee for the Town of Goshen. Terry has served as a director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers since 1988. This is supported by a lifetime interest in rail operations and in the intermodal aspect of transportation. He has extensive rail travel

experience across the nation. Terry is currently the security coordinator for the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners.

### **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 catches 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 Justice of the Peace. Morton has twice received the Secretary of the State's Award for Dedicated Public Service.

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

Mr. Kelaher is the Vice General Chairman 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.

### **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 is the president of the Connecticut Messenger Courier Association. He served on the Board of Directors of the Air and Expedited Carriers Association for over twenty-five years and was its president from 1987 through 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.

### **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.

#### **Robert Zarnetske**

Mr. Zarnetske is the City Manager in 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.

#### **John Zelinsky**

Mr. Zelinsky is a member of the Stamford Board of Representatives, on which he has

served for 29 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**

#### **H. James Boice**

During 2005, Deputy Commissioner H. James Boice represented Commissioners Stephen Korta and Ralph Carpenter of the Department of Transportation. Mr. Boice serves as the acting Bureau Chief of the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Public Transportation, and well as being the Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Policy and Planning.

#### **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.

#### **Senator Biagio 'Billy' Ciotto (outgoing)**

Senator Biagio 'Billy' Ciotto of Wethersfield represents the 9th Senatorial District and is the Senate Co-chair of the Transportation Committee. Senator Ciotto's district covers Cromwell, Newington and Rocky Hill and parts of Wethersfield and Middletown. {Note: Sen. Donald DeFronzo of New Britain, representing the 6<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District, will be the Senate co-chair member of the Commission in 2007.}

#### **Philip Smith**

Mr. Smith represents Secretary Robert Genuario of the Office of Policy and Management.

#### **Frederick L. Riese**

Mr. Riese is the designee of Commissioner Gina McCarthy of the Department of Environmental Protection who retired in late 2004. Mr. Riese is a Senior Environmental Analyst with the Office of Environmental Review. He has served on the Commission since its inception in 1984, including 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.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION IN 2006

Tom Cheeseman served as Chairman of the Commission in 2006, his fifth year in that office. Morton Katz continued to serve as Vice Chairman, while Frederick Riese continued as Administrative Vice Chairman. Kevin Maloney, Ralph Capenera, Robert Zarnetske and John Zelinsky joined the Commission in 2006.

### Monthly Meetings

As set forth in Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a(j), the Commission met on the first Thursday of each month. Five of these meetings were held at Union Station in New Haven, four at the Connecticut Department of Transportation headquarters in Newington, two were at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, and the March meeting was cancelled due to severe winter weather.

Heidi Green, President of 1000 Friends of Connecticut, addressed the April and October meetings of the Commission regarding land use planning issues and their impact on transportation. In May, Douglas Holcomb, Director of Planning and Service Development for the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority spoke concerning the Authority's new *Ziptrip* bus pass initiative and the new transit facility it has under construction. Robert Santy, President of the Regional Growth Partnership, spoke on land use issues, transportation, housing and Jobs Access services at the Commission's June meeting. In July, the Commission heard Gloria Mills, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation, speak about the current status, new initiatives, and funding needs of ADA and other paratransit services in Connecticut.

The August meeting was highlighted by a presentation by Patricia Douglas, Executive Director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Association, as to how the Downeaster rail service between Boston and Portland, Maine went from concept to successful service, and where commuter rail in that corridor may be headed in the future. In September, ConnDOT Deputy Commissioner James Boice updated the Commission on a number of major transit projects the Department has underway or in planning. Mario Marrero, Transportation Planner with the Capitol Region Council of Governments, briefed the November meeting on the current services and funding for the Jobs Access program in the Capitol Region.

The Commission was fortunate to have such knowledgeable and interesting speakers during the year and is very appreciative of their presentations to us.

### Public Hearings

The Commission conducted eight public hearings during 2006 to gather public input from transportation users and providers, local officials and planners, non-profit organizations, and other members of the public. In the spring, the Commission held hearings in West Haven, Newington, East Lyme, and Derby. During the fall, hearing sites included Waterbury, Plainville, Litchfield and Danbury. 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 raised at the 2006 hearings tended to be local rather than statewide ones. The summaries of the eight public hearings, found on pages 35-52 of this Annual Report, will provide more detail on the issues raised in each of the hearings but a few of the more noteworthy issues are recounted here. Some of the topics raised by multiple speakers or discussed in greater detail included the need for improvements to the Danbury and Waterbury Branches of Metro-North, budget difficulties being experienced at the Valley Transit District, the need for a standardized and readily identifiable system of bus stop markings in the Waterbury fixed route system, the need to better coordinate the various modes of transportation at and near the New London railroad station, the need for a new bus storage and maintenance facility for the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District, the loss of out-of-region bus services from Torrington and Canaan, and the need to better provide for work trips made by bicycle. The two foremost issues raised concerning the Danbury Branch rail service were the need for some degree of mid-day service during the 4-hour gap which currently sees no trains running from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm, and the desire to extend rail service on the Danbury Branch northward to serve Brookfield and New Milford. The two major Waterbury Branch concerns were increased safety, lighting and cleanliness at the Waterbury station and the need to market the service in the Waterbury and Torrington areas where many residents are unaware of the existence of the train service.

### **East of the Hudson Rail Freight Task Force**

During 2006, the East of Hudson Rail Freight Task Force, on which Commission member Richard Carpenter participates, continued to meet regularly in the Board Room of the New York Law School in lower Manhattan. The Task Force was created in 1999 to monitor and plan for improved rail freight service east of the Hudson River. It was established as part of the final decision of the U.S. Surface Transportation Board dividing Conrail between CSX and Norfolk Southern. Impetus for its creation came from a Congressional Intervention Petition supported by members of Congress from New York and Connecticut which sought to extend the shared access area operated by both acquiring railroads northeastward from northern New Jersey through New York City to New Haven.

Meetings of the Task Force occur about every six weeks. Members include the Norfolk Southern and CSX Railroads, Canadian Pacific Railway, Providence and Worcester Railroad,

the New York and Atlantic Railroad, the New York Cross Harbor Railroad, Amtrak, Metro-North, the Long Island Railroad, New York State DOT, New York City DOT, the New York Economic Development Commission, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council and Environmental Defense. The Task Force operates on the principle that government and the private sector must work together to provide rail transportation solutions, not just for passenger service but also for greatly improved rail freight service including direct access across the Hudson River.

During 2006, there was major progress in achieving the goal of extending operation of 286,000 pound class freight cars by eliminating weight restrictions imposed mainly by the Long Island Railroad. Other issues on which substantial progress was made were the planning for the proposed Pilgrim Intermodal Facility on Long Island, improving access over the Hell Gate bridge by upgrading the freight and passenger tracks, surveying and locating potential rail yard sites, the creation of a new intermodal terminal on Staten Island, and enhancing the New York Harbor Railroad Car Float operations.

Of potentially the greatest interest and benefit to Connecticut and southern New England, the Task Force has been very active in promoting and planning for the eventual construction and use of the Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel. This year, \$100 million in federal funds were included to further the planning and construction of a cross harbor rail freight tunnel linking New Jersey and New York. Such a tunnel, if constructed, could shorten the distances and travel times to reach Connecticut from the south if complementary rail freight access on the New Haven Line can also be enhanced. Predictions of a 79% increase in truck traffic on the region's roads in the next 20 years have resulted in strong support for this rail freight tunnel. More information on the proposed tunnel can be found at [www.moveny.org](http://www.moveny.org).

Lastly, the Task Force heard reports on various studies including the Hudson Line Capacity Study and the New York High Speed Passenger Service Study for New York City to Niagara Falls rail service.

### **Other Activities and Events**

During the past year, many Commission members took part in transportation-related events or served in various capacities related to the Commission's goals.

Chairman Tom Cheeseman attended the Community Transportation Association of America convention in Orlando. Tom has also now assumed the chairmanship of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce's Transportation Committee, and he serves as chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation and as the Connecticut delegate to the Community Transportation Association of America.

Russ St. John continued to serve as Connecticut's railroad representative on the Operation Lifesaver Committee, whose goal is to upgrade public awareness of, and safety at, rail at-grade crossings. Russ also serves on the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail Service study advisory committee.

Richard Schreiner currently serves on ConnDOT-sponsored advisory committee for the Danbury Branch Electrification Study.

Linda Blair was a trainer in the bus driver training for DATTCO drivers on how to meet the needs of riders with disabilities, and she served on a focus group to address the needs of disabled travelers in the design of the new M-8 rail cars.

Kevin Maloney attended national meetings of the Air and Expedited Motor Carriers Association in Miami, the Express Carriers Association in Fort Worth, the Messenger Courier Association of America in Las Vegas, and the National Transportation Logistics Association in Phoenix, as well as the Connecticut International Traffic Association in Windsor Locks.

Bill Kelaher is on the steering committee for Amtrak's Operation Red Block Program, a drug and alcohol awareness and prevention program for Amtrak personnel.

Terry Hall serves as one of New England's five directors on the National Association of Railroad Passengers and participated in the Association's spring and fall board meetings in Washington and Austin, respectively.

Yvonne Loteczka serves on the Capitol Region Council of Governments Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. Yvonne also attends the meetings of the Greater Hartford ADA Forum.

As mentioned earlier, Richard Carpenter continued his participation on the East of Hudson Rail Freight Task Force. The Task Force is chaired by New York Congressman Jerrold Nadler and is involved in securing better rail freight access across the Hudson River into New York City, and by extension, into Connecticut and southern New England. Mr. Carpenter also serves as a member of the Transportation Strategy Board's Interstate 95 Corridor Investment Area Board. Mr. Carpenter is working on Volume 3 of A Railroad Atlas of the United States in 1946, covering Ohio, Indiana and Lower Michigan. Volume 2, covering New England and New York state, was published by Johns Hopkins University Press in spring 2005. Volume 1, released in August 2003, covered the Mid-Atlantic states.

During 2006, Frederick Riese served on three ConnDOT-sponsored advisory committees as the representative of the Department of Environmental Protection. Current study efforts for which he participates on ConnDOT advisory committees include the I-84/Route 8 Waterbury Interchange Needs Study, the New Canaan and Waterbury Branch Lines Study, and the Rest Area and Service Plaza Statewide Study.

1. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD MOVE WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED TO COMPLETE PHASE II OF THE DANBURY BRANCH ELECTRIFICATION STUDY AND IMPLEMENT THE PREFERRED ENHANCEMENT OPTIONS. THE FIRST PHASE OF THE STUDY WAS COMPLETED EARLIER THIS YEAR, AND NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDERWAY TO DEFINE THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE SECOND PHASE.

The Commission has previously recommended enhancements to the Danbury Branch Line on multiple occasions, including the last two annual reports. This is, without exception, the major concern raised at CPTC hearings held in the Housatonic Region. In particular, there is a greatly felt need to add service during the current four hour mid-day gap from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm during which no trains run, and a desire to extend the service northward to Brookfield and New Milford. There is an increasing sense of frustration concerning the lack of progress on these issues as the need for these and other improvements on this line has only grown.

Metro-North reported that suburb-suburb travel eclipsed that of travel to New York City for the first time this year, and that reverse commutes were the fastest growing cohort among trip types on its service. This has indeed been the case along the Danbury Branch corridor as growth in commutation to Stamford from corridor towns has far outpaced the general population growth in these towns. Census figures show the increase in work trips to the Stamford area from communities in the Housatonic Region grew by as much as 118% since 1990.

Towns in the corridor are already making land use and planning decisions based on upgrades to the Danbury Branch service. For example, Redding is developing a village center around a new station stop on the line, to be constructed privately by the developer. Brookfield is in the early stages of a similar plan adjacent to a former station stop that is contemplated to be served by the New Milford extension of the Branch.

Public interest in and willingness to pay for transportation improvements is high right now. The completion of this final and conclusive Branch Line Study is key to moving any improvements on the Danbury Branch to reality and should be pursued with all diligence and expeditiousness.

2. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT UNDERTAKE A MARKETING CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE THE WATERBURY BRANCH OF METRO-NORTH, AND THAT A LOW COST UPGRADE BE UNDERTAKEN AT THE WATERBURY RAILROAD STATION TO ENHANCE THE APPEARANCE AND SECURITY OF THAT STATION.

Testimony by the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley at the Commission's Waterbury public hearing highlighted the very low level of public awareness of the existence, let alone the service times, of the Waterbury Branch rail service among residents of Waterbury, Torrington, and other Naugatuck Valley communities. The Torrington area should be a natural market for the Waterbury Branch service but most residents there do not know anything about the service. Even more to the point, many Waterbury residents do not know about the Waterbury Branch service. Given the State's level of investment in equipment and operating cost to provide this service, there is a need for more public information and marketing of the train to realize the benefits of the State investment over a larger ridership base. A specifically targeted marketing effort via local radio stations, newspapers, and perhaps outdoor advertising, would go a long way to promote public awareness of the service.

The appeal of the Waterbury Branch service could also be enhanced by some very low cost improvements at the Waterbury train station. In order to improve the public perception of safety and security at the station, increased lighting must be provided. This may be as simple as replacing broken and burned out bulbs in the existing lighting fixtures at the station. A clean up of broken glass in the parking lot would also go a long way toward creating a feeling of safety and security at the station. Increasing visibility to and from the parking lot, which sits behind a raised, unused parking platform, would also promote user confidence.

These very low cost efforts, combined with some level of marketing, will enhance the ridership of the Waterbury Branch and perhaps serve as the first step in achieving the passenger levels which would make additional service, especially one addition southbound morning train, practical.

3. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT FUNDING BE PROVIDED FOR THE INSTALLATION OF APPROXIMATELY 700 SIGNS TO MARK THE BUS STOPS ON THE WATERBURY FIXED ROUTE BUS SYSTEM. SUCH FUNDING COULD BE PROVIDED EITHER AS A LINE ITEM IN THE BUDGET OF NORTHEAST TRANSPORTATION OR AS A SPECIFIC CAPITAL GRANT.

The Waterbury fixed route bus system carries 5,000 to 6,000 riders per day. Yet it has been decades since the markings identifying the bus stops on the route system have been maintained. Generally, bus stops on the Waterbury system are indicated by white bands painted around utility poles. These markings are now faded or entirely gone, often with the utility pole having been replaced since the bus stop marking was placed on it. In other cases, the bus stop itself has been moved, with the location known only to the drivers and to consistent bus riders. Lack of a clearly identified and consistent system of bus stop markings makes the fixed route bus system less user friendly and discourages new riders from trying or easily using the system.

The Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV) has been working on this issue of updating the location and identification of Waterbury's bus stops for over five years. COGCNV has performed a survey of all bus drivers on all routes to locate all the currently used stops, and has entered every stop on a GIS system. ConnDOT has given COGCNV a verbal commitment to provide signs for the approximately 700 bus stops in Waterbury and four neighboring towns, identifying not only the location of the stops but also the routes which serve each stop. These signs would follow the template of the bus stop signs developed for the Capitol Region. The City of Waterbury has approved all the bus stop locations on city streets and has endorsed all the stops in the plan. The City has also committed to maintain the signs. However, funding is needed to cover the installation of all the signs. The Commission recommends that such funding be provided, either as a line item in the budget of Northeast Transportation, the local system operator, or as a specific capital grant.



4. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS GOVERNOR RELL AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE UPGRADING AND EXPANSION OF CONNECTICUT'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AS A WHOLE, INCLUDING THE SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES IN THE GOVERNOR'S ROADMAP FOR CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMIC FUTURE. THE HIGHWAYS OF OUR STATE ARE ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION OPERATING BEYOND THEIR CAPACITY. THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION SUPPORTS THE EXPANSION OF PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE AND BUS TRANSIT INITIATIVES, SUCH AS THE NEW BRITAIN BUSWAY, THAT ARE LIKELY TO REMOVE PASSENGER VEHICLES FROM OUR OVERLY CONGESTED HIGHWAY SYSTEM, AND THE RAIL FREIGHT INITIATIVES OUTLINED IN RECOMMENDATIONS 10 AND 11 WHICH CAN REMOVE FREIGHT SHIPMENTS FROM OUR HIGHWAYS.

According to a study published by the Capitol Region Council of Governments in December of 2005, over 98% of the goods moving throughout our state are moving on trucks. Over 37,000 trucks a day operate on our highways, transporting nearly 89,000,000 tons of commodities annually. Sixty percent of these trucks are moving commodities directly to and from Connecticut and operate locally or regionally (within 750 miles). Therefore, the Commission recognizes the need for the maintenance and appropriate expansion of our highway system, as called for in the Governor's Roadmap for Connecticut's Economic Future, to support economic growth in our state.

Toward these ends, the Commission recommends that all State fuel taxes should be used for transportation purposes. All petroleum products sold in this state are subject to a 6.8% "gross earnings tax" at the wholesale level. The tax on petroleum products here in Connecticut is not fixed, but floats up and down with the price of petroleum products, hitting the state's consumers doubly when gasoline prices rise and creating havoc with the finances of all those Connecticut businesses that operate trucks, particularly those whose income is limited contractually. At today's prices, this tax equates to eight cents (\$.08) per gallon of gasoline and twelve cents (\$.12) per gallon of diesel fuel.

At its present rate, this tax yields around three hundred million dollars annually. However, only half of this amount is actually used to support our transportation infrastructure, the other half going into the state's general fund. In recognition of the fact that this gross receipts tax is ultimately paid by the users of Connecticut's roads and highways, the Commission recommends that 100% of the gross receipts taxes on fuels should be used to maintain and expand our highways and to support other public transportation, rather than being used to support the General Fund.

Additionally, the Commission recommends that the financial burden now being placed on the consumers of fuel in this state by the gross receipts tax be lessened by changing from the existing formula to a flat tax per gallon or, at minimum, placing a cap on the formula itself.

The level of the diesel fuel tax, in particular, operates to discourage in-state purchases of fuel by trucks traveling through Connecticut, or leaving Connecticut on trips originating here. While the Commission has not studied this issue, it may well be the case that our higher level of diesel fuel tax relative to surrounding states is actually depriving the State of enhanced revenues it would realize if our diesel fuel taxes and prices were competitive with surrounding states, and it certainly deprives the state of truck-related economic activity that would occur if Connecticut diesel prices did not discourage trucks from stopping and purchasing fuel and other goods and services here.

Lastly, the Commission continues to support the efforts of the Connecticut Department of Transportation in undertaking the Rest Area and Service Plaza Study and once again emphasizes the need to address the shortage of overnight truck parking capacity at such rest areas in Connecticut. This shortage has caused frequent parking of trucks in marginal or unsafe areas overnight or led to drivers continuing on when in need of rest they are unable to obtain due to truck rest area overcrowding.

5. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT MORE ACTIVELY PROMOTE THE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT BY ITS EMPLOYEES IN ORDER TO REDUCE HIGHWAY CONGESTION, SAVE ENERGY, REDUCE TRANSPORTATION-GENERATED AIR EMISSIONS, AND DEMONSTRATE A LEADERSHIP ROLE ON THIS ISSUE.

The State of Connecticut has for many years encouraged employers to provide transit incentives for their employees in order to realize the spectrum of public policy benefits that transit use promotes. As the largest employer in the state, the State of Connecticut can make a significant contribution to this effort. The current \$3.00 subsidy available to State employees for monthly bus passes was established during the Grasso era in the mid-1970s. At that time, \$3.00 represented a meaningful discount toward a \$25.00 monthly pass. Over the ensuing decades, as bus fares have increased, participation in the State discount program has waned to fewer than 50 employees at the present time.

With renewed calls from the public to address congestion on Connecticut's highways, the time is ripe to move on this issue. A substantial increase in the monthly bus pass discount from \$3.00 to \$20.00 would be a very simple strategy to promote transit usage by State employees. Even more effective would be a program similar to that set up for Federal employees pursuant to Executive Order 13150 issued by President Clinton in April 2000 under which Federal employees receive transit vouchers redeemable for transit services. This program doubled transit use by D.C. area Federal employees within one year.

Another model, representing a state initiative, was implemented this year in Tennessee when that state government issued electronic 'Smart Cards' to participating state employees who then can ride Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) buses for free with the state paying MTA for each ride taken by its employees. Such a format would be very easy to implement in Connecticut, would prove highly effective in promoting transit use, would involve minimal administrative work for the employees or the State, and would recover some of the State costs through decreased deficits at Connecticut Transit and other participating transit operators whose deficits are funded by the State. The Capitol Region Council of Governments has developed a proposal on this model to encourage State employee transit use through a two year pilot project for Hartford area State employees.

A transit incentive program for State employees, if successful, could serve as a valuable model and could be expanded to other groups. Municipalities could adopt such a program for their employees, while large private employers would also be more likely to encourage employee transit use if they saw the State demonstrating leadership in this area.

6. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT A METHOD BE DEVELOPED TO ADDRESS FUEL PRICE INCREASES AS THEY OCCUR, RATHER THAN AFTER THE FACT, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN SERVICE LEVELS AND NOT UNDULY BURDEN TRANSIT SERVICE PROVIDERS.

Between 2003 and 2006, oil prices increased from under \$25 per barrel to a peak of \$78 per barrel. Since that time, the price has fallen to the \$60 per barrel range. The initial rise translated to unexpected and unbudgeted operating cost increases of tens of thousands of dollars for operating entities.

Some opportunities exist for bulk purchases of fuel that can mitigate, or at least delay some of this increase; transit authorities can opt to buy fuel with the state or attempt lock in a long term price with a local supplier, if possible. While the State has, in many cases, been able to provide relief for fuel increases, this is not always true, leaving the door open for fare increases and service reductions. When fuel price relief has been provided, it has almost always been after the fact.

The Commission suggests that some proactive approach be developed, such as an automatic trigger that would provide an adjustment in subsidies as needed when fuel prices increased by a certain level. Alternatively, transit system fuel supplies could be managed separately by the State, as is currently done for fleet liability insurance coverage, and removed from the annual budget process.

7. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REQUIRE EACH TRANSIT AUTHORITY WITHIN THE STATE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PROPER HANDLING OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE FAILURE OF ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIRS, SCOOTERS, OR OTHER MOBILITY DEVICES USED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. SUCH POLICIES SHOULD REQUIRE THE TRAINING OF ALL PERSONNEL OF EACH TRANSIT AUTHORITY AND OTHER PERSONNEL WHO WOULD BE RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, SUCH AS POLICE OR FIRE PERSONNEL.

As public transportation becomes more available to people who use wheelchairs, more and more disabled people are using it, making possible trips that only a few years ago were unthinkable. A significant factor that has played a major role in this increased usage is the much-increased level of technological improvements to modern wheelchairs, especially power chairs and scooters. And the manufacturers have very aggressively marketed these improved devices by promoting greater independence for the user.

But the negative side of the story is that, like anything else, these devices can break down or be damaged, usually at the most inopportune time. Such breakdowns are unavoidable and may not directly be related to the public transportation that the wheelchair or scooter user used to travel to the area where the breakdown occurs. Indeed, the individual may have traveled a mile or more from the point of departure from the train or bus when the unexpected breakdown occurs. Such a breakdown can happen in any kind of weather and on any sort of terrain, and can potentially put the life of the wheelchair or scooter user at serious risk.

At present, there are no wheelchair accessible taxicabs in Connecticut that can be called when such incidents occur. Police and fire personnel usually want to call an ambulance. An ambulance will only take the individual to a hospital, not to his or her home. The ambulance will not transport the wheelchair or scooter, leaving it, a piece of equipment costing tens of thousands of dollars, by the side of the road. And who pays for the ambulance? Since the trip is not of a medical nature, insurance, including Medicaid and Medicare, will not pay the several hundred dollars, leaving the individual, who is most likely very low income, to pay out of pocket with funds that otherwise would be used for things like food and rent. The hardship can be overpowering.

While some transit districts may have policies to provide assistance in such situations as breakdowns, they may not be well known to night and weekend personnel, causing a refusal when called by police, other authorities, or individuals. They may also be unknown to those who would need to avail themselves of such programs.

The same factors also play major roles in the realm of emergency preparedness. Indeed, this was substantially witnessed last year during Hurricane Katrina where many thousands were left to suffer or die because there was no way to properly evacuate them with their necessary

equipment. Earlier this year an emergency preparedness drill was held for south central Connecticut at Platt Technical High School in Milford. There were no people with disabilities, especially wheelchair or scooter users, included in the drill. There were however non-disabled participants playing the parts of people with disabilities. Some authentic people with disabilities showed up and the system had no idea as to how to handle them. This vividly exemplifies the serious need to address these issues.

Since the focus here is for policy development and information dissemination, and resources are already in place (i.e., transit authority and ConnDOT staff, police and fire department training programs, etc.), no additional funding should be needed. Current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations allow transit authorities to operate paratransit vehicles beyond the required three-quarter ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) mile radius from the fixed route corridor for a nominal fee. Such nominal fee could be charged from the nearest edge of the ADA corridor to the pickup location.

8. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT, AS A PART OF ITS TAXICAB LICENSING PROCEDURE, REQUIRE ALL COMPANIES, CURRENT AND FUTURE, OPERATING THREE OR MORE VEHICLES IN TAXICAB SERVICE, TO OPERATE AT LEAST ONE DUAL USE VEHICLE CAPABLE OF SERVING AMBULATORY CUSTOMERS AS WELL AS CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WHO USE WHEELCHAIRS.

For larger companies operating fleets of five or more vehicles in taxicab service, a ratio of 1-in-5 vehicles in their fleets should be dual use equipped so as to be able to serve customers with disabilities. The Commission recommends that existing companies be given a three year time frame to comply with this requirement, while any new companies licensed would need to comply from the initiation of business. There must also be no distinction between the fares assessed to ambulatory and disabled customers.

The intent of this recommendation is to ensure that adequate and accessible taxicab transportation is available to meet the current and growing needs of the disabled community.

9. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT ESTABLISH A FREE, SHORT TERM 'CELL PHONE PARKING LOT' WITHIN FIVE MINUTES OF BRADLEY FIELD TERMINALS A AND B FOR USE BY THOSE ARRIVING TO PICK UP INCOMING PASSENGERS. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A FACILITY WILL LESSEN CONGESTION AND IMPROVE SECURITY IN THE TERMINAL PICK-UP AREA CAUSED BY WAITING PARKED AND CIRCLING VEHICLES.

Such a lot would be limited to 'live' parking, i.e., all vehicles must be attended. As most travelers now carry cell phones, arriving passengers could call those coming to pick them up, perhaps from the baggage claim area. Such lots are now in use in Denver and at several airports in Florida. A Bradley cell phone lot could be established at an existing lot or a new location. It would need to be signed for live parking only, and well advertised. Such a facility could substantially lessen the chronic congestion that occurs in the pick-up area as vehicles circle the access roads at the terminals, and could do this at little or no cost to the Department.



10. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT CONNECTICUT SHOULD TAKE URGENT ACTION TO PRESERVE THE FULLEST POSSIBLE FREIGHT SERVICE ACCESS ON THE NEW HAVEN LINE, INCLUDING PRESERVING SIDE CLEARANCE AT NEW ROCHELLE STATION WHERE A TRACK LAYOUT AND HIGH PLATFORM RECONFIGURATION PROJECT IS NEARING COMPLETION. IF COMPLETED AS CURRENTLY PLANNED BY METRO-NORTH, FREIGHT TRAINS OPERATING TO AND FROM THE HARLEM RIVER BRANCH WILL HAVE TO PASS BY THE CLOSE SIDE CLEARANCE OF THE NEW, RECONFIGURED EAST SIDE HIGH LEVEL PLATFORM AT NEW ROCHELLE STATION.

Connecticut, in previously completed track work and platform reconfigurations at New Haven, Stamford, Old Saybrook, and at certain other locations on the Shore Line East service, has provided either a through track without high level platforms or a gauntlet track as at Old Saybrook. Accordingly, the Commission urgently recommends that Connecticut immediately work with Metro-North to include either a gauntlet track on track two or a crossover between track two and track one in the tangent track between New Rochelle Station and the curve at the site of New Rochelle Junction. In this way, a consistent side clearance will be preserved on the New Haven and Shore Line East Lines. It is important that this work be made part of the current project, not only to save money but also to avoid the necessity of later revising the presently planned interlocking design and construction in a separate project.

The Harlem River Branch and the New Haven Line provide the only direct rail access to Connecticut from the south. Therefore, the best possible clearance standards should continue to be maintained. Both Connecticut and New York, as owners of the New Haven Line, have a public obligation to do no harm to existing side and overhead rail clearances, and to, in the interest of good transportation policy, take steps to improve such clearances.

11. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT SHOULD WORK TO OBTAIN DIRECT, THROUGH RAIL FREIGHT SERVICE INTO CONNECTICUT ON THE NEW HAVEN LINE TO PROVIDE A TRUCK-COMPETITIVE RAIL OPTION. THE STEPS NECESSARY TO REACH THIS GOAL MAY INCLUDE PERSUADING CSX AND OTHER RAILROADS TO EXPAND RAIL ACCESS OVER THE NEW HAVEN LINE, OR TO SECURE OPERATING RIGHTS ON THIS ROUTE FOR ANOTHER CARRIER OR CARRIERS THROUGH A PETITION TO THE U.S. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD IF NECESSARY.

When Conrail was divided between CSX and Norfolk Southern, CSX was granted exclusive freight use of the New Haven Line and the Harlem River Branch between New York City and Cedar Hill Yard in New Haven/ North Haven. Since the Conrail division in 1999, CSX has limited its use of these lines to local freight service. This service operates either eastward out of Oak Point Yard in the Bronx or westward from Cedar Hill Yard, without any through service on this route. Indeed, through freight service is instead routed north from New Haven to Springfield, thence west over the Berkshire Mountains to Selkirk, New York, and finally back across the Hudson River and down the Hudson Line to New York City. This is hardly a truck competitive freight option.

While CSX has agreed to allow the Providence and Worcester Railroad to move through stone trains over the New Haven Line and Harlem River Branch to reach Long Island, other than these, not a single truck trailer, container, or other freight rail car moves between New Haven and New York over this direct route, which parallels an Interstate 95 highway crowded with an increasing number of highway tractor trailers. Based on experience to date, CSX does not appear to be interested in providing through service on this direct route. Given this experience, the Commission recommends that the State of Connecticut seek operating rights on this line for a carrier who is interested in providing such service. If this requires Surface Transportation Board intervention in lieu of a voluntary business arrangement, the Commission recommends that Connecticut prepare an intervention petition to that Board seeking the granting of through freight rights to a willing operator.

Along with Connecticut's efforts to promote a feeder barge service to New Haven and/or Bridgeport in order to remove containers or trailers from Interstate 95, the operation of through freight service on the New Haven Line could be a second prong in the attack on highway congestion in southwestern Connecticut. The operation of through rail freight service would allow Cedar Hill Yard to become a significant intermodal transfer point, removing trucks from this segment of Interstate 95.

12. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, THROUGH CONNDOT, SHOULD CONTINUE TO INVEST IN THE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLES, PARTICULARLY BUSES.

### **Biodiesel**

In October 2006, Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner Ralph J. Carpenter announced that CTTRANSIT had implemented a program under which the Hartford, New Haven and Stamford CTTRANSIT divisions will be operating their buses on 5% biodiesel with ultra low sulfur diesel fuel. Stephen Warren, CTTRANSIT Assistant General Manager of Maintenance, reported that CTTRANSIT had been testing 5% biodiesel for three months before implementing the new program.

ConnDOT Transit Administrator Michael Sanders has acknowledged that biodiesel costs slightly more than regular petroleum-based diesel, but maintains that the benefits of lower exhaust emissions, reduced engine wear, and the reduction in reliance on foreign oil justify the slightly higher cost. The Commission agrees with Mr. Sander's assessment and looks forward to expansion of the biodiesel program.

The use of biodiesel in a conventional diesel engine reduces unburned hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter. In addition, using biodiesel also decreases the exhaust emissions of sulfur oxides and sulfates, which are major contributors to acid rain. When compared to other alternative fuels, biodiesel is the only option to have fully completed the health effects testing requirements of the Clean Air Act.

### **Hybrid Vehicles**

In November 2005, a study commissioned by ConnDOT and conducted by the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering concluded that there were significant operational limitations to existing hybrid vehicle technologies. However, the study also recommended that ConnDOT continue to evaluate hybrid buses to understand their performance in extended service. The study team recommended that ConnDOT continue to purchase small numbers of additional hybrid buses as newer designs become available. The Commission recommends that ConnDOT continue to monitor the hybrid vehicle market to identify opportunities for applying new hybrid technologies in future fleet expansions.

### **Fuel Cell Technology**

In August 2006, the Greater Hartford Transit District announced that it had contracted with UTC Power of South Windsor, Connecticut, for the company and its partners to provide a 40-foot hybrid electric fuel cell-powered transit bus that will be used in revenue service. As part of the agreement, UTC Power also will provide two years of program support, including

the use of a hydrogen refueling station. UTC Power is a United Technologies Corporation company.

A \$2.9 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration to the Greater Hartford Transit District will pay for the bus and infrastructure to support future fuel cell transportation projects in Greater Hartford. CTTRANSIT will operate the bus once it arrives in Hartford.

The many benefits of fuel cell-powered buses include quiet operation, fuel efficiency that is more than two times better than a standard diesel-powered bus, and zero harmful tailpipe emissions. Their clean operation means they can have an immediate positive impact on street-level emissions.

UTC has successfully provided fuel cell power plants for transportation since 1998. UTC fuel cells power buses in the United States, Spain and Italy. Connecticut is a center for fuel cell technology; therefore fuel cell applications in public transportation represent a significant potential growth area for the Connecticut economy. The Commission believes the State should support development of the fuel cell industry and the use of fuel cells in bus fleets throughout Connecticut.

13. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, THROUGH CONNDOT, SHOULD BROADLY AND AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE THE PASSENGER RAIL STUDIES MANDATED BY LEGISLATION PASSED DURING THE 2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

With the passage of “The Roadmap For Connecticut's Economic Future,” legislative leaders and Governor Rell have demonstrated their strong support for the improvement of Connecticut’s public transportation system. The bill provided funding for two important rail studies to evaluate the feasibility of providing rail service from New London to Worcester, Massachusetts, and from Old Saybrook to Hartford. The Commission applauds the leadership of the Governor and the General Assembly for recognizing the need for, and potential benefits of, expanded rail service in central and eastern Connecticut.

The Commission recognizes that the intent of the legislation is to encourage a comprehensive study of potential opportunities to improve public transportation services and facilities in the region. As ConnDOT begins its assessments, the Commission urges ConnDOT to broadly consider all services, including possible bus feeder service, to promote the success of these passenger rail programs.

Finally, the Commission believes that ConnDOT should also evaluate whether rail and related transit services could be designed to support travel to and from major eastern Connecticut tourist destinations, including the casinos. The economy of southeastern Connecticut is now based largely on tourism and ConnDOT should remain cognizant of that fact when evaluating the potential value of rail service in the region.

14. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT SHOULD SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST-ORIENTED TRANSIT IN SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT.

In June 2003, using funds provided by the Transportation Strategy Board, the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) engaged a team of consultants to conduct a study and develop a plan for a new transit system focused on tourist travel within the southeastern Connecticut region. SCCOG's rationale for conducting the project centered on the fact that the regional economy has shifted to tourism, the tourist economy is dependent on rubber-tired transport, and traffic congestion is a problem today that is expected to get worse. The study evaluated the market for a tourist-oriented transit service employing survey research and other data sources.

The consultant team administered a survey to tourists during peak tourist season at selected locations including the casino resorts, Mystic Aquarium, Mystic Seaport, visitor information booths and hotels. Over 900 responses were obtained. The survey addressed visitor activities and demographics, interest in alternative transit options, and desired features of transit service. Key findings included:

1. Visitors were asked how likely they would be to use a transit service that circulated among area attractions and hotels, a shuttle service that connected with the rail and ferry terminals and a shuttle to area airports. The response indicated considerable interest in these services; while about half of current casino visitors indicated they would be either somewhat or very likely to use these services, about one quarter indicated they would be very likely to use them. Among current leisure attraction visitors, there was even greater interest in a transit service that circulated among area attractions and hotels (35% reported they were very likely to use it and 68% either somewhat or very likely to use it).
2. Visitors were then asked if the availability of such transit services would influence their visitation behavior. The results indicate that many visitors believe their visitation behavior would be influenced. Approximately one fifth of current casino visitors indicated they would be very likely to do each of the following: visit more frequently, increase their length of stay, and visit additional attractions in the region. Among current visitors to other leisure attractions in the region, there was an even greater response to visiting additional attractions – one third indicated they would be very likely to do so. If so, there would be benefits to the local tourist industry.

The Commission believes that SCCOG's study clearly demonstrates that tourism should be considered by policymakers when deciding how to invest in transportation. The Commission believes that ConnDOT, Connecticut Transportation Institute and other state agencies should be encouraged to fully evaluate the value of developing tourist-oriented transit

systems. The Commission is particularly intrigued by the possibility of high quality service connecting Bradley International Airport to the Connecticut Convention Center and major tourist destinations, including the casinos in southeastern Connecticut.

15. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, THROUGH CONNDOT AND THE CONNECTICUT TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE, SHOULD ACCELERATE THE USE OF INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTION SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGIES IN THE STATE'S PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES AND FACILITIES.

According to reports published by the Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office at the United States Department of Transportation, no bus stops on Connecticut's major bus routes are equipped with electronic displays of dynamic traveler information for the public. The Commission believes that information systems that provide the public with real-time information about vehicle location and on-time performance would substantially improve the public's confidence in the state's over-the-road public transportation systems.

The Commission believes that efforts should be made to improve the use of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies throughout the State's transit programs. Connecticut learned valuable lessons about implementing ITS during its Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Networks (CVISN) initiative. The State of Connecticut deployed its CVISN safety information exchange system by carefully managing the development and integration of subsystems by private sector teams that worked with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Commercial Vehicle Safety Division and the Department of Public Safety commercial vehicle inspectors. A similar approach should be considered to bring about more rapid implementation of ITS in the transit programs.



16. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT SHOULD PROVIDE GREATER RESOURCES TO THE CONNECTICUT TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT TO SUPPORT TRANSIT RESEARCH IN CONNECTICUT.

The Commission believes that the Connecticut Transportation Institute (CTI) at the University of Connecticut is a potential source of innovative scholarship to improve public transportation. CTI can bring together a critical mass of transportation faculty and research talent at the University of Connecticut, the top public research institution in New England. The institute's current research and educational projects do include some work with CT Transit; more can and should be done, particularly with regard to research into the use of alternative fuels and intelligent transportation systems. However, the Commission notes that CTI currently has only three primary faculty members and eight faculty members who conduct limited research in association with the institute.

17. THE COMMISSION AGAIN COMMENDS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR PROVIDING \$10,000,000 IN PUBLIC ACT 05-04 TO FUND MATCHING GRANTS TO CONNECTICUT'S MUNICIPALITIES TO SUPPORT ENHANCED DIAL-A-RIDE TRANSPORTATION SERVICE FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED RIDERS. THIS FUNDING, WHICH WAS PROVIDED FOR FISCAL YEARS 2006 AND 2007, IS PROVING VALUABLE IN HELPING TOWNS AND TRANSIT PROVIDERS MEET THE NEEDS OF ELDERLY AND DISABLED CITIZENS FOR A WIDE RANGE OF TRIP PURPOSES.

For FY 2006, matching grants for elderly and disabled Dial-a-Ride services were extended to 136 towns, including those who participated in multi-town applications. (There remains the possibility that additional towns may submit applications for pro-rated grants to cover the latter portions of FY2006.) These funds will provide for additional services including more capacity and greater hours of operation, with many towns now able to provide some evening or weekend service. These are the types of services that have been repeatedly requested by numerous speakers at the Commission's public hearings for many years. The Commission is confident that these services will amply demonstrate their value so that a convincing case for the extension of these programs can be made when this programs will need to be reauthorized.

18. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT INSTALL SIGNS ON INTERSTATE 84 EASTBOUND IN NEWTOWN AND ON ROUTE 8 NORTHBOUND IN SHELTON RECOMMENDING THAT THE APPROPRIATE TRUCK ROUTE FOR TRAFFIC BETWEEN THESE POINTS IS TO USE ROUTE 8 AND INTERSTATE 84 VIA WATERBURY RATHER THAN USING ROUTE 34 BETWEEN NEWTOWN AND DERBY.

At the Commission's public hearing in Derby, the mayor and another speaker described the problems experienced in downtown Derby due to truck traffic using Route 34 as a connection between Route 8 and Interstate 84. Particularly in downtown Derby, the narrowness of Route 34 causes congestion problems, while the location of downtown buildings immediately adjacent to the sidewalks produces vibrations affecting the buildings and their tenants. A lack of sufficient traffic calming measures adds inappropriate speeds for downtown to this equation. Both speakers advocated the all-highway route via Waterbury as more appropriate for through trucks than the use of Route 34, and also cited the 8/84 routing as time competitive despite its longer distance.

The Commission recognizes that a State highway is, and should be, open to all legal classes of vehicles, and as such, Route 34 cannot be closed to truck traffic. The intent here is to reduce the volume of through truck traffic on Route 34 by designating the Route 8/ Interstate 84 travel alternative as the recommended corridor for through truck traffic. This would be similar to the signing that directs trucks to follow Route 9 northbound to access Interstate 91 south, rather than having them make that connection using Routes 66 or 372.

Secondarily, the installation of traffic calming devices on Route 34 southbound entering downtown Derby should be explored to slow truck speeds and therefore reduce vibrations from trucks entering and transiting downtown Derby.

## **2006 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 2006.

<b>TOWN</b>	<b>MODERATOR</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
West Haven	Linda Blair	May 9	Town Hall Senior Center
Newington	Morton Katz	May 23	Senior and Disabled Center
East Lyme	Frederick Riese	June 6	East Lyme Public Library
Derby	Richard Schreiner	June 20	Town Hall
Waterbury	Frederick Riese	September 13	City Hall
Plainville	Morton Katz	September 27	Municipal Center
Litchfield	Frederick Riese	October 10	Bantam Borough Hall
Danbury	Richard Schreiner	October 24	City Hall

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

West Haven Town Hall Senior Center  
West Haven, Connecticut  
Tuesday, May 9, 2006 – 7:30 P.M.

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Thomas Cheeseman  
Linda M. Blair  
Yvonne A. Loteczka

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Linda Blair opened the hearing with a description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and ConnDOT staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Elaine Kolb**, representing herself and other transit users with disabilities, described several shortcomings in the April 19 emergency preparedness drill staged by Milford and West Haven at Platt High School. She said often such exercises do not adequately address issues affecting the handicapped, which proved to be the case with this drill. First, Platt High School is not transit accessible. The town coordinator informed her that handicapped-accessible transportation to the drill could not be provided. So Kolb took the O Bus to get to Platt, using roads that do not have sidewalks from the drop off point to the school. She later found out that the Milford Transit District does have accessible transportation available, but this was not known to the West Haven drill coordinator. Also, the O Bus driver did not know how to tie down either her wheelchair or that of a companion on the bus. Lastly, the Milford Transit District driver could not successfully deploy the lift for departing the bus.

Kolb also mentioned that initial planning for the emergency drill did not involve any ‘real’ handicapped people, only people playing that role.

The problems she experienced caused Kolb to point out the lack of any formal protocol for those cases where someone’s wheelchair breaks down or is damaged in transit. Most systems will provide a ride home for the passenger but will not make provisions for the wheelchair. There is also no protocol on how to rescue people in power chairs when a lift breaks.

In response to this, Commission member Loteczka mentioned that such policies do exist in the Greater Hartford region. Commission chairman Tom Cheeseman explained that emergency preparedness drills such as the one Kolb described are State-mandated planning exercises. As a transit district chairman, Cheeseman would like to compile a list of elderly and handicapped users of his system as a resource for use in an emergency situation, but privacy rules prevent him from being able to compile such a list.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

Senior and Disabled Center  
131 Cedar Street  
Newington, Connecticut  
Tuesday, May 23, 2006 – 7:30 P.M.

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Morton Katz  
Thomas Cheeseman  
Russell St. John  
Ralph Capenera  
Linda Blair  
Richard Sunderhauf  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Richard Schreiner

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

The hearing convened at 7:37 P.M.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Morton Katz opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Alice Shea** of East Windsor would like to see bicycle racks on buses. She brings her bicycle on the bus for her morning trip to work in Hartford, then bicycles home after the work day. Due to the lower level of ridership on her bus, there is space for her to bring her bike onto the bus, but this option is not available for colleagues of hers who would like to use their bicycles for commuting.

**David Lee**, General Manager of Connecticut Transit, said that buses in his company's New Haven and Stamford Divisions are already equipped with bicycle racks. The Hartford Division buses are not yet equipped with racks but there is a commitment to do so. This will not happen in 2006, but will occur with the next delivery of new buses, likely in 2007. The bicycle racks in use in New Haven and Stamford have capacity for two bikes. There is a standard rack also made which can accommodate three bikes. Anything larger than that is a problem. The racks cost \$900 each. For the 250 buses in the Hartford Division, this equates to almost a quarter million dollars. Overall, there are relatively few users of this feature in the other divisions, but those who use them use them often, particularly in the

Stamford Division which has many everyday users of the racks.

Lee observed that the racks should last for the lifetime of the buses. If ordered as original equipment on new buses, the federal government covers 80% of the cost of the racks. At \$275,000 per bus, the additional cost of the racks is not significant. The racks represent a convenience for some existing riders and an attraction for some new ones.

**Kevin Sullivan** is a resident of Wethersfield, an employee of Connecticut DEP and a member of the Central Connecticut Bike Alliance. He bicycles to work in Hartford daily, using Wethersfield Avenue. Sullivan noted that people generally underestimate the feasibility of bicycles for commuting and other travel. He feels that the City of Hartford has done a great job with the stripping of roads for bicycle lanes. He observed that CT Transit bus drivers in particular are very courteous to cyclists. His door-to-door travel time by bicycle of 15 minutes is about the same as his driving time to work. He would like to see a bike lane on the proposed New Britain Busway when that is built.

**A. J. Belliveau** of the Central New England Railroad said his business is doing well but expressed disappointment with the lack of funding for ConnDOT's Rail Rehabilitation and Maintenance Program, which is a 70/30 match program. He notes that clearance restrictions on Amtrak's Springfield Line of less than 19' 2" and weight restrictions which do not allow for 286,000 pound cars sometimes require cars to be reloaded. He also expressed his strong preference for rail instead of bus service in the New Britain Busway corridor.

**Sandy Fry** from the Capitol Region Council of Governments discussed three current projects in the region which her agency sees as priorities. They are the New Britain Busway, the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter rail service, and transit-oriented development. The New Britain Busway is a very good project, appropriate to the density of development in the corridor. The Hartford-New Britain corridor does not have sufficient density for light rail to be successful. She noted that one of the major costs for the busway is the necessary grade separation at Flatbush Avenue in Hartford. The crossing design has needed to be substantially redesigned because of the requirements of the Springfield Line commuter rail service. Feeder buses, she also noted, will be able to access the busway to provide 'one seat rides' for commuters, which would not be the case if feeder buses met a light rail service in the corridor.

Fry mentioned that the proposed Springfield Line commuter rail service will better connect this region to New York City and will also be a catalyst for economic development.

Lastly, transit-oriented development (TOD) is an important consideration in maximizing the effectiveness of transit investments. CRCOG is a strong proponent of TOD.

Moderator Katz read two letters which had been received in response to the public notice for this hearing. In a letter from the **Court of Common Council of Hartford** [signature illegible], the writer stressed the importance of the New Britain Busway and the New Haven to Springfield rail service as

elements of a balanced transportation system. Transit-oriented development is seen as encouraging economic development and healthier, less car dependent, mixed use communities. As a biker, the writer believes public transportation should be able to carry bikes. Communities should be linked by bike trails and walking trails. Other issues felt to be important are jobs access transportation programs, subsidizing public transportation, marketing the alternate forms of transportation, sizing transportation vehicles to the size of the riding public, better marking of bus routes, and more connectedness between transportation modes.

**Steven Lagasse**, an 18 year rider of the Bristol/Plainville commuter bus, has been very satisfied with the service until a route change one year ago moved the drop off point to Grace Lutheran Church in Plainville. This change has benefited one rider but lengthened the commute for 99% of the ridership due to the heavy traffic congestion in the area of the church. An announced change of the drop off location scheduled to be implemented May 1 has been delayed for further study. Potential use of the private Lowe's lot in Plainville, if agreeable to the property owner, is offered as one location which would improve the service.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:48 P.M.



**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

East Lyme Public Library  
41 Society Road  
Niantic, Connecticut  
Tuesday, June 6, 2006 – 7:30 P.M.

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Robert Zarnetske  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Russell St. John  
Linda Blair

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

The hearing convened at 7:36 P.M.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Molly McKay**, a member of the National Transportation Committee of the Sierra Club and of the National Corridors Initiative, expressed her feelings on several current transit issues and developments:

- She supports the proposed study for a New London to Worcester passenger rail service.
- The proposed Tourist Transit Plan should feed rail stations as well as serving tourist destinations.
- Shore Line East service in southeastern Connecticut is very limited. More service is needed.
- There is much public support in the region for increased rail service.
- The ‘flexing’ of Federal transportation monies should be maximized so that transit needs can be more adequately met.

In response to her comments, Commission member Robert Zarnetske noted that USDOT has allocated \$2.21 million to southeastern Connecticut for public transportation but the State needs to come forward with the local match. Also, a previous ConnDOT study of rail service to Worcester had not included Massachusetts ridership in its calculations and it was undertaken before MBTA service was extended to Worcester, a development which would increase the demand for this service today. Both commuter and tourist demand needs to be included in the new study.

**Kathryn Molochko** expressed that a new bus repair garage is needed for the Southeast Transit District (SEAT). She also recommended that all buses should contain a sign giving information on how riders can register complaints, comments or suggestions either via an 800 number or an e-mail address.

Molochko noted that San Francisco has taxi service that is free of charge to all handicapped users. She feels such an arrangement should be available here. She also feels that SEAT should install an information kiosk at its new garage to inform travelers of the available routes and services. Lastly, she requested that a large print version of bus schedules be made available.

**Todd O'Donnell** agreed with the comments of the previous speakers. O'Donnell introduced himself as the owner of the New London train station. He lamented that the various transit services at and near the train station are not well coordinated. The train station is not as effectively used as a multi-modal center as it could be. He feels New London needs either a new transit district or a port authority to provide the proper coordination of transportation services.

O'Donnell expressed that he does not have a good working relationship with the City of New London. He also feels the SEAT bus terminal in New London is in a very poor location which forces bus patrons to cross traffic and roads. He is currently being sued by one such passenger who fell and got hurt crossing the road. He also noted that he cannot afford to provide bathrooms for all the travelers passing through the area.

As the only privately-owned rail station on the Northeast Corridor, New London station faces some issues that other stations do not. O'Donnell is having difficulty finding tenants for the 27,000 square foot station. Amtrak is currently his only tenant. Ideally, he would like to see transportation and tourist related tenants such as the offices of the Fishers Island ferry or Mystic and More. Cruise ship offices, a State visitors center or a museum would also work well at the station.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:47 P.M.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

**Public Hearing**

Derby Town Hall

1 Elizabeth Street

Derby, Connecticut

Tuesday, June 20, 2006 – 7:30 P.M.

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Thomas Cheeseman  
Richard Carpenter  
Linda Blair  
Richard Schreiner  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Kevin Maloney

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CONNDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

The hearing was convened at 7:32 P.M.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Richard Schreiner opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Richard Belden**, State Representative from the 113<sup>th</sup> district, has been in the General Assembly for 32 years. Rep. Belden stressed the value of the Valley Transit District to the local communities. The Valley Transit District is a unique arrangement in Connecticut. It does not receive local support and it operates no fixed routes. The District has tried fixed routes in the past but they did not work out well.

Belden described the financial difficulties the District is in due to a claim by ConnDOT that it had over-reimbursed the District by \$276,000 and was requiring repayment of those funds. This repayment is being taken out of an annual budget of \$1.2-1.3 million at a rate of \$16,500 per month. He closed by again stressing the importance of the Transit District's service to the area.

Chairman Cheeseman thanked Belden for the hard work and financial support that the Legislature put in last session for public transportation. He asked Belden why the four member towns do not contribute toward the Transit District's operating costs and was told that, beginning about three years ago, the towns have budgeted money for the District but only Shelton has actually contributed funds.

**John Tyminski** is a resident of Ansonia and a teacher at Kolbe Cathedral High School in Bridgeport.

He noted that the Waterbury Branch schedule does not allow him to commute to work by train because the first morning train leaves about a half hour too late. The low ridership on the Waterbury Branch results from poor service and a poor schedule. Earlier service and more peak hour service is needed. Ideally, Tyminski would like to see light rail service offered on the Branch.

**Joy Thompson** is executive director of the Valley Transit District. The District began operations in 1972. She noted that beginning in 2000 or 2001, the four member towns did agree to contribute to the District. The District suffered a setback shortly thereafter when some funds were stolen. Then ConnDOT asserted its claim that the District had been overbilling it for 10 years. ConnDOT set up a payment schedule to reduce its support to the District by \$16,500 per month for 18 months to reclaim these funds. This month is the 11<sup>th</sup> month of that repayment period. The reduction leaves the Transit District with only \$39,286 per month of operating subsidies.

Thompson complained that monthly reimbursement payments became very tardy after last June. Reimbursement payments for July, August and September didn't arrive until late fall, with the reimbursement contracts not even going out until November. As a consequence, there were times when the District's employees have missed paychecks.

Thompson noted that the District serves 400 to 500 people per day, and has a base population of 83,000 in the four towns. In many cases, its transportation services make the difference between people being able to stay in their homes or having to go into nursing homes.

Valley Transit District actually carries more passengers than they bill ConnDOT for, Thompson asserted. She also noted that the District's ADA funding has been reduced for fiscal years 04/05 and 05/06, down to half the former level of funding. Valley Transit has no staff left to cut. Thompson is the only employee in the office. There is no janitor, no bus washer, or other staff. Lastly, she said the CT Transit F route is the only fixed route service in the region and it is this bus route that defines the District's ADA corridor and service requirements.

**Roger Burkwell** complained about the volume of truck traffic using Route 34 as a shortcut between Interstate 84 and Route 8. Not only do these trucks cause congestion on Route 34, which includes Main Street in downtown Derby, but the heavy trucks produce vibrations which are damaging the buildings downtown. He felt more traffic lights could be used to slow Route 34 traffic, especially trucks.

**Mayor Anthony Staffieri** of Derby concurred that Route 34 is heavily used by trucks but said that any widening of that road through downtown would be devastating to Main Street and downtown. A way needs to be found to slow down the trucks through town to reduce vibration, but also to make Route 34 a less attractive option to trucks taking using it as a shortcut. Trucks should stay on Interstate 84 to Waterbury and then take Route 8 south from there. He said that although Route 34 is a shorter trip in mileage, the 8/84 route is faster in time.

Mayor Staffieri affirmed the value of the Valley Transit District to the community.

**Rep. Belden** mentioned that he and former Governor O'Neill fought to keep the rail line from Derby to Danbury open in the mid-80s when many local citizens and some mayors wanted to close it. The line is a valuable asset today. The loss of the Poughkeepsie Bridge to fire damage in 1974 has really hurt Connecticut by making it difficult to access the state by rail.

Richard Schreiner closed the hearing at 8:25 pm.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

Waterbury City Hall  
235 Grand Street

Waterbury, Connecticut

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Linda Blair  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Russell St. John  
John Zelinsky

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Frederick Riese

**CDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

The hearing convened at 7:40 P.M.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Sheryl LaCoursiere** discussed the difficulties of commuting by public transportation from Waterbury to New Haven to reach her job at Yale. The Connecticut Transit J Route bus to New Haven operates as a local bus with local stops on both the Waterbury and New Haven ends of the trip and consequently it takes 68-70 minutes for the trip. The last bus to depart New Haven is at 6:10 pm, which limits her work flexibility. Train service from Waterbury is to Bridgeport, which makes for a long and circuitous trip to New Haven. She has found that the F Route bus from New Haven to Seymour, then taking the train from Seymour to Waterbury, is often her best option.

Also, the Waterbury local bus routes do not conveniently connect to the J Bus to New Haven. The wait from her Town Plot bus arrival on the Waterbury Green until the J Bus departs is 33 minutes, then the 70 minute trip to New Haven makes her total commute time to New Haven 115 minutes.

LaCoursiere also works at the Veterans Administration Hospital in West Haven. The bus trip from the VA Hospital to Waterbury via the New Haven Green is 117 minutes. If she attempts to reach her job by train, the connection at Bridgeport allows only two minutes to make the transfer, which does not allow for any contingencies.

Other points raised by LaCoursiere were the poor signage of bus stops, the lack of free transfers

between paratransit systems for trips requiring two systems, the need for Interstate highway cameras to be extended to Waterbury, and the demise of the Commuter Register publication makes locating vanpools or carpools difficult.

**Yvonne Smith-Isaac**, chairperson of the Waterbury Transit District, spoke concerning the Section 13b-38bb paratransit grant program. She would like to see this program extended beyond its initial 2-year run, ideally, for at least another two years. However, she finds the paperwork process cumbersome, with too little assistance provided. She is also still waiting for her first grant money to arrive.

Regarding bus service, the bus connections to New Haven are not efficient, and in general it takes too long to get to other cities from Waterbury by bus. She would like to see some bus rapid transit proposals from Waterbury to Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport. Also, we need to continue adequate funding for local bus operations. Specifically for the Waterbury system, a fixed route is needed to Naugatuck. The lack of such service results in an extra burden of demand on the paratransit system to provide Naugatuck service. In addition, evening bus service to 10 pm is needed. Job Links runs their service to 10 pm so obviously there is a need for evening service.

More funding is needed for paratransit service. The 13b-38bb grant program is good but it will not solve all funding problems for Dial-a-Ride services. Waterbury's paratransit services are funded out of the bus system budget. Funding is only sufficient to meet the demand for subscription rides. There is no money to meet demand for other needs, especially service to and from surrounding towns.

Smith-Isaac also feels the Waterbury train station is unsafe. She favors the proposed multi-modal center, but not making the fixed route bus service use it as its hub. She wants to see a train station more substantial than those used on Shore Line East. The State also needs to develop a customer-friendly information center, perhaps with local or regional call centers.

Smith-Isaac also discussed pedestrian issues. Waterbury has many crossings that are unsafe for pedestrians, especially where roads have been widened. But many of the problem intersections do not meet the ConnDOT threshold of 100 people per hour crossing which she cited at ConnDOT's minimum to justify a crossing walklight. The three audible traffic signals now in place downtown work great and should be installed at additional locations. Lastly, she feels that wheelchair-accessible taxis should be available from all licensed taxicab vendors.

**Sam Gold**, senior planner at the Central Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, cited a lack of marketing for local transit services. Large expenditures are made to provide transportation services but there is little public information or marketing. Gold lives in Torrington and often takes the Metro-North Waterbury Branch train on trips to New York City. Torrington should be a natural market for this service but most Torrington residents don't know anything about it. Even more to the point, many Waterbury residents don't know about the Waterbury Branch train service.

Gold has worked hard to identify and post the local bus stops. There are no signs identifying bus stops, and the painted stripes on utility poles which have historically been used to indicate stops have not been maintained and are faded or missing. The Council of Governments (COG) has been working for 5-6 years now on the bus stop issue. Gold did a survey of all bus drivers on all routes to locate all the bus stops. Pat Capobianco of Northeast Transportation mapped every bus stop in the Waterbury system using GPS. Gold now has a verbal commitment from ConnDOT for signs for the 170 bus stops. Approximately 140 of the stops are on State roads and technically require approval by the State Traffic Commission. He has encountered a reluctance on the part of the State Traffic Commission to authorize the stops due to liability concerns. Other systems in the state have just relied on getting local approvals for their stops. The City of Waterbury is close to granting its approval for the COG bus stop plan.

On train-related issues, Gold supports some improvements to the Waterbury train station even before the Intermodal Center proposal advances. Putting light bulbs in the existing light fixtures would help provide a feeling of safety, as would clean-up of the broken glass at the station. Factors such as these lead him to use the Naugatuck train station. The wall separating the train station parking lot from Meadow Street serves no function as should be removed. His research has found that the train station is not actually a high crime area but the public has a perception of it as unsafe. The above improvements would help alleviate that.

The six daily weekday trains run at poor times for work trip needs. The Branch's highest average daily ridership of 200 occurs on Sunday which shows that most train use here is for leisure.

The Department of Economic and Community Development is leading the study of the Downtown Intermodal Center. The COG feels this is more accurately an economic development study and issue than a transportation one. This proposal could have a big negative impact on the local bus system, forcing it to either shorten its routes or have longer headways (40 minutes vs. 30 minutes). Gold does not want to see the train station improvements impact the bus service. He noted some potential drawbacks such as that the Sunday high train usage of 200 riders occurs on a day when there is no local bus service. Nor is there bus service after 6 pm, so most trains cannot connect to the bus. The 5000-6000 daily bus riders should not be inconvenienced for the sake of 140 average daily train riders, most of whom do not wish to connect to the bus routes.

Returning to buses, Gold says the COG supports the long term extension of the proposed New Britain Busway to Waterbury. Also, he discovered that ConnDOT had no knowledge of the Watertown Avenue bus route or the specific stop at the HELP Center on the corner of Watertown Avenue and Tompkins Street when it was designing a new intersection project there. No sidewalks were included in the plans, nor was there any awareness of pedestrian crossing issues at this intersection.

The hearing was adjourned at 9:14 pm.



**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

Plainville Municipal Center  
1 Central Square  
Plainville, Connecticut  
Wednesday, September 27, 2006

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Tom Cheeseman  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Morton Katz  
Linda Blair

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

**CDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

The hearing convened at 7:33 P.M.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Morton Katz opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

Issues raised at Plainville Public Hearing.

**Funding of Fixed Transit Route to and from Plainville to Southington/Plymouth**

**Purpose:** There was a clear concern by the residents of the lack of a fixed route to both Southington and Plymouth limited transportation. The fact that there is no Fixed route system to these towns further exasperates the concerns of the community due to the lack of parallel para-transit service for the disabled residents of Southington and Plymouth.

**Municipal Grant Program:**

**Purpose:** With the immediate problem facing the communities without fixed route service. The matching Municipal Grant program would be an option that 133 of the 169 towns in the state have applied in terms of operational cost and the possible use of the 5310 program to cover equipment cost. The Chairman volunteered to speak to the Common Council of both towns in terms of the programs and the benefits.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

Bantam Borough Hall  
890 Bantam Road  
Bantam (Litchfield), Connecticut  
Tuesday, October 10, 2006 – 7:30 P.M.

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Terry Hall  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Richard Carpenter  
Russell St. John  
Linda Blair

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

The hearing convened at 7:35 P.M.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Carol Deane**, Director of the North Western Connecticut Transit District, discussed the lack of progress in developing a new vehicle storage and maintenance facility for her district, despite the inclusion of a \$2.5 million earmark for the facility in the federal transportation bill. Nancy Johnson and John Larson were instrumental in securing this funding. With the assistance of State Rep. Ann Ruwet, a State matching grant has also been secured. ConnDOT has taken over administration of the project about a year and a half ago, but there has been no communication from the department in recent months. Deane requested any assistance possible in moving this project along. A feasibility study has already been done but the prime site identified in that study is no longer available.

The NWCTD has two full-time and one part-time staff and fifteen drivers. Ridership is up, especially for the Dial-a-Ride services. This has necessitated leasing a vehicle from the Greater New Haven Transit District to meet the demand.

The District is currently using offices in Torrington City Hall which must soon be vacated, and also rents a parking lot to house its fleet of vehicles. The District relies on one mechanic to maintain its fleet. If it had its own facility, sufficient contract maintenance work is available locally and regionally to fully support a second

maintenance person in a self-sufficient fashion.

New funding available for Dial-a-Ride services through the State matching grant program has allowed for Saturday service from 9 AM to 3 PM. The increase in service and rising fuel costs experienced by motorists have spurred substantial ridership increases. The District also operates Jobs Access services.

**Ellen Schroeder** of the Winsted Senior Citizens Center noted that her ridership is up during the last 3-4 months, due to rising gas prices. Winsted/Winchester finances her van which provides rides to the senior center, medical offices and facilities, movies, restaurants, and the town hall. Her budget covers staff, the senior center building, and her van. It was very difficult to make a recent town-mandated 1.8% cut in her budget.

**Carol Deane** mentioned that her recent experience with State reimbursement of District expenses has been good. Also, the single lot used to park her 16 Dial-a-Ride vehicles is lighted and secure and is an improvement over the scattered lots previously used.

Commission member **Russ St. John** switched roles to present his proposal that ConnDOT designate a parking area near Bradley Field as a 'cell phone lot' where people awaiting arriving passengers could park for short periods of time until they receive a call that their passengers are ready to be picked up. Such a lot would be limited to 'live' parking, i.e., cars with drivers in or with their vehicles rather than unattended vehicles. This arrangement, which is available at some Florida airports Russ is familiar with, would lessen the congestion that occurs at the terminal access area.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**  
**Public Hearing**

Danbury City Hall  
155 Deer Hill Avenue  
Danbury, Connecticut

Tuesday, October 24, 2006 – 7:30 P.M.

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Richard Schreiner  
Tom Cheeseman  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Russell St. John  
Linda Blair

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Fred Riese

**CDOT STAFF**

Dennis King  
Andrew Davis  
Anna Bergeron

The hearing was convened at 7:36 P.M.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Richard Schreiner opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Colin Pease**, vice president of the Housatonic Railroad, expressed his view that the soaring oil demand from China and India necessitates the wise use of energy on our part. Greater use of the Danbury Branch of Metro-North, including its extension to New Milford, would conserve fuel. He foresees no conflict between his railroad's freight operations and an extended commuter line on the Danbury to New Milford rail segment, which is owned by the Housatonic Railroad.

**Bill Johnson**, a co-director of the New Milford Rail Service Restoration Society, has been active for over a decade advocating the restoration of passenger rail service to New Milford, a cause which he still strongly supports. Local connecting bus service is also needed to feed passengers to the rail line.

**Jonathan Chew**, director of the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials, spoke about the importance of the Danbury Branch and the need to upgrade service on it. He noted that ConnDOT is currently in the middle of a study of the Branch. A main purpose of the study is to improve rail service to Stamford which is an important and growing employment focus for residents along the northern end of the Danbury Branch. To illustrate this, Chew cited figures from the 2000 census for overall population growth and for growth in Stamford-based employment in area towns. For example,

between 1990 and 2000, Newtown's population grew by 21% but work trips to Stamford from Newtown grew by 31%. Bethel's population grew by 3%, while commutation to Stamford increased 15%. The figures for Danbury were 14% population growth and 42% growth in Stamford employment from 1990 to 2000. For New Fairfield, the figures were increases of 8% and 52% respectively, for Brookfield 11% and 24%, and for New Milford, 15% population growth and a 118% increase in trips to Stamford. These figures clearly demonstrate a market for improved Stamford-oriented service on the Danbury Branch, which schedule is currently focused to serve trips to New York City, not Stamford. A centralized traffic control (CTC) system on the Branch is a prerequisite for virtually any improvements for Branch service and thus is badly needed.

Chew also discussed a Smart Growth initiative in Georgetown where 416 rail-oriented residential units are proposed to be privately built right next to a proposed new railroad station.

More parking is also needed at stations along the Danbury Branch. The Phase 2 Danbury Branch study needs to include funds to study the parking needs on the line.

ConnDOT's own studies show 336 new riders from New Milford on the Branch if service were extended there. This does not reflect major new development proposed in the area of the proposed Brookfield station. Chew also mentioned that plans for a third cross-stateline shuttle to connect to the Harlem Line will be announced soon.

**Bob Rush** of the Rail Service Restoration Society spoke in support of Danbury Branch service to New Milford. This 14 mile extension of service would boost total Branch ridership by an estimated 37% and would deliver the biggest bang for the buck of any of the Danbury Branch improvement options being studied.

**Joe Dobbins** is a conductor for Metro-North on the Danbury Branch. He said the Danbury Branch train crews support the extension of the service to New Milford. He also said the four hour gap in mid-day service (10:30 am – 2:30 pm) needs to be addressed. Operationally, Dobbins prefers manual blocks to CTC. Shortening the blocks from four miles to two miles would allow more trains to safely run on the Branch. Metro-North crews are more than willing to manually switch the sidings to allow for more service without the need for CTC. He also supports bus service to meet the trains.

Dobbins is skeptical that electric trains could handle the grades on the Danbury Branch, especially the slippery track conditions encountered in the fall when leaves are present on the rails. Shore Line East-type equipment would work better on the Branch. The three hour service headways on the weekends cause many would-be riders to use the Harlem Line instead. Dobbins felt that additional trains should be run on the weekends to reduce headways. The four hour mid-day service gap during the week likewise leads many users to resort to the Harlem Line, especially for their return trips which are then completed by taking the shuttle bus from Southeast, NY.

**Deborah Pacific** is the director of the Danbury Parking Authority. The Authority manages a 129-

space surface parking lot at the Danbury rail station and a 532-car parking garage across the street. The lot is always at capacity, while the garage typically has 400-450 cars in it. Tourists from as far away as Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont come to Danbury to take the train to New York City. The biggest deterrent to commuting from Danbury to New York is the lack of direct trains into the City; most require a switch at South Norwalk. Many New Milford, Brookfield, and Roxbury residents drive to Danbury to take the train into the City. A new 386-car parking garage is being built by the Parking Authority on the other side of Main Street.

**Ken Kruzansky** of Brookfield is a daily train rider to Stamford. He believes better switching is needed between Danbury and Norwalk and that this is a higher priority need than extending service to New Milford, which he does not favor. He also noted that the Housatonic Railroad freight trains are very noisy as they travel through Brookfield at night.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

## **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 and

the Governor (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 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to transportation, on or before January first, annually, and all members of the General Assembly on or before February 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.”