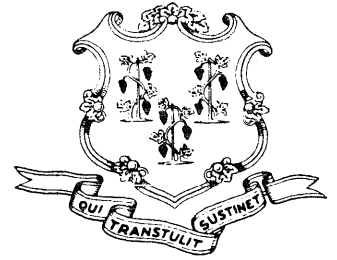


Connecticut Public Transportation Commission



New England's First Fuel Cell Powered Bus
Entered Service in Hartford - April 2007

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission



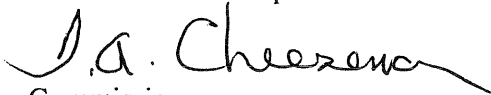
2800 BERLIN TURNPIKE, P.O. BOX 317546 • NEWINGTON, CT 06131-7546

DATE: January 2, 2008

TO: Honorable M. Jodi Rell, Governor

Honorable Donald DeFronzo and Antonio Guerrero
Co-Chairpersons of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

Honorable Ralph J. Carpenter, Commissioner of Transportation

FROM: Thomas Cheeseman, Chairman 
Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

I am pleased to submit to you the 2007 Annual Report of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission as required by the Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a(e). The 2007 Annual Report contains 12 recommendations, most of which focus on the theme of making transit services more convenient, friendly and easy to use. The information and testimony presented at the Commission's twelve monthly meetings and eight public hearings, together with the experience and expertise of the Commission's members, forms the basis of the recommendations presented herein. The following overview will briefly describe the recommendations of this year's Annual Report.

Overview of Recommendations

Problems within the regulatory framework for the taxi industry highlighted the Commission's public hearings of 2007. Testimony focused on inconsistencies in both the adjudicatory and enforcement aspects of the regulation of the industry. The many difficulties with the private contractor framework under which most drivers are employed were also dramatically brought to light at several hearings. The Commission's first recommendation calls for a review of the regulatory framework within which this industry operates in Connecticut.

The second recommendation highlights the difficulties that travelers using transportation services provided pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can encounter when the dispatch office of the ADA transit services closes before the end of the daily operation of these services.

Continuing the theme of making transit services friendlier and easier to use, the Commission's third recommendation calls for the development of a plan to address the chronic and growing shortage of parking capacity to support the needs of current and potential New Haven Line rail commuters. The development of a statewide map showing all transit services, particularly bus routes, is sought in the

Commission's fourth recommendation. Such a map would not only help users of the individual transit systems but would assist in informing travelers of the availability and location of inter-regional transit connections, thus assisting in making longer trips by transit.

Two problems which many bus system operators are chronically encountering are discussed in the fifth and sixth recommendations. The very considerable delays in the processing and issuing of reimbursement payments to the transit districts, and the effects of these delays, are described in recommendation #5, while the difficulties caused to all systems, be they Connecticut Transit, transit districts, or even private operators, by the current bottlenecks in obtaining commercial driver's licenses for new or prospective employees is described in the subsequent recommendation.

In the seventh recommendation of this Annual Report, the Commission repeats its concern that the development of a proposed intermodal transportation center in Waterbury should not be done in a way that is detrimental to the efficient operation of the fixed route bus service in that city. One potential solution to link the existing bus system pulse point at The Green to the new transportation center without compromising the fixed route system is offered.

The need to address the removal of public pay phones at transportation facilities is the focus of the eighth recommendation, while another phone issue, the establishment of a cell phone parking lot at Bradley International Airport, is addressed in recommendation #9.

A renewed call for a requirement that some portion of each taxi company's fleet be handicapped accessible is contained in the Commission's tenth recommendation.

The Commission strongly believes that any meaningful reduction in the congestion on Connecticut's highways will require options for the movement of goods by means other than truck. A current proposal to expand rail capacity into the Northeast is discussed in recommendation #11 along with a proposal that Connecticut explore opportunities for its inclusion in this plan. Lastly, the opportunities presented by the greater funding and utilization of the University of Connecticut Transportation Institute are detailed in the twelfth recommendation.

Members of the Commission welcome your comments on the recommendations contained in the Annual Report. We appreciate your consideration of these proposals and we welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss actions that can be taken to implement these recommendations. The Commission looks forward to receiving the Department of Transportation's responses which are due February 1, 2008.

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**ANNUAL REPORT
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

JANUARY 2, 2008

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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 eleven gubernatorial and eight legislative appointees, as well as ex-officio representatives of the Commissioners of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Protection, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, and the co-chairmen of the Transportation Committee of the General Assembly. Current members, including the designees of the State agencies, are listed below.

Christopher Adams

Chris has been an attorney in the Connecticut General Assembly for over ten years, working closely with legislators, agencies and members of the public, taking policy initiatives, and making them work in practical ways. He is interested in transportation of all types, including bicycling (he's a licensed Category 4 racer), but his passion is railroad transportation. He has served on the Board of Directors of the New Haven Railroad Historical and Technical Association, and currently serves as its photo librarian. He also sits on the Board of Trustees for the Railroad Museum of New England. His background and interest in railroad history have given him some understanding of railroad operations and culture, and he's one of the few attorneys in Connecticut that has taken and passed the Northeast Operating Rules Advisory Committee exam. Chris joined the Commission in 2007.

Dorothy F. Adamson – Senior Citizen Representative

Before retirement, Dorothy was a professional librarian/media specialist. Beginning at W.F. Kaynor Voc-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 late husband, Robert, experienced a variety of transportation modes, giving rise to her interest and, often, admiration for some of the systems they encountered. Dorothy resides 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 CT Transit bus system and the Greater New Haven Transit District's Transportation for Disabled Persons Program. 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. Linda retired from the Commission in November of this year.

Ralph Capenera

Ralph is from the business community and has his focus on the need for mass transportation to move products and to get employees to and from work. In addition to serving on this Commission, he was appointed by Governor Rell to serve on the Governor's Small Business Advisory Board.

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. In spring of this year, he completed Volume 3, which covers Indiana, Ohio and the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and which will be published in 2008.

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. Until earlier this year, he served as a member 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 a security coordinator for the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners. Terry now resides in Mystic.

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

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 Carrier 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 an attorney in Norwich. He is a member of the Norwich City Council and was the former City Manager of Norwich. He serves as the secretary for Southeastern Area Transit (SEAT). Before returning to Connecticut in 2003, Bob spent more than ten years in Washington where he served as the Acting Assistant Director of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics at US DOT. 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 30 years. He serves as chairman of the Operations Committee and is a member of the Legislative and Rules, Public Safety and Health, Transportation, and Steering Committees. Mr. Zelinsky is a past commissioner and chairman of the Stamford Human Rights Commission, and he serves on numerous local civic, political, and charitable organizations. He is an Independent Insurance Agent and a real estate broker.

Ex-Officio Members

Peter Richter

During 2007, Peter Richter represented Commissioner Ralph Carpenter of the Department of Transportation. Mr. Richter served as the Bureau Chief of the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Public Transportation during most of 2007.

Senator Donald J. DeFronzo

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

Representative Antonio Guerrero

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

Frederick L. Riese

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

Philip L. Smith

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

ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION IN 2007

Tom Cheeseman served as Chairman of the Commission in 2007, his sixth year in that office. Morton Katz continued to serve as Vice Chairman, while Frederick Riese continued as Administrative Vice Chairman. Chris Adams joined the Commission in 2007.

Monthly Meetings

As set forth in Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a (j), the Commission met on the first Thursday of each month. In order to make the Commission's meetings as accessible as possible to the public and to Commission members from around the state, the Commission meetings are held in different locations during the year. In 2007, five of these meetings were held at Union Station in New Haven, two were at the Connecticut Department of Transportation headquarters in Newington, two were at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, and one each were at Middletown City Hall, the Housatonic Area Regional Transit facility in Danbury, and the Connecticut Transit Hartford Division bus facility.

A broad range of speakers addressed the Commission on a spectrum of timely topics during the course of 2007. Bryan Maruch of UTC Power addressed the January meeting giving a presentation on advances in fuel cell technology for transportation applications including the hydrogen fuel cell bus coming to Hartford. In February, the Commission received a presentation from Neil Schuster, President of the Intelligent Transportation Society of America, about innovations in information technology and safety that are coming into use in America and elsewhere. David Ishihara, Federal Security Director for Connecticut with the Transportation Security Administration, spoke in March about the strategies employed in providing security for air travel and other forms of public transportation.

In May, Michael Riley, President of the Connecticut Motor Transport Association, discussed major transportation bills currently before the General Assembly. Carmine Trotta, Assistant Director of Intermodal Planning at ConnDOT, provided a summary of the myriad studies and planning activities currently underway at the Office of Intermodal Planning in July. The August meeting featured Eric Bergstraesser, Chief Operating Officer of Housatonic Area Regional Transit, outlining the history, services, facilities and equipment of HART and how it works with the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials, the City of Danbury and other municipalities within its region.

In September, Ron Kilcoyne, Chief Executive Officer of the Great Bridgeport Transit Authority, explained how his organization was formed, discussed the new intermodal transportation center it had just inaugurated, and explained the new services it was putting into place and the unmet needs in its region. Gloria Mills, the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation, spoke to the

Commission concerning the survey done by the Transit for Connecticut Coalition and the funding proposal that came out of this survey. These topics were further elaborated on by Karen Burneska, Transit Coordinator of the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, at the November meeting. The year concluded with Michael Krauss, Director of the Regional Growth Connection, a New Haven area workforce development agency, speaking on initiatives to meet the needs of Jobs Access transportation clients in New Haven County.

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 2007 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 Stamford, Enfield, Groton and Milford. During the fall, hearing sites included Putnam, Bristol, Bridgeport and Torrington. 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.

Taxi-related issues were at the forefront of the issues raised at the Commission's eight public hearings in 2007. At the Stamford, Bridgeport, and Torrington hearings, testimony was presented on inconsistencies and irregularities in the regulation of the taxi industry as concerns the issuing of plates and the inspection of the fleets of various operators. ConnDOT staff corroborated that these problems exist. The use of a private contractor structure for the employment of drivers by many taxi companies, rather than a traditional employer/employee model, was cited as causing many administrative and financial hardships for the drivers. Both of these issues appear to merit further scrutiny by ConnDOT and perhaps by the General Assembly as well.

Another of the more frequently heard comments concerned the need for greater availability and dissemination of information about existing transit services and how to use them. There is often a lack of awareness on the part of would-be transit users as to just what services are available, including a lack of awareness that services which could meet the personal needs of individual riders actually currently exists. Addressing this information gap will involve increased marketing efforts for transit services and tools such as the statewide transit map called for in the fourth recommendation of this report.

Support for transit-oriented development was voiced at several hearings, with the benefits of such development cited and calls for more municipal and state support to promote this concept. Another statewide issue of interest to the public is increasing the

opportunities for inter-regional transit connections to link the services provided by the local and regional transit systems.

Among local issues, support for the construction of a new bus storage and maintenance facility for the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District in Torrington, and calls for bus service from Bristol, Plainville and New Britain to Terryville/Plymouth and to Southington were the most forcefully voiced concerns. The summaries of the eight public hearings, found on pages 27-46 of this report, will provide more detail on these and other issues raised at the hearings.

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 Reno, Nevada, May 19-23 and the Federal Transit Administration's Ridership Forum in Boston, October 15-16. Tom serves as the chairmanship of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce's Transportation Committee, and he also 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 San Diego, the Express Carriers Association and the Messenger Courier Association of America (both in Orlando), 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 Charlotte, 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.

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 Transportation Investment Area Board. Mr. Carpenter has completed Volume 3 of A Railroad Atlas of the United States in 1946, covering Ohio, Indiana and Lower Michigan, to be published in 2008. 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. He is currently working on Volume 4 of the Railroad Atlas covering Illinois, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

During 2007, Frederick Riese served on ConnDOT-sponsored advisory committees for the statewide Rest Area and Service Plaza Study and the expansion of Interstate 95 between Old Lyme and the Thames River, as the representative of the Department of Environmental Protection.

1. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH THE TAXI INDUSTRY IN CONNECTICUT OPERATES SHOULD BE EXAMINED AND REFORMED TO ADDRESS MULTIPLE PROBLEMS IN THE WAY FRANCHISES ARE AWARDED, PLATES ARE ALLOCATED, INSPECTIONS ARE PERFORMED AND OWNER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS ARE STRUCTURED.

Problems within the taxi regulatory system and the taxi industry itself were clearly and forcefully expressed at three of the Commission's public hearings. Staff within ConnDOT corroborates many of these accounts. A 2006 report of the Taxi Industry Task Force, a group convened by the General Assembly's Transportation Committee and including representation by ConnDOT and the Department of Motor Vehicles, recommended that a thorough evaluation and revamping of the taxi industry regulatory framework be performed, and suggested a review of pertinent State statutes and regulations be undertaken by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee. ConnDOT staff have concerns that the regulatory framework used by the department and the Department of Motor Vehicles to oversee this industry is administratively burdensome for the industry.

At the Commission's Bridgeport hearing, there was a call for a moratorium on the issuance of new taxi plates in order to protect the smaller operators. If the plate issuance process continues to operate as it is, the larger companies will be able to force the smaller operators out of business, which will result in prices going up and service going down. The difficulties in completing the plate issuance process have been most acute for smaller operators in Fairfield County. One area, in which the current regulatory framework displays favoritism, or at least inconsistent treatment, is the manner in which plates are issued to applicants. The ability of larger operators, who can afford to expend more on legal fees, to tie up the application process for smaller or independent operators through delays and continuances, results in unfair treatment for the latter group, whose financial resources, can be exhausted trying to navigate the application process. This has the ultimate result of reducing competition and providing a poorer quality of service to the public.

The Commission also heard testimony that many taxis in Fairfield County are operating without insurance or that insurance coverage is cancelled as soon as the insurance cards are issued and in the hands of drivers. Accounts of irregularities and inconsistencies in inspections, particularly in Fairfield County, were also detailed, although it was acknowledged that this situation has improved since some inspection personnel have been reassigned.

Perhaps a more difficult issue to address, and one that may be outside of the purview of any evaluations of the regulatory framework, is one raised by four drivers at the Commission's Torrington public hearing. It concerns the structure of the owner-

driver arrangements in New Haven, Bridgeport and Meriden, and perhaps in other areas. In these cities, the drivers are hired as independent contractors by the predominant taxi companies and pay lease fees of \$750-900 per week to the owners for the use of the vehicles, insurance, and dispatch services. If the lease fees, which most drivers pay on a daily basis, are late, the driver's computer is shut off and he is charged a \$45 access fee to turn it back on. Though the drivers' fees include insurance, several drivers reported that, in the event of an accident, they are dismissed or are charged a \$5,000 fee to be allowed to drive again for the company. As private contractors, the drivers have no health insurance, life insurance, workman's compensation, or other benefits. Operating under these conditions, it is very difficult for the drivers to earn a living. The summary of the Torrington public hearing on pages 43-46 of this report covers this testimony in more detail.

While the Commission cannot speak from a position of expertise as to the best model for taxi regulation, the regulatory frameworks for taxi regulation in Washington, D.C., Atlanta and Denver were suggested in testimony to the Commission as good models for a fairer structure to oversee the industry in Connecticut, while the 2006 Taxi Industry Task Force report suggested investigating the formation of a comprehensive taxi and livery commission as one possible model worthy of investigation. Rhode Island has such a commission with statewide jurisdiction while many American cities operate such bodies for their cities or metropolitan areas. The 2006 Task Force report called out a number of regulatory issues which were not raised by speakers during the Commission's public hearings; however, we concur that an in-depth study of the regulatory structure of the taxi industry which includes the issues above is necessary and overdue.

2. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT ADA PARATRANSIT OPERATORS BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO A STAFF PERSON AT THE DISPATCH OFFICE DURING THE HOURS OF OPERATION OF THE ADA SERVICE.

The Commission is aware of situations where staff is not provided to answer the phone after 4:00 pm at the dispatch office of ADA transit providers. In such cases, ADA clients have no ability to check up on a late ride or to cancel an unneeded ride. An automated phone message system can allow the rider to leave information or a question, but the client has no assurance as to when that message is seen or acted upon. If a ride is not on time, the client can be left without means of knowing when or if their ride is coming, or if alternate plans need to be made. For a wheelchair-using traveler perhaps waiting outside for a return ride, this lack of information can be very troublesome.

3. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT CONNDOT PREPARE A STRATEGIC PLAN TO ADDRESS THE SHORTFALL OF PARKING CAPACITY ALONG THE NEW HAVEN LINE. MORE PARKING IS NEEDED AT RAILROAD STATIONS FOR BOTH COMMUTERS AND OFF-PEAK RIDERS.

There is no accurate estimate of the unmet parking demand along the New Haven Line, but it is substantial. With annual ridership growth on the New Haven Line averaging 1½%, the need is also growing more acute. The insufficient supply of parking results in the existing lots and structures filling up early in the morning which constrains the growth of intrastate and off-peak use of the New Haven Line as no parking capacity remains to serve these riders.

The Commission realizes that ConnDOT is well aware of the shortfall in parking capacity along the New Haven Line. Indeed, the Commission applauds the Department's past efforts to construct or procure additional parking capacity, efforts which have often not borne fruit due to a lack of local support or active local opposition. Proposals for parking structures outside of the major corridor cities had been especially susceptible to such opposition. Hopefully, the recent acceptance of parking structures by Wilton, Ridgefield (Branchville) and Redding (Georgetown) signifies a change in this local attitude which ConnDOT can nourish to realize better success in future efforts to expand parking capacity.

Previous studies of New Haven Line parking were performed in 1987 and 1995 pursuant to Special Act 86-58 and Public Act 95-287, respectively. Much has changed since the last study was done; however, there has been no recent effort to update these studies. There are plans for additional parking via a second garage at Union Station in New Haven, at new stations proposed for West Haven and Orange, at the new Black Rock Station in Fairfield, in Bridgeport and at a new parking garage at Stamford Station. These facilities, if and when constructed, will provide several thousand additional spaces along the New Haven Line. However, their timing is uncertain and their locations do not completely correlate with the locations of unmet parking demand.

Therefore, the Commission recommends a comprehensive assessment of New Haven Line parking needs be performed and solutions be proposed for addressing the identified unmet needs. Satellite parking facilities and investigation or solicitation of private parking capacity should be considered as possible measures to address unmet needs. Development of an updated and comprehensive strategic plan to address parking needs will also provide an opportunity to solicit municipal input in the planning process and develop buy-in while developing recommended parking supply enhancements.

4. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT CONNDOT PRODUCE A STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSIT MAP WHICH WOULD FEATURE THE EXISTING STATE HIGHWAY NETWORK MAP ON ONE SIDE AND LOCAL/REGIONAL MAPS SHOWING THE NETWORK OF BUS ROUTE SYSTEMS OPERATED BY CONNECTICUT TRANSIT AND THE TRANSIT DISTRICTS ON THE REVERSE. LOCATIONS OF METRO-NORTH, SHORE LINE EAST AND AMTRAK STATIONS WOULD ALSO BE SHOWN ON THESE MAPS.

The Commission finds there is a substantial need for greater access to transit information for the general public, including current and potential transit users, and believes that enhanced availability of transit information will encourage greater levels of bus and rail ridership, providing alternatives to automobile travel and increased options for those who do not have access to automobiles.

Just as the Official State Tourism Map encourages visits to Connecticut's tourist attractions (and also contains a useful rail station guide map), a State Highway and Transit Map could encourage greater transit use by clearly displaying the locations accessible by transit, and the bus and rail links by which they can be reached. Notations connoting inter-regional connections could be provided at the margins of the individual regional transit maps. Although the Highway and Transit Map would probably be most useful in a hard copy form that could be carried with travelers, it should also be available and maintained on-line.

5. THOUGH THE COMMISSION DOES NOT HAVE A SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION TO OFFER ON THE FOLLOWING TOPIC, IT DOES NOTE THAT PROBLEMS PERSIST WITH REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS TO TRANSIT DISTRICTS.

In the normal course of business, transit districts and private contractors front the cost of public transit operations and get reimbursed through ConnDOT for all or some of their deficit. This year, the transition between FY 07 and FY 08 left many operators without reimbursement for four to five months. The reasons for late payments were varied including late federal grants, contracting issues outside of ConnDOT and difficulties with the state's CORE accounting system. While this year was unusual, very late payments are a periodic problem.

Entities such as Norwalk Transit District, Northeast Transportation in Waterbury, the Torrington-based Northwestern Connecticut Transit District, and others tapped credit lines for tens of thousands, in some cases many hundreds of thousands, of dollars to continue operation. In more than one case, the state finally provided funds when credit lines were virtually exhausted and systems were on the brink of shutdown. As of late November, some agencies were still awaiting payment.

Late payments increase the bottom line cost of transit service. Affected agencies delay payments to contractors and suppliers to meet payroll. These delays in turn negatively impact the credit ratings for these agencies and increase the cost of borrowing. Preferred pricing and service is lost from suppliers.

ConnDOT does not reimburse transit operators for the interest expense encumbered when they are forced to borrow funds to bridge the time until reimbursement payments arrive. This further reduces the funds actually available to the transit operators since they must now pull funds for the interest payments from some other facet of their operating budget.

Entities providing transit service should be prepared to carry a few months of operation, especially between fiscal years. However, it is not reasonable to expect them to operate an essential state service without subsidy for a substantial part of the year. Transit operators should not be penalized for loan interest payments necessary to continue service because state payments are delayed.

(NY State DOT has a similar operate and reimbursement program with its transit providers. However, if payments are not timely, an interest payment is included. The commission recommends that in a like fashion, ConnDOT provide interest payments to transit providers that are more than sixty days past due for reimbursement.)

6. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES STAFF AT LEAST THREE REGIONAL TESTING LOCATIONS AT WHICH COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES CAN BE ISSUED IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE LICENSING PROCESS AND REDUCE LICENSING BACKLOGS. LONG LEAD TIMES FOR CONNECTICUT'S COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSE (CDL) ROAD TESTS ARE COMPLICATING THE HIRING PROCESS NOT ONLY FOR TRANSIT OPERATORS BUT FOR ALL BUSINESSES THAT RELY ON COMMERCIALLY LICENSED DRIVERS. CURRENTLY, THERE IS A SINGLE CDL TESTING LOCATION FOR THE ENTIRE STATE.

Waits of three to four months for CDL road test appointments are now the norm in Connecticut. Since job candidates with CDLs are a limited commodity, private and public businesses are faced with keeping new hires without CDLs on staff for a greatly lengthened training period or with losing good candidates that are stuck in the limbo of the licensing process. Some businesses and transit operators pay the added expense for DMV to come to their facilities to conduct tests. Others near the state's borders hire from neighboring states, such as New York, where wait time for appointments is on the order of two to three weeks. This deprives Connecticut residents of jobs they would otherwise qualify for.

Many, if not most, transit operators now only consider driver applicants who already have CDLs. Over and above the difficult search for appropriately-licensed candidates, this creates its own set of problems. The license becomes the primary qualification, making customer service skills and work history secondary.

Beyond the issue of the long wait times, safety problems are created when the pool of commercially licensed drivers is artificially constrained by this bottleneck in the licensing process. When drivers possessing CDLs are not readily available, some employers, assumedly well outside of the transit industry, may yield to the temptation to employ non-commercially licensed drivers who are untested, potentially unqualified, and therefore represent a potential hazard on the roads.

Currently, The Hartford Regional Market is the single location for all CDL road tests in Connecticut. For anyone beyond the central region of the state, travel time to that office can be considerable. A related issue is that examiners are not always familiar with the particular nuances between truck, transit, school bus or over-the-road coach equipment.

7. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR ITS EFFORTS, AS LEAD AGENCY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER IN WATERBURY, TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF LOCAL FIXED ROUTE BUS SERVICE AND ITS RIDERS AS IT DEVELOPS THE PLANS FOR THIS FACILITY.

The Commission's 2002 and 2003 Annual Reports first addressed the concerns of Northeast Transportation Company and others that the proposed intermodal center located at the Waterbury Metro-North station could adversely impact the operations of the Waterbury Division of Connecticut Transit, operated by Northeast Transportation, if the transfer point for the fixed bus routes were moved from the Waterbury Green to the intermodal center. With 1,300 to 1,400 of the system's 4,500 to 5,000 daily riders making transfers at The Green and with the bus routes operating on a very tight schedule, the relocation of the pulse point for the fixed route system from the Waterbury Green to the intermodal center has the strong potential to reduce the effectiveness of the system and compromise the hourly service schedules. With these concerns in mind, the Commission commends the Department of Economic and Community Development for its efforts to explore alternatives to a complete relocation of the pulse point and to discuss these options with ConnDOT and Northeast Transportation in order to accommodate the needs of the bus users and the operation of the bus system.

The option of using a shuttle bus service between The Green and the intermodal transportation center should be considered. This would provide a connection on a predictable fixed schedule and could run more frequently at times around the arrival and departure of the six daily trains into and out of Waterbury Station¹, and less frequently at other times of the day. It would also avoid the need for as many as 21 or 22 buses collecting and waiting at the transit center at peak hours while transfer connections are being made. Any configuration designed to provide bus parking must provide space for wheelchair ramp deployment. Lastly, the use of a shuttle avoids any disruption to the existing Waterbury fixed route bus system, disruption which could ultimately lose more riders from the system than the intermodal connection would add to it.

The Commission again notes the importance of fully accommodating the physical needs of full size buses within the architectural planning for the intermodal center in order to ensure that all needed bus movements can be accomplished safely and efficiently at the center. If the fixed route buses which now wait at The Green for connecting buses to arrive are to be moved to the new center, there must be sufficient capacity there to accommodate them while connections are made.

Lastly, the installation of bus shelters around The Green would protect riders in

¹ Only four of the six trains operate during hours when CT Transit Waterbury Division bus service operates.

inclement weather so that riders would not need to rely on store fronts and other private structures for protection. Additional shelters should be added to meet this need regardless of the outcome of the transportation center study.

8. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT DEVELOP A PLAN TO ADDRESS THE REMOVAL OF PAY PHONES FROM MAJOR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES INCLUDING HIGHWAY SERVICE PLAZAS AND REST AREAS, TRAIN STATIONS, AND AIRPORTS, TO PRESERVE THIS COMMUNICATION OPTION FOR TRAVELERS WHO DO NOT POSSESS CELL PHONES. FOR REASONS OF BOTH CONVENIENCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY, PAY PHONES SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE TRAVELING PUBLIC.

The recent announcement by AT&T of its intent to exit the pay phone business will accelerate the rate of loss of pay phones from public places including major transportation facilities. The presence of pay phones at transportation facilities is especially critical because travelers are subject to automobile breakdowns, changes in transit schedules, cancelled flights or trains, or other contingencies which go beyond the typical communication needs of the general public. For the many citizens who do not have cell phones, the availability of pay phones is essential when the unexpected occurs and alternate arrangements must be made. Therefore, for those facilities under ConnDOT's control, active efforts should be taken to preserve access to pay phones.

9. THE COMMISSION REPEATS ITS 2006 RECOMMENDATION 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 commonly in use at many airports across the country. 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. This lot would 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. During 2007, John F. Kennedy International Airport and Westchester County Airport have instituted cell phone parking lots of the type recommended above for Bradley.

The Department's response to this recommendation in 2006 stated that the loss of parking revenue should such a lot be provided would violate the terms of the Construction, Financing and Operating Special Facility Lease Agreement under which the Special Obligation Parking Revenue Bonds were issued. However, the majority of the users who would patronize the cell phone lot are not paying for parking at present but are circling the terminal access road or attempting to park curbside at the terminal in anticipation of the arrival of passengers they are meeting. Providing a lot for the use of such ultra-short term visitors to the airport would not result in any significant loss of parking revenue since these visitors are not paying for parking at present. At a minimum, the Department should inquire of other airports which have instituted such lots to ascertain their experience with changes in the level of parking revenues after cell phone lots were opened to the public.

10. THE COMMISSION REPEATS ITS 2006 RECOMMENDATION 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, 1-in-5 vehicles in their fleets must be dual use equipped to be able to serve customers with disabilities. The Commission recommends that existing companies be given three years to comply with this requirement, while 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 current and growing needs of the disabled community. The Department, in its responses to the Commission's 2006 recommendations, indicated that statutory changes and/or changes to the Department's regulations may be necessary to accomplish this change. It suggested that the issue be studied as part of a broader review of the taxi industry, possibly by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee. While the Commission would not object to including this issue in that comprehensive study, the timeframe involved in proceeding in that manner would leave the implementation of this recommendation several years off. Therefore, the Commission advocates addressing this issue via the necessary statutory or regulatory changes as soon as possible, believing that the scope of this issue is specific enough that it can proceed independent of a comprehensive review of the larger regulatory issues of the taxi industry.

11. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE COMMISSIONER CONTACT THE PRESIDENT OF NORFOLK SOUTHERN CORPORATION TO ENCOURAGE THAT CORPORATION TO EXTEND ITS PROPOSED CRESCENT CORRIDOR INTO CONNECTICUT TO CEDAR HILL YARD, AT A MINIMUM, IF NOT FURTHER INTO NEW ENGLAND.

As described in the September 2007 issue of *Trains* magazine, in an article entitled *Governments to Help Fund NS Expansion*, Norfolk Southern is proposing an Interstate 81 Crescent Corridor project which would add rail capacity from New Orleans and Memphis to the East Coast, with northern termini at Philadelphia and Newark. If successful, the Crescent Corridor service might ultimately add truck traffic to Interstates 84 and 95 in Connecticut because New England bound and New England originating freight shipments would end or begin their trips in Newark, New Jersey.

Therefore, Connecticut, in the interest of encouraging a worthy public-private partnership, should contact Norfolk Southern and express our willingness to work with them to extend the Crescent Service into Connecticut, logically to Cedar Hill Yard in North Haven. This would reduce, or even avoid, the increase in truck traffic that this new service could add to our state's roads, as well as to enhance service to Connecticut freight shippers and customers.

As an example of such a public-private partnership, the Commission notes and commends the state of Rhode Island, Amtrak, and the Providence and Worcester Railroad for constructing the Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP) in Rhode Island which has resulted in some of the rail autorack and container traffic using Quonset Point (Port of Davisville) taking a rail route rather than adding more truck traffic on the already congested Interstate 95.

One other suggestion, in the interest of furthering this concept, is that ConnDOT should work to provide clearance for double stack operations on the Springfield Line between Springfield and Cedar Hill Yard in North Haven, perhaps in connection with a partnership with Norfolk Southern or CSX to upgrade service into Connecticut. Cedar Hill Yard has ample space for rail freight expansion, is directly accessible to Interstate 91, and is remote from any surrounding residential development.

Due to the fact that only one Class I railroad, CSX, controls Cedar Hill Yard, Connecticut should petition the Surface Transportation Board to allow Norfolk Southern to be granted access to the strategically located yard, from both the north and the west. It should be noted that CSX operates no through freight service to or from Cedar Hill Yard. Railroad monopoly control, without use being made of those assets, is not in the public interest.

The Congressional Intervention Petition of 1998, made at the time of the division of Conrail between CSX and Norfolk Southern, should be reopened by Connecticut. This petition proposed that the Conrail shared-access area for northern New Jersey should be extended across the Hudson River via car floats and through Penn Station to Cedar Hill Yard. Connecticut Public Transportation Commission meeting minutes at that time recorded statements by a Norfolk Southern official endorsing this concept.

A rail freight alternative for Connecticut is urgently needed. It is simply insufficient for Connecticut to continue to try to solve the traffic congestion problems on its highways by focusing only on reducing automobile traffic.

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

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 include work with CT Transit; more can and should be done, particularly research into the use of alternative fuels and intelligent transportation systems. However, CTI currently has only three primary faculty members and eight faculty members who conduct limited research in association with the institute. ConnDOT and Connecticut Transit should seek out new opportunities to collaborate with CTI. By actively bridging the gap between academics and the application of new technologies, ConnDOT and CTI can strengthen the quality of scholarship, enhance the skills of the state's transportation professionals and improve efficiency of our transportation system.

2007 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 2007.

<u>TOWN</u>	<u>MODERATOR</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Stamford	Frederick Riese	May 15	Government Center
Enfield	Frederick Riese	May 29	Town Hall
Groton	Russell St. John	June 20	Town Hall Annex
Milford	Linda Blair	June 26	Parsons Government Complex
Putnam	Tom Cheeseman	September 11	Town Hall
Bristol	Morton Katz	September 25	City Hall
Bridgeport	Russell St. John	October 10	City Hall
Torrington	Frederick Riese	October 23	City Hall

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

Stamford Government Center
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, Connecticut
Tuesday, May 15, 2007 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

John Zelinsky
Tom Cheeseman
Russell St. John
Linda Blair

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS **CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

The hearing was convened at 7:35 P.M. in the cafeteria of the Stamford Government Center.

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and the purpose of the public hearing. He then introduced the other Commission members and ConnDOT staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

[Name on record but withheld upon request] expressed her observation that the cleanliness of Metro-North trains has deteriorated of late in all aspects including litter, smelliness, dirtiness, and grungy seats. She advocated higher speed trains to New York and noted a big increase in train travel between Stamford and New York. Her major comments concerned her experiences with taxi service in Stamford. She feels that much needs to be done to improve taxi service, which she described as being run by a ‘mafia.’ She described one particularly unpleasant experience which had to be resolved by a call to the police. Following a train trip with her husband, they approached a taxi at the train station for a ride. The taxi driver did not help them with their bags and in fact told them to load the bags in the trunk. Upon finding the trunk to be dirty and full of junk, she and her husband declined to ride in this taxi and instead approached another cab. The second driver was agreeable to providing the requested ride but the first driver began an argument with him, and subsequently moved his vehicle to block the second driver’s vehicle. At this point, [Name withheld] called the police. When the second driver saw that [Name withheld] had called the police on her cell phone, he backed his vehicle away and allowed the second taxi to depart.

She knows of similar experiences that visitors from India have had at the train station. When a driver indicated he did not know the location the visitors were requesting a ride to, they sought a second taxi, who agreed he could provide the ride. The first driver then yelled at both the

visitors and the other driver. [Name withheld] also noted that Stamford taxis are generally in filthy condition.

[Name on record but withheld upon request, speaker #2] foresees increasing bus ridership in Stamford but said it is difficult to get information on the bus or about the bus as there are no bus route maps. Posting such maps around town would help increase bus ridership. In general, the Connecticut Transit buses are well maintained and offer good service. He feels it would be helpful to list the buses that stop at each bus shelter and show where they go.

Craig Lader of the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) said the region's Long Range Transportation Plan for 2007-2035 has just recently been endorsed. Among the ideas endorsed by SWRPA and contained in the Long Range Transportation Plan are:

- Congestion Pricing: This technique has successfully reduced traffic, increased transit use and reduced emissions.
- Transit-Oriented Development: SWRPA strongly supports this technique to link land use and transportation. South Norwalk, Stamford, and stations along the Danbury Branch are especially favorable for transit-oriented development.
- Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (LOCHSTP): SWRPA has identified the following needs in transit services to the disabled, senior and low income citizens: extension of service hours, improved services in less populated communities, inter-regional services, improved amenities to enhance safety and security on transportation services, improved information dissemination and marketing, improved coordination between providers and human service organizations, door-to-door services, and additional volunteers.
- Stamford Transportation Center: This center serves over 11,000 persons per day. SWRPA recommends that a master plan be developed to define capital, maintenance, and operating needs; that the parking garage at the center is replaced; that community connections to the center are assessed, that connections to the Stamford Urban Transit way and the Atlantic Avenue be assessed; and that signage, art, and beautification features be added.
- Increased service on the Danbury Branch: including completion of the signal and communication system.
- Rail network improvements: including new rail cars, increased parking at New Haven Line stations, expanded intrastate commuter rail service, implementing ITS technology, providing real time traveler information, and maintaining a state of good repair.
- Bus system network: maintain a state of good repair.

Lloyd Mellad, owner of Darien Taxi and Allways Transportation and AllTrans taxi and livery consulting, spoke about corruption in the local taxi service. Most local taxi operators don't provide adequate service for handicapped clients or even look at them. Mellad also said there is collusion between the dominant local taxi operator and the ConnDOT inspectors, with the latter working to influence the ConnDOT adjudicators. This results in taxi plates being assigned to connected people and not to independent or new operators.

Mellad feels the taxi and livery industry regulation irregularities are worst in Fairfield County. Any new operator attempting to come into this area faces these problems. He cited a new taxi company which had recently applied for 24 plates but was issued only six. This is a sure recipe for bankruptcy. The applicant spent \$70,000 on legal fees in his attempt to get the plates and encountered repeated delays and continuances of his hearings. Mellad also says many taxis in lower Fairfield County operate with no insurance. Often operators cancel their insurance policies as soon as they receive their insurance cards. ConnDOT should conduct a check of insurance coverage.

Mellad believes there is a pattern of local taxi operators dealing only with one ConnDOT adjudicator from whom they received favorable treatment. He requested that phone records of the operators, inspectors and adjudicators be examined for ex parte communications.

He also cited an example of a ConnDOT inspector grounding his cars for six days until they were painted the mandated color (black). In the meantime, Eveready New Canaan was operating black cars, while their State-mandated color was blue. This was reported to the same ConnDOT inspector who had grounded Mellad's cars, but the inspector took no action regarding Eveready's cars.

Alexandria Reed, Mellad's daughter, read into the record written testimony detailing the above and additional problems and allegations.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:44 P.M.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

Enfield Town Hall
Council Chambers
Enfield, Connecticut

Tuesday, May 29, 2007 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Tom Cheeseman
Linda Blair
Kevin Maloney
Russell St. John

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS CDOT STAFF

Fred Riese
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing at 7:32 PM welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and the purpose of this public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

James Brislin of Enfield feels that the proposed Thompsonville railroad station could be a spark for development if done properly, but it can't be simply a platform in the middle of a parking lot. He noted that it has been a long time since Enfield had a rail station, and many parties locally have lobbied long and hard for the Thompsonville rail station. Mixed use development including retail vendors and housing is needed to make the station work. The housing would be desirable because it would offer easy access to transportation.

Brislin faulted the lack of evening bus service from Hartford. People need to have a certain comfort level in transit if they are to leave their cars at home. Also, people looking to partake of Hartford's night life need a way to get back home in the evening.

Enfield has a lack of fixed route bus service. Brislin recommends three routes including Route 5 service between Bernie's and Mass Mutual, a circulator route from Route 190 to Elm Street to North Maple to Hazardville, and a less frequent route serving Hazard Avenue, the south end of town and Scitico.

The lack of over-the-road bus service between transit districts creates a problem if you need to travel from one region to another. Brislin suggests an Interstate 91 bus service linking Enfield, Windsor, Hartford, Middletown, Meriden, and New Haven and an Interstate 84 route linking Danbury, Waterbury, New Britain, Hartford, and UCONN as a good solution to meet this need.

Communications to transit users and would-be users could also stand improvement. Better bus route maps need to display not only the roads actually run on but the entire street system. The public also needs better information on how to use transit. He cited an example that Connecticut Transit W Route stops at different places at different times of day. He had had the experience of waiting for the bus at the wrong location because he was unaware that there are different stops at mid-day.

Other points raised by Brislin were the need for a parking garage atop the Union Station parking lot in Hartford, the potential for corporate subsidization of some particular bus routes, the need for Interstate highway buses to access the many employment sites now located along the Interstates, and the use of signal prioritization to speed buses and reduce their travel times.

Sandy Fry, Transportation Planner with the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), addressed the findings of the Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (LOCHSTP) as they related to Enfield and Hartford. CRCOG participated with the Central Connecticut and Midstate Planning Regions in the development of the regional LOCHSTP. The plan did find that Enfield is underserved for transit services, with only one morning and three evening commuter buses and a weekend bus from Hartford to the Enfield and Somers prisons. The LOCHSTP found that downtown Hartford is not the only significant employment location though it is the only area to which transit service is provided.

Fry believes that commuter rail service on the Springfield Line will present some real opportunities for redevelopment and economic activity in Thompsonville and Enfield. Fry said some money is available from a Rob Simmons earmark for station development.

The New Britain Busway is another priority project supported by CRCOG. An upcoming CRCOG study will also look at Downtown Circulator options and service to Union Station.

Fry described the State's role in implementing transit-oriented development as doing proper planning for bicycle and pedestrian access and selecting the proper locations for facilities. Thompsonville is one of three new rail stations proposed to be constructed along the Springfield Line along with North Haven and Newington Junction.

Tim Doherty of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission cited a very good level of cooperation between Connecticut and Massachusetts in the Springfield Line Commuter Rail Service planning. He sees many economic development opportunities springing from the implementation of this service. Relative to this plan, the restoration of Union Station in Springfield has been scaled back in scope and plans for a South Springfield stop have been dropped for the time being. Doherty also mentioned that bus service in Enfield was formerly provided by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority but this ceased about 3-4 years ago.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:36 P.M.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

Groton Town Hall Annex

Wednesday, June 20, 2007 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Tom Cheeseman
Linda Blair
Kevin Maloney
Russell St. John
Robert Zarnetske
Bill Kelaher

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS **CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Russ St. John opened the hearing at 7:32 PM welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and the purpose of this public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

Harry Mantzaris welcomed the Commission to Groton. As a 65-year resident of the town, he has witnessed many local bus companies disappear off the scene. Now SEAT has filled the void with the courtesy of State of Connecticut funding. Ridership on SEAT is growing.

In view of the significant congestion on Interstate 95, especially from Old Saybrook to Groton, alternatives to highway use are necessary. The East Lyme stretch of I-95 can be especially treacherous in bad winter weather as it gets icy and slick. Regional and statewide solutions are needed.

Passenger rail service to Worcester, perhaps using self-propelled Budd cars, would be of great value to the region.

Mantzaris closed by saying SEAT service is good and the buses are clean, but more frequent service is needed.

Tiiu Propfe said the low attendance at tonight's hearing does not mean that people don't care about transportation issues. She mentioned that Shore Line East service has been very helpful for her visits to her son in New York City, saving the drive to New Haven. Although originally conceived as a purely commuter service, Shore Line East can serve tourist needs too but weekend service will be needed for this to become a reality. She also would like to see increasing use of rail freight service to reduce truck traffic on Interstate 95. She feels many of

the accidents on Interstate 95 involve trucks, many of which are speeding. She cited inadequate speed enforcement for trucks.

James Butler, Executive Director of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, offered extensive comments. He credited Molly McKay and other transit advocates with shifting the focus of local transportation planning to include more transit development. In fact, many transit projects are included as high priorities in the Region's recently released Long Range Transportation Plan. He also cited good conversations with ConnDOT, including with Deputy Commissioner Martin, concerning some of the transit initiatives.

Butler sees a need for more transit of all sorts. SEAT just carried its one millionth rider for the year, the first time this milestone has been reached. He sees a need for continued expansion of SEAT service, and also for equitable funding treatment for systems like SEAT which should have the same funding arrangement as Connecticut Transit does, which has no local funding of its operating deficit, which is completely State funded.

Shore Line East expansion needs to be speeded up. Not only weekend service but more weekday service is needed too, and an increase in service to New London. Perhaps an agreement with Amtrak to honor all Shore Line East tickets to New London in exchange for a reimbursement for each rider so carried can be arranged.

The New London Multimodal Center provides connections to Amtrak, Shore Line East, high speed ferries, conventional ferries, long haul buses, local buses, and buses operated by the casinos. ConnDOT should be supported in its negotiations with station owner Todd O'Donnell to preserve long-term intermodal use there.

Butler noted that the Transportation Strategy Board had provided \$500,000 to the Council of Governments to do a study of a possible tourist-based transit system for southeastern Connecticut. The intent was to design a system that would allow visitors to come to southeastern Connecticut without having to bring their cars. The study showed that such a system would be financially feasible for the region. The study recommended that a 2-year pilot demonstration of the service be undertaken. The estimated cost to run the 2-year pilot system would be \$12,000,000.

Nine of the twenty towns in the Southeastern Connecticut Planning Region participate in SEAT. New London pays \$119,000 toward SEAT's budget and Norwich provides \$100,000. Butler contrasted this with the \$0 Hartford pays for the operation of Connecticut Transit. Chairman Cheeseman noted that Middletown contributes \$323,000 toward the operation of Middletown Area Transit.

Commission member Robert Zarnetske complimented Butler on the excellent work he had done at the COG. He further commented that the key to implementing the tourist-based regional transit system is to attract private money, principally from the casinos. The 2-year demonstration project could be a nationwide model for tourist transit using low emissions vehicles. Zarnetske further felt that the success of the system would require the expansion of this concept to serve

Bradley Airport and the Connecticut Convention Center in order to bring those tourists into the region.

According to Butler, the original allotment of slot machine revenues to the State was 80% going to municipalities and 20% to the State. That division has gradually flipped to 80% of the slot revenues being kept at the State level and 20% going to the municipalities. Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport receive approximately \$10,000,000 each of this funding. New London, which bears a much greater burden on its services and infrastructure from casino traffic and travelers, receives about \$1,000,000 annually.

Edith Fairgrieve has followed transportation issues for 35-40 years but sees little progress at this time. She also inquired what role the Commission plays in the planning and delivery of public transportation services.

Moderator Russ St. John read into the record an e-mail received from **Joan Costas** who could not attend tonight's hearing. Costas feels that public transportation between southeastern Connecticut and Hartford is needed. She said that Peter Pan or Greyhound holds the franchise to run this route but they do not feel it is economically feasible for them so they do not use it. She feels the State should take this route over and provide the service, making perhaps two round trips per day starting from New London, going to Norwich, and then to Hartford and back, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. In view of the present cost of gas, and the fact that there are persons who do not have cars or access to one, there should be some means of public transportation to our state capital from southeastern Connecticut.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:54 P.M.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

Parsons Government Complex
Milford, Connecticut
Tuesday, June 26, 2007 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Linda Blair
Richard Schreiner
Kevin Maloney
Russell St. John
Robert Zarnetske
Richard Carpenter

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese
Susan Simmat

CDOT STAFF

Dennis King
Dennis Jolly

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Linda Blair opened the hearing at 7:45 PM explaining the purpose of the hearing, reading the public notice for the hearing, and introducing the members and ConnDOT staff present for the record. There being no members of the public present, she recessed the hearing until 8:00 PM.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

Moderator Linda Blair reopened the hearing at 8:00 PM. There being no members of the public present, she closed the hearing at that time.

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing
Putnam Town Hall
Putnam, Connecticut
Tuesday, September 11, 2007

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Tom Cheeseman
Linda Blair
Russ St. John

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS **CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Tom Cheeseman opened the hearing at 7:37 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate. He then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff present.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

Stephen Gazillo of the Washington Group, a rail engineering consulting firm, asked about the status of the New London-Norwich-Worcester commuter rail study. He was advised that ConnDOT is still pursuing funding for this work. His firm is also working on the Danbury Branch Electrification Study. Phase 2 of that study is about to commence, perhaps in two weeks, awaiting only final approval of the contract. Phase 2 will take 36 months and will result in an environmental impact statement covering the alternatives of straight electrification of the Danbury Branch, electrification with some alignment modifications, extension of the Danbury Branch service to New Milford, and no action. Asked about the results of Phase I of the study with regard to the extension of the service to New Milford, Gazillo said that there were strong ridership numbers for this option and it was a cost effective alternative. Double tracking the Branch or making significant alignment modifications were ruled out in the Phase I study because of their \$1 billion price tag and major impacts. Signalization improvements on the Branch will proceed ahead of any other work and, in fact, are all set to commence.

Gazillo said his firm is also involved in the final design of one of the five segments of the New Britain Busway and in the New Haven Line catenary replacement project. Washington Group is also a subcontractor on the Springfield Line Commuter Rail Study. On that latter project, he reported that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in Massachusetts is leading a planning effort to study extension of the Springfield Line commuter rail service northward, potentially as far as White River Junction, Vermont.

David Chase, also with the Washington Group, retired in 2001 from ConnDOT where he had worked for 34 years. In addition to the projects mentioned by Steve Gazillo, he is involved in the work to replace the current Thames River Amtrak bridge with a new lift bridge. The towers for the lift span are currently being constructed, and the new span will be in place about a year from now. Chase mentioned that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority is working on

a study to extend commuter rail service south from Providence to Wickford, R.I., including work to design two new rail stations and track reconfigurations. Washington Group had hoped to be a liaison engineer for this project but another firm got the job.

Dennis Jolly of ConnDOT spoke briefly, mentioning that he had grown up in this area. He also reported that the Windham Regional Transit District had received a Federal earmark for funding for its new bus facility.

David Chase asked the Commission about its involvement in advocating for more funding for transportation. As construction costs go up due in part to the increasing costs of steel and concrete, gas tax revenues are going down due to better mileage on cars. There has been no increase in the Federal gas tax for many years, and the state reduced its gas tax. There are not enough dollars to meet all the transportation needs.

Tom Cheeseman adjourned the meeting at 8:09 PM.

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

Public Hearing

Bristol City Hall
111 North Main Street
Bristol, Connecticut

Tuesday, September 25, 2007

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Tom Cheeseman
Linda Blair
Morton Katz
Richard Sunderhauf
Russ St. John
Bill Kelaher
Kevin Maloney

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS CDOT STAFF

Fred Riese
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing at 7:40 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate. He then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff present.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

Tony Savino, Transit Manager for the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency said the region's first priority is to establish transit service to Plymouth and Southington, which currently have no service. Both fixed route and paratransit service are needed. Savino is finding more and more disabled people in these communities who need ADA service. Due to the lack of any fixed route service operating in these towns, there is no mandated ADA service corridor for these towns. Savino said only four of the seven towns in the CCRPA region receive transit service, namely New Britain, Plainville, Bristol, and the Kensington section of Berlin. Savino noted that there is Jobs Access transportation service on the Berlin Turnpike and on the Chamberlain Highway to Meriden Square. These services have been very successful and will be replaced by fixed route bus service. This change will open up these corridors in Berlin to ADA service as well. DATTCO is the Jobs Access service provider.

New Britain Transportation has previously proposed to run Route 10 service from Plainville to Southington on a 3 times per day basis to provide a minimal level of morning, mid-day, and afternoon service but thus far this route has not been approved for funding. New Britain Transportation has similarly proposed a three trips per day route to serve Plymouth.

All of Plainville and New Britain are covered for ADA service because of the density of the fixed route network. All of Bristol except one area is similarly within the ADA service area, but Savino said they will make pick-ups in this area of Bristol if requested.

Two fixed bus routes operate in Bristol. The Bristol local bus serves Route 6 and runs to the senior center. The New Britain-Bristol bus runs direct service connecting those two cities with only two stops made in Plainville. This direct bus has worked great and has been a huge help since the Department of Social Services (DSS) office in Bristol was closed and citizens needed to get to the New Britain DSS office.

The Dial-a-Ride Matching Grant Program established by C.G.S. Section 13b-38bb has been a boon to the seven communities of the Central Connecticut Region. Six of the seven towns applied under the program last year (Southington did not) and all seven towns applied during the second year of the program. The towns run their Dial-a-Ride programs independently and have done different enhancements with the matching funds. Two towns have added weekend service. Bristol and Plainville operate a reciprocal service whereby, for example, a Bristol citizen can get a ride to Plainville from the Bristol system and Plainville will provide the return trip. Savino also said the Section 5310 Program has helped in the region. His agency has been able to get two or three vans per year through this program.

Work will begin in mid-October on the extension of Route 72 to Route 229. The necessary construction funds have been bonded. Completion of the project is expected in 2011. Also, the two-lane portion of Route 229 will be widened to four lanes. This is critically needed as the Bristol Southeast Industrial Park is developed. This industrial park will add economic growth and jobs for Bristol.

Lastly, Savino said ADA ridership keeps growing and growing. Currently there are 3,500 registered ADA clients in the four served towns. Seven hundred and fifty ADA rides are provided daily.

Commission member Morton Katz, the scheduled moderator for this hearing, arrived at this point and assumed the moderator's role.

Representative Frank Nicastro, 79th District, represents the southern half of Bristol and is a member of the Transportation Committee of the General Assembly. He previously served as Mayor of Bristol and is currently on the Town Council. Rep. Nicastro said that as Mayor he couldn't get businesses to locate in downtown Bristol because it had no highway access. So he is pleased to see that the Route 72 extension is now about to happen. The bids have been received and reviewed and the contract has been awarded to Manafort. Nicastro is concerned, however, that the disruption caused to local roads and traffic during construction will increase congestion. One mitigating solution he would like to see would be a direct bus from Bristol to the UCONN Health Center in Farmington. This might help get some cars off the road. Nicastro mentioned that ConnDOT is also looking at improvements to other local Bristol roads like South Street and Riverside Avenue to ease traffic flow. Tony Savino commented that a new bus route does provide service to the UCONN Health Center via downtown New Britain.

Marianne Lydem, who works at the UCONN Health Center, said that bus service from Bristol to UCONN requires a trip to New Britain and then into downtown Hartford in order to reach UCONN. This route just takes too long since she and most other workers need to be at work by 8 AM. The existing route can require three hours to reach work, so a direct Bristol to UCONN

bus is needed. She also mentioned that there is a frequent need for people to get from Bristol Hospital to the UCONN Health Center. She had heard of people paying as much as \$52 to make this round trip between these two hospitals. Commission member Susan Simmat suggested that formation of an Easy Street vanpool might be a solution for employees if there are 8 or more people going from Bristol to jobs at UCONN.

Gary Allen sees a need for paratransit service from Bristol to Hartford. Tony Savino advised that DATTCO runs paratransit service to six locations in and around Hartford: the Capitol, Hartford Hospital, the UCONN Health Center, West Farms Mall, the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Newington, and the Newington Dialysis Center. From these locations, the Greater Hartford Transit District can provide service to locations within the Hartford area. These trips can be arranged by the clients at the times most suitable for them.

Mr. Allen takes a commuter bus from the Todd Street commuter lot and is concerned about the fate of this lot during the Route 72 construction. He was advised by Tony Savino that a replacement commuter lot will be built near Middle Street and Pine Street but that it will be at least a year before the Todd Street lot has to close.

Rob Palaski formerly lived in Los Angeles where reciprocal arrangements between paratransit systems, such as the one described between Bristol and Plainville, were common.

Gary Allen noted that a 72-hour advance notice is required to arrange paratransit rides. This presents a difficulty in that planning three days in advance is often not possible. Savino noted that he has to provide 700 rides per day with only 6 buses so that amount of notice is necessary to arrange the trips and assure that there is capacity for the rides.

Morton Katz adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing
Bridgeport City Hall
45 Lyon Terrace
Wednesday, October 10, 2007 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Russell St. John
Linda Blair
Kevin Maloney
Richard Carpenter
Robert Zarnetske
Bill Kelaher

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS **CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Russ St. John opened the hearing at 7:40 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and the purpose of this public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

Friede Costigan, a resident of Fairfield, spoke on behalf of the Riverhurst Association, a neighborhood group representing about 40 households located close to Interstate 95. She said her neighborhood receives a high level of noise from that highway, particularly at night and in the winter when trees and vegetation are barren. Noise barriers were promised to the neighborhood in the 1980s but nothing happened. She was also concerned as to whether the new Black Rock train station in Fairfield would draw any service away from the existing Fairfield Station of the New Haven Line.

Lloyd Mellad, the owner of Darien Taxi, spoke concerning issues he has encountered with ConnDOT's regulation of the taxi industry in lower Fairfield County. The problems he has observed have resulted from favoritism toward the larger taxi operators and have worked to the disadvantage of minority and smaller operators. He first cited an incident that occurred in 2000 when an inspector ordered his cabs off the road for being the wrong color, i.e., not the color specified in his company's license. He later found out that this inspector had no authority to do this but was acting totally on his own, according to Mellad.

Mellad also noted that when he acquired Norwalk Yellow Cab, it had 35 plates. He turned five of those back to the State. These five plates were then awarded to Eveready Taxi, one of the largest operators in the area.

Mellad has requested the phone records of ConnDOT to analyze for collusion or *ex parte* communication between some operators and inspectors and one ConnDOT adjudicator. He noted that when he took over Norwalk Yellow Cab, the same inspector he cited previously came down to inspect his fleet and took 60-70% of the vehicles off the road.

Mellad called for a moratorium on the issuance of new taxi plates in order to protect the smaller operators. If the plate issuance process continues to operate as it is, the larger companies will be able to force the smaller operators out of business, which will then result in prices going up. He feels that the larger operators really want the limousine business and are less interested in providing the taxi services.

Mellad mentioned that when Dennis King assumed responsibility for inspections, operators with infractions did not want to deal with him but rather asked to be referred to a particular ConnDOT inspector. Mellad said other independent operators can tell stories of similar treatment by what he termed as renegade inspectors. He said some inspectors have now been moved to other geographic areas. This action has largely solved the problem of differential treatment by inspectors. He mentioned that when his cars were taken out of service for being the wrong color, other operators were running off-color vehicles without any problems from the inspectors.

As to plate issuance, Mellad said Washington, DC, Atlanta, and Denver have systems that work much better. Currently, large operators can succeed in getting more plates but small operators cannot. It is very difficult for the smaller operators to get through the process when confronted with repeated legal challenges and continuance requests filed by the larger companies.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:32 P.M.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

Torrington City Hall

140 Main Street

Torrington, Connecticut

Tuesday, October 23, 2007 – 7:30 PM

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Tom Cheeseman
Linda Blair
Morton Katz
Dorothy Adamson
Russ St. John
Richard Carpenter
Kevin Maloney

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS **CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese
Susan Simmat

Dennis King
Dennis Jolly

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing at 7:32 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate. He then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff present.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

Mayor Ryan Bingham welcomed the Commission to Torrington. He tipped his hat to Carol Deane and the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District (NWCTD) for doing such a great job. Mayor Bingham advocated funding for the proposed NWCTD bus facility in downtown Torrington and said this proposal has the City's backing. Bingham also supports transit-oriented development and would like to eventually see the Naugatuck Railroad extend its service to Torrington. He also praised the work of Rick Lynn and the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials.

Town Councilman Rick Della Valle also complimented Carol Deane for doing a great job. Della Valle works for a halfway house that depends on transit services to meet the needs of its clients. Della Valle feels that more money needs to be spent on marketing and public awareness as many local people do not know what transit services are available. He noted that Torrington now has evening and weekend bus service but that surrounding towns do not. There is a need for such service in the towns. Taxi service is not an option for his clients as it is too expensive.

Rick Lynn, Planning Director for the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials (LHCEO) thanked the Commission for coming to Torrington. The top transportation priority in the region is to move forward with the bus transit facility for the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District. Lynn thanked the Commission for its past support for this facility. He also mentioned that the transit facility received a \$1.6 million earmark in the Federal SAFETEA-LU transportation bill.

The City has identified three or four downtown locations as potential sites for a garage. So progress is being made.

Lynn also discussed the Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Planning process (LOCHSTP) which has identified service and resource gaps in the region and potential strategies to address these gaps. Recommended projects in the Litchfield Hills Region include expanded dial-a-ride service in Winsted, new Sunday service in Winsted, development and implementation of a public awareness campaign, expanded Sunday dial-a-ride service in Torrington, expanded hours of dial-a-ride service in Torrington on weekdays, and pursuit of an Independent Transportation Network in the region in cooperation with the Sullivan Senior Center in Torrington. The region is awaiting funding under the LOCHSTP program to pursue implementation of these recommendations.

The Litchfield Hills Regional Transportation Plan projects a 30% increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the region over the next 20 years. This increase in VMTs and the increase in the elderly population in the region will require the expansion of rail, bus, paratransit, and ridesharing to meet the transportation needs of the area. By 2030, nearly 40% of Litchfield County's population will be 65 years old or older according to a study done by the Connecticut Office of Rural Health.

Representative Ann Ruwet, 65th District, noted that Torrington has two federally supported housing projects for seniors and disabled citizens. She agreed that Carol Deane and the NWCTD do a great job. She voted against the state transportation bill because of the gross receipts tax increase it contained and the fact that there was very little in the bill of benefit to Torrington and Northwest Connecticut. Rep. Ruwet supports the recommendation of the Connecticut Office of Rural Health concerning Non-Emergency Medical Transportation in Upper Litchfield County. A regional transportation coordinator should be hired to coordinate trip planning and scheduling and to coordinate between ConnDOT, DSS and local agencies.

Antoine Scott, a taxi driver representing the Coalition of Independent Contractors, spoke on behalf of taxi drivers in Bridgeport, New Haven, and Meriden. Mr. Scott said he drove for Metro Taxi for 10 years and had an excellent driving record but was terminated on October 15, allegedly for not going after a job (customer) several months earlier. Shortly before his termination, Scott had organized the Coalition of Independent Operators, consisting of him and several other drivers. The owner of Metro Taxi was invited to the organizational meeting but did not attend. Sixty drivers did attend. On October 15, the owner of Metro Taxi held his own meeting, which was attended by fewer than 10 drivers. That day, when Scott went to pay his taxi lease payment, he was fired.

Scott described some of the conditions local taxi drivers work under. The lease fee that drivers for Metro Taxi pay is \$170 per day for their vehicles, insurance, and dispatching. The fees must be paid at the New Haven office, so the Meriden and Bridgeport drivers lose one hour out of their legally allowed 12-hour shift from revenue service driving to New Haven to pay the fee. The actual lease fee for the vehicle is \$131 per day but gas and fees bring it to \$170/day. If prepaid in full for the week, the lease fee for the vehicle is \$120/day but few drivers can afford to do this.

A second Bridgeport taxi driver who withheld his name said the issues described by Scott affect not only Metro Taxi drivers but Yellow Cab drivers in the area as well. In Bridgeport, recent changes have hurt the taxi business and threaten the survival of the taxi industry and the drivers. The relocation of the bus station has hurt drivers. Sacred Heart University and the University of Bridgeport send their buses to the train station now to meet students, so these trips are lost to the taxis. The lease payments are \$750-900 per week, compared to just \$450 per week in Stamford. If your payment is late, your computer is shut down and a \$45 access fee is assessed to turn it back on. Dispatch often gives inaccurate directions to fares; nevertheless, the drivers are charged for dispatch services. This driver said Bridgeport drivers now make \$400 per week less than they did two years ago. He is personally opposed to a strike but one may be necessary. The drivers' lease payments include an insurance fee, yet if a driver is in an accident, he is fired.

Antoine Scott mentioned that drivers can get their own insurance policies but a \$2,000,000 policy is required. Metro Taxi is self-insured.

Fritz, a Yellow Cab driver from Bridgeport, pays lease payments of \$900/week. He recently worked 24 hours to net \$58. He is a 10-year driver. Fritz complained that the dispatchers show favoritism in assigning the longer, more profitable trips. He feels that drivers just can't make ends meet with a \$900 weekly lease fee. Despite paying for insurance as part of this fee, if a driver has an accident, he must pay the company \$5,000 to be allowed to get back in his cab.

Mike, also a taxi driver, who did not want to give his full name, feels drivers don't get the respect they deserve. They are the unsung heroes of America. They pick up strangers every day, people they don't know who are sitting right behind them. They receive no health insurance, no life insurance, and no workman's compensation. They are often robbed at gunpoint.

Formerly, there was a 50/50 split between the drivers and the company, but this is no longer the case. The vast majority of drivers, maybe 95%, end up working for less than minimum wage. Mike noted that Metro Taxi provides medical trips under the State contract with Logisticare. The drivers receive \$9.00 for providing a Logisticare trip, such as for a dialysis patient. Using the dialysis trip as an example, he noted that this trip may take 35-40 minutes and may require the driver to render assistance to the passenger/patient getting into or from the clinic. Of this \$9.00, 5% goes back to the company, leaving the driver with \$8.55. The rates under the Logisticare contract have not gone up in ten years. On the meter, this \$9.00 Logisticare trip would cost \$22-30, but the bid contract calls for a \$9.00 fee. As independent contractors to Metro Taxi, the drivers have no benefits and no rights.

Michlene Bakunis recently took a trip to Cherry Hill, NJ. She used the New Jersey Transit system which she found to be very impressive. Coming back home, she does not find the same well integrated local and intercity transit service available. Though it will take a long time to change our car-based habits, such change is necessary for the ecology, for energy, and on its own merits.

Carol Deane, Executive Director of the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District, reported considerable progress on the bus storage and maintenance facility proposal and on her relationship with ConnDOT on this project. She thanked Mayor Bingham, her board of directors, and Rick Lynn for their support.

The Transit District is running interregional service to the Farmington UCONN Health Center, Hartford, Waterbury, and New Haven. She has not had any success getting authorization to travel in Massachusetts despite filling out 50 pages of forms. She wants to resume service to Great Barrington, which is a 10 minute trip for her riders in Sharon, Salisbury, and Canaan. She also would like to provide occasional trips to Deerfield, Massachusetts and for senior citizens to the Big E, both of which she has done in the past. However, one private contractor objected when she recently ran the latter trip.

Deane mentioned that the NWCTD still had not received a dime in reimbursement for this year and has had to get loans to keep operating until the funds come through. Tom Cheeseman mentioned to her that the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 (rural) grants through ConnDOT had been held up but would be coming at the end of October or early November.

Regarding the proposed bus facility for NWCTD, Deane reported that the location has been narrowed to three sites in Torrington, with ConnDOT to ultimately make the final site selection. Any of these sites will work well for her operation. There is \$7,000,000 in the proposed State bonding package for this facility. At this point, the future of the bond package is being negotiated and is uncertain. Currently, the District pays \$3,500/month to lease its existing site. This site is an improvement on the previous arrangement involving multiple sites for vehicle storage. But the existing arrangement does not allow her to do vehicle maintenance internally, and the costs of private maintenance of her vehicles are getting astronomical. Also, currently the District buys its fuel from the City of Torrington at a price which includes a 25 cent per gallon surcharge.

Finally, Deane reported that Jobs Access service is working well. A new service to the Route 183 industrial park has been added recently.

At the end of the public hearing, Tom Cheeseman presented a dozen roses to **Linda Blair** to thank her for her ten years of service on the Commission. This hearing marked Linda's last official Commission activity before her relocation to Boston.

Moderator Riese adjourned the meeting at 9:28 PM.

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 co chairpersons 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.”