



## Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

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M-8 Rail Car Mock-up  
*Anticipated delivery of first prototype for testing in 2009*

**DATE:** December 31, 2008

**TO:** Honorable M. Jodi Rell, Governor

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

Honorable Joseph F. Marie, Commissioner of Transportation

**FROM:** Thomas Cheeseman, Chairman  
Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

I am pleased to submit to you the 2008 Annual Report of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission as required by the Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a(e). The 2008 Annual Report contains 10 recommendations aimed at maintaining and improving the delivery of public transportation services to the residents of Connecticut. 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**

This is a challenging time for the fiscal health of government at all levels and, consequently, a time when new initiatives will be difficult to implement. Public transportation is certainly no exception. With this reality in clear view, the Commission carefully chose these following recommendations for its 2008 Annual Report. The majority of these recommendations do not require funding outlays but rather legislative, administrative or procedural changes. The foremost challenge for public transportation in the current fiscal climate will be to maintain the existing network of services and, where cuts are found to be necessary, to minimize their impacts on the transit-using public. For the three recommendations that do involve new expenditures, the focus at this time is on continuing planning and administrative work so that the State can be ready to advance these projects when the revenue picture improves.

The Commission's first recommendation requests a study by ConnDOT, assisted by the Windham Regional Council of Governments and the Windham Regional Transit District, of the transit needs in the Windham Region, particularly for bus service connections between Willimantic and Storrs and

from Storrs to Hartford. These service gaps were strongly and repeatedly cited at the Commission's public hearing in Willimantic at which an ardent and well-documented case was made to justify the requests for these services.

The second recommendation acknowledges the substantial progress that has been made in recent years to develop a more comprehensive public transportation network, and recognizes that further enhancements to this network will not be achievable under current conditions. It therefore advocated that every effort be made to maintain the existing network of transit services, especially as demand for such services is accelerating with the tight personal budgets many citizens are experiencing.

Active participation by Connecticut in the planning studies underway in New York City for major freight and passenger projects to move goods and people into and through the New York City area is advocated in the third recommendation in view of the impacts upon Connecticut that the outcome of these studies can be expected to produce.

The increasing reliance upon volunteer drivers to operate many demand response transportation services, especially those operated by municipalities, non-profit agencies and smaller transit districts, highlights the need for liability protection for these volunteers, a need which is called out in the fourth recommendation.

In its fifth recommendation, the Commission repeats its concern that the development of a proposed intermodal transportation facility in Waterbury should not be done in a way that is detrimental to the operation of the fixed route bus service in that city, particularly when options are available which would avoid such impacts.

There are on-going and pressing needs for vehicle storage and maintenance facilities at several transit systems in Connecticut to protect the vehicles and to foster more efficient operations. While most of these facilities will not be advancing to construction soon, the need to continue planning work on them is noted so that they will be ready to go when funding materializes, either from an improved economy and budget picture in the state or from any future Federal stimulus package. Such continued planning is advocated in recommendation #6.

A renewed call for the establishment of a cell phone parking lot at Bradley International Airport is made in recommendation #7. The importance of continued planning work for improvements to the Danbury Branch rail line of Metro-North is highlighted in the eighth recommendation. The ninth recommendation calls for the provision of bicycle amenities at transit facilities and commuter lots to increase the use of bicycles as an element of multi-modal trips. The final recommendation calls for an inventory and assessment of the parking needs at all transit facilities and services, including such attributes as lot capacity, lighting and state of maintenance. This assessment would include not only railroad station lots but also commuter lots, bus station lots and shuttle service lots as well.

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, 2009.

**CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

DECEMBER 31, 2008



## DEDICATION

The Commission dedicates its 2008 Annual Report to Command Sergeant Major Anthony Savino who passed away on February 26, 2008. Tony was well known to the Commission through his role as transit manager at the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. Tony was a faithful advocate for public transportation who worked tirelessly and creatively to find ways to stretch scarce resources to address as many of the transportation needs of his region as possible.

Whenever the Commission held a public hearing in the Central Connecticut Region, Tony could always be counted on to spread the word and to produce a good turnout of speakers at the hearing. Tony was also a frequent and very welcome guest at the Commission's monthly meetings. Both the Commission and the cause of public transportation lost a good friend with Tony's passing. The memory of Tony, invariably with his trademark unlit cigar in his mouth, will not soon fade from our hearts and minds.

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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 eleven years, working closely with legislators, agencies and members of the public, taking policy initiatives, and making them work in practical ways. He is interested in transportation of all types, including bicycling (he's a licensed Category 3 racer), and he serves on the Old Saybrook Bikeways Committee. But his passion is railroad transportation. He has served on the Board of Directors of the New Haven Railroad Historical and Technical Association, and currently serves as its photo archivist. He also 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 Vo-Tech School in Waterbury, she subsequently held positions at the American Community School (Cobham, England), Robert College (Istanbul, Turkey) and the American School in Japan (Tokyo). In the course of traveling in Europe and Asia, she and her 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. Dorothy resigned from the Commission during 2008.

### **Richard Carpenter**

Mr. Carpenter is the former Executive Director of the South Western Regional Planning Agency, a position he held from 1966 until his retirement on March 31, 1999. In this position, he was involved in land use and transportation planning for that eight town



region of one-third million population. Previous to being appointed to the CPTC, he was a member of the Governor's Railroad Advisory Task Force from 1974 to 1983, serving as its Chairman from 1974 to 1981. Mr. Carpenter's chief interest is the improvement of passenger and intermodal rail freight service. He served on the East of the Hudson Rail Freight Operations Task Force as the invited representative of Congressman Jerrold Nadler of New York. He is also a member of the Interstate 95 Coastal Corridor Transportation Investment Area Committee, one of five such committees working with the Transportation Strategy Board.

Mr. Carpenter is also the author of the book: "A Railroad Atlas of the United States in 1946 – Volume 1, The Mid-Atlantic States", published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2003. Volume 2, covering New York state and New England, was published in spring of 2005. In spring 2007, he completed Volume 3, which covers Indiana, Ohio and the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and which will be published in December 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 is a retired large scale systems programmer. Terry has served as a Director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers since 1988. He continues to serve in a similar role with this organization in the now renamed position of Representative, filing one of two such slots for the state of Connecticut. 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 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 can catch the North Shore Limited to Cleveland. He makes frequent trips via Amtrak through the Northeast Corridor to New York, Delaware and Pennsylvania. He serves as a Magistrate in a number of G.A. Courts and is a 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.

### **Edward McAnaney**

Mr. McAnaney is judge of the Probate Court for the District of Suffield-East Granby. Additionally, he is a Magistrate of the Superior Court and practices law in Suffield. He

has a life-long interest in railroading and is a conductor and brakeman for the Naugatuck Railroad.

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

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

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

Mr. Schreiner is Director of Service Development for the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) in Danbury. He has expertise in the areas of transit operations, transportation planning, service design, procurement, public relations and regulatory requirements. He is the former Executive Director of the Long Island Sound Taskforce (now Save the Sound), a non-profit environmental organization. Mr. Schreiner resides in Derby with his wife and children.

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

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

### **Alan Sylvestre**

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

## **Robert Zarnetske**

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

## **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 2008, Peter Richter represented Acting Commissioner Emil Frankel and Commissioner Joseph Marie of the Department of Transportation. Mr. Richter serves as Assistant Administrator of the ConnDOT Office of Rails.

### **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.

### **Connie Mendolia**

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

## ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION IN 2008

Chairman Tom Cheeseman served in his seventh year in that capacity in 2008. Morton Katz continued to serve as Vice Chairman, while Frederick Riese continued as Administrative Vice Chairman. Alan Sylvestre and Edward McAnaney were appointed to the Commission during 2008.

### Monthly Meetings

As set forth in Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a(j), the Commission met on the first Thursday of each month. In 2008, eight of these meetings were held at Union Station in New Haven, two were at the Connecticut Department of Transportation headquarters in Newington, and two were at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.

Most of the Commission's meetings during 2008 included presentations by invited speakers. Andrew Anastasio, vice president of A. Anastasio and Sons Trucking Company, an intermodal freight transload operator out of North Haven, addressed the February meeting and explained his company's role in receiving freight shipments by rail and distributing them by truck throughout New England and the Northeast. At the March meeting, Peter Richter, Assistant Administrator of the ConnDOT Office of Rails, discussed issues concerning the rolling stock for the New Haven Line service and station issues for the New Haven Line and Shore Line East commuter services. ConnDOT Deputy Commissioner Albert Martin outlined negotiations with Amtrak to increase service on the Springfield Line, and also discussed development plans at New Haven's Union Station in April. The May meeting featured a talk by James Cameron, president of the Metro-North, Shore Line East Rail Commuter Council, who discussed the new M-8 rail cars currently under development for the New Haven Line service and other New Haven Line issues including the proposed new maintenance facilities at New Haven Yard and the management of New Haven Line rail stations.

Commission member William Kelaher updated members on the upcoming four-day closure of the Thames River Bridge for replacement of the moveable span and the measures to mitigate the travel impacts this would cause. The July meeting also featured a presentation by a Commission member as Frederick Riese discussed the planning for the replacement of Amtrak's Connecticut River Bridge, an effort in its very early stages. He also discussed the options being evaluated in Phase II of the Danbury Branch Electrification Study, which was just getting underway. Donna Carter, executive director of the Greater New Haven Transit District, addressed the Commission's August meeting with details of the District's operation of four battery-powered electric trolley vehicles in downtown New Haven.

The October meeting received an update from Eugene Colonese, Administrator of the Office of Rails, on several topics including development on the M-8 passenger rail

cars, the critical systems replacement (CSR) program for the M-2 rail cars, the new maintenance facilities at New Haven Yard, and the increasing ridership on the New Haven Line and Shore Line East. November's meeting featured a discussion of the new Bridgeport bus terminal operated by the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority given by Douglas Holcomb, Service Development Officer for the Authority.

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 2008 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 Waterbury, Fairfield, Old Saybrook and Hartford. During the fall, hearing sites included Middletown, Winsted, Willimantic and Danbury. These hearings, a requirement of C.G.S. section 13b-11a(b), provide information which is then used both in the formulation of the Annual Report, and also to resolve conflicts, issues and questions raised at the hearings, either by providing the information at the hearing or by facilitating the contacts necessary to achieve a resolution.

The issues raised at the Commission's eight 2008 public hearings included several of statewide reach and many local or regional issues. On the positive side is the news that transit ridership is up significantly in every corner of Connecticut. Local fixed route bus service, intercity bus service, New Haven Line and Shore Line East rail service, and Jobs Access transportation services have all experienced substantial jumps in ridership in 2008, driven by a combination of high fuel prices and the underlying growth trends that predated the fuel price spikes. These ridership increases have demonstrated the value of Connecticut's transit services. They have also generated statewide calls for funding to support and maintain at least the existing level of transit services, though there are also many needs that are yet unmet.

Two other issues raised at multiple hearings were the lack of marketing efforts for transit, which often leads to a lack of public awareness of the availability of services that citizens have a desire to use, and the need for bus storage and maintenance facilities for the vehicle fleets of several transit districts including the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District, the Windham Regional Transit District and the Estuary Transit District. These three transit districts currently utilize inefficient sites for vehicle storage, often in multiple locations, with outside storage, and with no facilities to service and maintain their vehicles. Similar facility needs for new bus storage and maintenance facilities were heard at the Waterbury and Middletown hearings, to serve the needs of Northeast Transportation and Middletown Area Transit, respectively.

Local issues showed more variability. The desire for bus service from Storrs to Hartford was expressed by numerous speakers at the Commission's October 8 hearing in Willimantic. The need for better bus connections between Storrs and Willimantic, particularly between the campuses of UConn and Eastern Connecticut State University, also was repeatedly expressed. The foremost issues at the Danbury region hearing concerned improved rail service on the Danbury Branch of Metro-North, which is the subject of the on-going Danbury Branch Electrification Study. In particular, the need for installation of centralized traffic control (CTC), which is a prerequisite for almost any service enhancements on the line, and strong support for extending the Danbury Branch service northward to New Milford were expressed by multiple speakers.

Other hearings yielded more diverse comments. Foremost issues at the Waterbury hearing were a desire for improved intercity bus connections, chiefly to Danbury, Torrington and Hartford, and the potential difficulties involved should the pulse point for the local bus service be moved from its current location at the Waterbury Green to a proposed new intermodal transportation center several blocks away at the train station. Fairfield public hearing issues included the need for more parking at New Haven Line rail stations, more accommodations for bicycle travel, and enhancing service on the underutilized Danbury and Waterbury Branches of Metro-North. The Hartford public hearing heard calls for better connections between Hartford and Bradley Field, more consideration for transit-oriented development and smart growth land use planning, and the need to take advantage of this historic opportunity to solidify and expand upon transit ridership gains. Salient issues at the Winsted hearing included the need for a centralized bus storage and maintenance facility, the need for Dial-a-Ride service to Canaan, and the dramatic growth seen in local Jobs Access ridership.

More detailed accounts of the testimony at all eight public hearings can be found on pages 11-25 of this Annual Report.

### **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 Federal Transit Administration's Drug and Alcohol Seminar in Orlando, Florida and its Tri-annual Review in Boston, as well as several other professional enhancement seminars. Tom is chairman 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 the ConnDOT-sponsored advisory committee for the Danbury Branch Electrification Study.

Kevin Maloney attended national meetings of the Air and Expedited Motor Carriers Association in Orlando, the Express Carriers Association in Atlanta, and the Messenger Courier Association of America in San Diego, as well as the Connecticut International Traffic Association in Windsor Locks. He was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Air and Expedited Motor Carriers Association and was recently appointed to the National Federation of Independent Businessmen Leadership Council.

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 representatives on the National Association of Railroad Passengers and participated in the Association's spring and fall board meetings in Washington and Portland, Oregon, 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.

Mr. Carpenter 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 December 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 2008, Frederick Riese served on ConnDOT-sponsored advisory committees for Phase II of the Danbury Branch Electrification Study and the New London Regional Intermodal Transit Center Study, as the representative of the Department of Environmental Protection.

1. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, IN COOPERATION WITH THE WINDHAM REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND THE WINDHAM REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT, UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN THE WILLIMANTIC AND MANSFIELD/STORRS AREAS, INCLUDING SERVICE BETWEEN THOSE AREAS AND SERVICE CONNECTIONS TO HARTFORD.

Both University of Connecticut officials and those from the towns surrounding the university overwhelmingly describe the public bus service between UConn and those towns as inadequate. Over twenty six thousand people live and/or work on the UConn campus. In addition to these are the employees and visitors associated with the Bergin Correctional Facility and the residents of the three elderly housing facilities in the area. While UConn operates about thirteen shuttle buses on its campus moving over 1.3 million passengers annually, the present transportation services connecting Storrs and Willimantic are inadequate. There is very limited service on weekends and no service at all after 7:00 pm. Many UConn students live off campus along the Routes 195 and 32 corridors, yet no bus service exists between UConn and these areas. Finally, it is clear that the demand for public transportation in the area is very likely to increase. Six hundred and forty housing units are due to be constructed in Mansfield, and it was recently announced that Cushman and Wakefield has been retained to develop a multi-use project downtown that will encompass 200,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, 75,000 square feet of commercial space and 25,000 square feet of civic and community space, with construction expected to commence in 2009.

Despite the fact that there is a constant stream of visitors to the Bergin Correctional Facility from the greater Hartford area (about 100 daily) and over two thousand UConn students intern with companies located in the greater Hartford area, there is no direct service between these locations. There is direct bus service between Hartford and Windham; however, this means that a Mansfield resident wishing to take a bus into Hartford would have to travel seven and one-half miles in the opposite direction in order to ride the twenty-five miles to Hartford.

Students at UConn are, for all intents and purposes, landlocked. Campus rules preclude nearly seven thousand freshman and sophomores from having a car at all, and the converging factors of higher fuel costs and less access to education financing mean that even fewer students have access to private automobiles. International students typically do not have access to private vehicles and are therefore at a yet greater disadvantage. The only way to get to and from Bradley International Airport is by taxi at a one-way cost of about \$100.00. The simple act of shopping presents a significant logistical challenge to many students. Bus transportation to the Buckland Hills area would solve this problem as well as provide a link to the Hartford Division of Connecticut Transit network for Windham County residents who wish to find employment in the greater Hartford area. The Commission recommends that the DOT consider instituting this service.

2. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT, WITH DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES AHEAD AND THE RESULTANT BUDGETARY CHOICES THAT THE STATE WILL FACE, EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO FUND AND MAINTAIN CONNECTICUT'S EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE IMPROVEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE STATE OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, AND TO CONTINUE PLANNING EFFORTS FOR FUTURE TRANSIT ENHANCEMENTS. A GOOD TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IS KEY TO THE LONG TERM ECONOMIC VITALITY OF THE STATE.

Major strides have been made over the last ten years to provide an adequate level of transit service statewide. The Governor, Transportation Strategy Board and State DOT have taken a leadership role in this regard with Jobs Access programs, State dial-a-ride and other service expansions becoming a model for other states. Partners within and beyond Connecticut's borders have helped make these new services a reality. These service expansions that have been successful must be kept on the road.

While current economic and fiscal realities will place the primary transit focus on the maintenance of existing systems, the economic downturn should not be a signal to stop planning for future transit enhancements. The current economic downturn can be expected to demonstrate further the value of public transportation services and to place increased demands upon transit systems. Therefore, the process to prioritize the transit needs for each region and to develop plans for improvements should continue. Toward this purpose, the Commission applauds the value of the Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Planning (LOCHSTP) process, which has proven to be a valuable mechanism for identifying and prioritizing local and regional transportation needs. The LOCHSTP process should be continued in order to prioritize needs in each region in an orderly fashion, and to develop plans that can be implemented as funding becomes available for expansion. The Commission believes that the LOCHSTP process serves well in evaluating the types of constituent needs and service requests that are frequently voiced at our public hearings and regular meetings.

3. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT SHOULD HAVE A PRO-ACTIVE, PARTICIPATORY ROLE IN THE PLANING FOR MAJOR REGIONAL RAIL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS CURRENTLY MOVING FORWARD IN NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY WHICH WILL HAVE PROFOUND IMPACTS ON THE MOVEMENT OF FREIGHT INTO AND OUT OF CONNECTICUT, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT COULD IMPACT OPTIONS FOR PASSENGER TRAVEL FROM CONNECTICUT INTO AND THROUGH NEW YORK CITY.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is proceeding with an Environmental Impact Statement for the Cross-Harbor Freight Movement Project. The centerpiece of this project is a cross-harbor rail freight tunnel running from Greenville Yard in Bayonne, New Jersey to Bay Ridge in Brooklyn. When completed, the project will allow freight trains to travel from New Jersey into New York City and Long Island and northeast into New England, removing a significant number of through trucks from Interstates 95, 91, 84 and other highways in the region. Relatedly, the Port Authority is also studying improvements to the New York New Jersey Rail Corporation's cross-harbor rail float barge operations, which it has recently acquired and which also connect Greenville Yard to Brooklyn.

Another lower Hudson project of potential impact to Connecticut is the proposal of New Jersey Transit to construct two single track passenger tunnels under the Hudson to a new terminal adjacent to Penn Station. As this proposal currently stands, the two tunnels and their supported lines will not physically connect to existing rail lines at Penn Station but rather will dead end just short of that terminal. This would preclude the opportunity for these tunnels to allow connections to Grand Central Terminal, to relieve congestion in the existing cross-Hudson tunnels or to provide any redundancy should outages occur on the existing tunnels. Amtrak, the National Association of Railroad Passengers and the New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers have all taken positions opposing this dead end configuration. The original plans for the NJT tunnels called for a through connection into Penn Station, a position which was revised to the current plans only last year. Connecticut's interest in this project lies in the potential for future passenger service from Stamford, or even New Haven, to points in New Jersey via Penn Station, as well as in the redundancy of having a second cross-Hudson tunnel option to increase reliability and flexibility.

With current projections forecasting a 70% increase in freight movements in the New York/ New Jersey metro region in the next twenty years and with 95% of the freight movements in the region moving by truck, the Commission believes that Connecticut has a stake in the Cross-Harbor Freight Movement Project as an effort whose design and success will manifest itself on our state's roads over the coming decades. Therefore we believe that Connecticut should seek to have a seat at the table as these decisions are discussed and made. Connecticut's interest in the New Jersey Transit passenger tunnels

is not as direct, but Connecticut has expressed its interest in improved connections between Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal and it may be in our interest to follow this project more closely and advocate for a NJT connection into Penn Station if we feel that is in our interest.

4. THE COMMISSION RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES (SUCH AS DEMAND RESPONSE SYSTEMS, COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSPORTATION, PARATRANSIT AND DIAL-A-RIDE) THAT UTILIZE VOLUNTEER DRIVERS, AND IT RECOMMENDS THAT THESE DRIVERS BE PROTECTED FROM PERSONAL LIABILITY.

Many programs throughout the state rely on volunteer drivers to provide transportation services to senior citizens, people with disabilities, and other qualifying riders who lack available transportation. These programs are operated by a variety of entities, including small transit districts, municipalities, non-profit organizations, the Red Cross, religious organizations, social service providers and state agencies. They cater to people who cannot easily ride on regular transit services because of physical conditions, medical needs or lack of available services. Volunteer drivers use vehicles owned by the operating agencies or, in some cases, their own vehicles, to take people to medical and other essential appointments.

The use of volunteer drivers has many benefits including reducing the cost of providing transportation and operating vehicles, and providing a personalized, one-on-one transportation service. One major concern, however, is the personal liability of the driver in the event of an incident or traffic accident. The concerns associated with liability risk can make it difficult to recruit and retain volunteer drivers. Volunteer drivers should be provided protection from personal liability. The Commission suggests legislation be proposed to address this issue in a comprehensive, statewide manner.

This issue is not unique to Connecticut. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) released a report in December 2006 titled *Volunteer Driver Liability and Immunity, a 50 State Survey*, that looked at laws related to insurance and liability for volunteer drivers. The report states that, for a growing number of Americans, mobility is difficult due to age-related conditions (loss of vision, slow response times). The number of Americans age 65 or over was estimated to be 35 million in 2000, and is expected to increase by 80% by 2025, to more than 62 million. The Commission heard testimony at a hearing in Winsted that the number of people age 65 and older living in the Litchfield region is about double the national average. Many of these individuals depend on low cost or free special transportation services that utilize volunteer drivers.

The NCSL report, available at [http://www.ncsl.org/print/transportation/vol\\_driverliabl06.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/print/transportation/vol_driverliabl06.pdf), points out that only two states, Georgia and Oregon, explicitly protect volunteer drivers from civil liability, while in many other states, the laws concerning civil liability and volunteer drivers are unclear. The Commission recommends that volunteer drivers who provide services be protected from personal liability. The laws enacted in Georgia and Oregon should be reviewed, either by ConnDOT or the General Assembly, for their applicability as models for developing legislation in Connecticut. The Commission has also heard that the State of

Vermont enacted legislation to protect volunteer drivers but we were unable to locate such legislation.

5. AS IT HAS IN THREE PREVIOUS ANNUAL REPORTS, THE COMMISSION EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN THAT THE WATERBURY FIXED ROUTE BUS SYSTEM WILL SUFFER SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS TO ITS RIDERSHIP, SCHEDULES AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY IF THE PULSE POINT FOR THE ROUTE SYSTEM IS RELOCATED FROM THE WATERBURY GREEN TO THE PROPOSED WATERBURY REGIONAL INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER ON MEADOW STREET ADJACENT TO THE TRAIN STATION. THE ON-GOING FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THIS PROPOSED FACILITY, BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CONTEMPLATES THE RELOCATION OF THE BUS SYSTEM PULSE POINT TO THIS LOCATION.

The Commission's 2002 and 2003 Annual Reports first addressed the concerns of Northeast Transportation Company and others that the proposed intermodal center to be 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 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. Additionally, all eastbound buses would still need to pass and stop at The Green on their routes to locations including the Waterbury UConn campus, the Brass Center Mall and the East End. Though westbound bus routes might not be significantly impacted by a switch to the intermodal center location, southbound, eastbound and northbound routes would have a problem staying on schedule if such a shift were made

The Commission notes and commends ConnDOT's emphasis that the intermodal center study evaluate the impacts of such a pulse point relocation upon the schedules, the operating costs and the number of buses needed to operate the Waterbury fixed route system. Further, the Commission recommends that 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 seven daily trains into and out of Waterbury Station<sup>1</sup>, and less frequently at other times of the day. It would also avoid the need for as many as 25 buses collecting and waiting at the transit center at peak hours while transfer connections are being made. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Only four of the seven trains operate during hours when CT Transit Waterbury Division bus service operates.



As elsewhere in Connecticut, ridership on the Waterbury Division of Connecticut Transit has continued to grow. For the first ten months of 2008, ridership stood at 1,369,291, up 10.7% from the 1,237,244 people carried in the similar period of 2007. The number of peak hour buses used to meet this demand had grown from 22 to 25 in the last year alone, in large part due to the growth of Jobs Access transportation services to Beacon Falls. The general experience of the system operator, Northeast Transportation, is that the people who ride their buses are on The Green only as long as it takes to catch their bus or to make a transfer. The bus riders are not typically ‘hanging out’ on The Green. This point is raised because the City of New Haven made a disastrous move several years ago to relocate the downtown bus stops off the New Haven Green in order to reduce the number of people downtown at The Green. In a matter of a couple of years, the bus stops were relocated back to The Green as the operational shortcomings of this move became ever more apparent. The Commission does not want to see such a mistake repeated in Waterbury.

6. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT EFFORTS TO REPLACE UNDERSIZED, ANTIQUATED AND INEFFICIENT BUS STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES BE EXPEDITED TO ALLOW FOR THE MORE EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF TRANSIT SERVICES IN SEVERAL AREAS OF CONNECTICUT. THE NEED FOR NEW BUS STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES WAS VOICED AT NO FEWER THAN FIVE OF THE COMMISSION'S EIGHT PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR 2008.

The growth of transit ridership and services over the years has been accompanied by a growth in the size of the vehicle fleets operated by the transit providers. As a result, some existing transit fleet garages have become inadequate and undersized. In other cases, the existing facilities were never designed for transit use and lack such basic features as fueling areas or maintenance facilities.

During the Commission's 2008 public hearings, discussions occurred relative to the needs for new bus facilities for the Estuary Transit District, the Windham Regional Transit District, the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District, the Middletown Transit District, and Northeast Transportation (Waterbury). Plans for a new bus facility in Middletown are moving ahead with the use of designated Federal funds but needs remain in the other regions.

The Estuary Transit District highlighted the need for an operating facility as a critical concern for the transit district. Estuary Transit District currently leases space at the Old Saybrook train station including eight spaces to park buses. These spaces are often taken by the public by 8:00 am. The service is growing and they have nowhere to put vehicles. Maintenance is performed at a local garage that does not have the capability of putting vehicles on lifts. The District purchases fuel at local service stations and does not have fueling facilities of its own.

For the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District, the need for a bus storage and maintenance facility continues to be the top transit priority in the region. Buses and vans continue to be stored outdoors. Some progress in the development for a new facility has occurred in 2008 with the selection of a specific site by the City of Torrington and ConnDOT.

The Windham Regional Transit District also highlighted the need for a facility to store and to maintain the District's buses. WRTD has a 31-bus fleet parking in two locations, with vehicles fueled at a third location, and the District's offices in a fourth location. This is very inefficient. The District could lower its costs significantly if it had its own facility. At present, every maintenance or repair task must be contracted out because of the lack of a facility. If WRTD had its own facility, it could cut out the middleman on parts and service. These concerns are heightened because the fleet is old.

WRTD's transit buses are 1995 models and its Dial-a-Ride vans are 1998s. WRTD has one new Gillig bus coming in by the end of 2008.

A new bus facility for Northeast Transportation in Waterbury has been in the works for a long time. The antiquated and very cramped industrial facility currently used as a garage does allow for the indoor storage of all the buses in the Northeast Transportation fleet, but the 38 vans used for demand response service must be parked outside. Efforts to construct a new facility for the Waterbury vehicle fleet are currently engaged in resizing a previous design for the facility to better accommodate the expanded number of vehicles now operating in the Waterbury fixed route and demand response systems.

While funding to advance these needed projects from the planning phase to actual construction may be difficult to come by in the current fiscal climate, the Commission advocates continued advancement of the planning for these projects. The current call for 'shovel ready' infrastructure projects as part of a federal economic stimulus program demonstrates the value of being prepared to advance projects at such time as a funding source materializes.

7. THE COMMISSION REPEATS ITS 2006 AND 2007 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 IMPROVE SECURITY AND LESSEN CONGESTION 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 Commission appreciates the Department's response to its 2007 recommendation wherein the Department said it would inquire of other airports to ascertain their experience with the effects on parking revenues after cell phone lots were instituted. This was a concern because the Department's response to the 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 Commission believes that 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. If the Department has not yet done so, it should follow through on its intent to 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.

8. THE COMMISSION NOTES THE CONTINUED STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DANBURY BRANCH OF METRO-NORTH AND, IN PARTICULAR, FOR THE TWO CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THE INSTALLATION OF THE CENTRALIZED TRAFFIC CONTROL (CTC) SIGNAL SYSTEM AND THE EXTENSION OF THE DANBURY BRANCH SERVICE TO NEW MILFORD. THE COMMISSION APPRECIATES CONNDOT'S RECENT EFFORTS TO EXPLORE PATHS FOR THE REDESIGN AND POSSIBLE PHASED INSTALLATION OF THE CTC SYSTEM IN LIGHT OF THE PROJECTED PROJECT COST INCREASES AND THE INSUFFICIENT AVAILABLE FUNDING. THE COMMISSION URGES THE DEPARTMENT TO COMPLETE PHASE II OF THE DANBURY BRANCH ELECTRIFICATION STUDY AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE.

At its Danbury public hearing, the Commission once again heard strong support expressed for improvements to the Danbury Branch rail service. ConnDOT had a similar experience when it held a series of scoping meetings in mid-June of this year on improvements to the Danbury Branch, particularly at the standing-room only public hearing in New Milford on June 17. There has been a very strong interest in, and demand for, Danbury Branch improvements expressed over the last fifteen years at both public hearings and in multiple studies performed over that timeframe.

All potential improvement options for increased frequency of service between Norwalk and Danbury require the installation of CTC signalization on the line to accommodate the increased number of trains and specifically to allow for trains to pass at sidings safely. Due to substantial increases in the estimated cost to install the CTC system, rising from \$17 million to \$130 million, ConnDOT has implemented an effort to redesign the CTC system to reduce its cost to \$75 million, and is also investigating whether a phased approach to its installation might be available to expedite the project. According to testimony presented at the Danbury hearing, the redesign effort is anticipated to take 12-18 months, and CTC installation will require two to three years. In view of the fact that CTC installation is a prerequisite for all upgrades on the currently served portions of the Branch, the Commission was very pleased to note Governor Rell's announcement earlier this month of \$2.5 million to perform the design work on this project, and the Bond Commission's approval of these funds. The Commission urges ConnDOT to continue to explore and pursue all available avenues to expedite this project.

The Commission expresses its continued support for the extension of Danbury Branch service to New Milford. This 14.3 mile extension is projected to increase overall ridership on the Danbury Branch by 33% almost immediately. Although the existing track will need to be improved, this option is the most efficient alternative on a cost per

passenger basis and will help remove traffic from the very congested Route 7 roadway both north and south of Danbury.

Lastly, the Commission thanks the Department for instituting the two additional mid-day trains on the Danbury Branch in October. These trains filled a major gap in the service and have been well received by the riding public.

9. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS THE DEPARTMENT FOR SEVERAL RECENT INITIATIVES TO ENCOURAGE BICYCLE USE AS AN ELEMENT OF MULTIMODAL TRAVEL, AND ENCOURAGES FURTHER MEASURES TO PROMOTE BICYCLE TRAVEL.

The Commission notes several encouraging recent developments to foster commuting by bicycle. These include the installation of bicycle racks on transit buses, the provision of sheltered indoor bicycle storage at Union Station in New Haven, the efforts to design improved bicycle storage arrangements on the new M-8 rail cars based on an improved version of the bicycle tie-downs used on the Long Island Railroad's M-7 cars, and the funding of a study on bicycle lockers and racks in the Hartford area. These measures will help promote the growing popularity of bicycles as a means of commuting.

Two specific measures which the Commission recommends to further this effort are the provision of indoor bicycle storage at other transit facilities where intermodal connections are made, and the installation of standard bicycle storage racks at park-and-ride lots, with priority going to high use park-and-ride lots or those on transit routes. The Commission also encourages further evaluation by Metro-North and ConnDOT of ways to accommodate bicycle storage on New Haven Line peak hour trains.

10. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO EXAMINE COMMUTER PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES, TO IMPROVE EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES, AND TO DEVELOP NEW PARKING WHERE NEEDED. ADEQUATE PARKING IS ESSENTIAL FOR RAIL AND BUS RIDERS AS WELL AS FOR THOSE WHO RIDESHARE OR VANPOOL. THE GROWTH IN RIDERSHIP ON ALTERNATE MODES HAS LED TO A PARKING CRUNCH, PARTICULARLY ALONG THE NEW HAVEN LINE, BUT ELSEWHERE AS WELL.

The Commission's 2007 Annual Report contained a recommendation for the State to develop a strategic plan to address parking shortages along the New Haven Line, and the Department subsequently expressed its intent to undertake such a study. However, this parking shortage problem has increasingly spread to facilities outside of the mainline corridor, thereby requiring that remedial actions now go beyond the New Haven Line stations.

Insufficient capacity is a growing problem at park-and-ride lots and transit stations across Connecticut. This is an unintended consequence of the strong ridership growth the state's transit systems have seen in the past year, and programs like Nu Ride that have effectively encouraged ridesharing.

In addition to the issue of parking lot capacity, the Commission notes that many existing lots are poorly marked and minimally maintained. These facilities should be inventoried, their condition noted, and improvements made where needed. An inventory of state properties in congested areas could determine whether any appropriate locations exist for developing new parking facilities.

A methodology should be established to support construction of new parking facilities and provide more resources to lease existing lots from private entities.



THE COMMISSION THANKS THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM INVESTIGATIONS AND REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR UNDERTAKING A VERY THOROUGH AND DETAILED STUDY OF THE REGULATION OF THE TAXI AND LIVERY INDUSTRY IN CONNECTICUT.

In 2007, the Commission recommended that the regulatory framework within which the taxi industry in Connecticut operates be examined and reformed to address multiple problems in the way franchises are awarded, plates are allocated, inspections are performed, and owner-employee relations are structured. The General Assembly's Program Review and Investigations Committee (PRI) undertook a study of taxicab and livery vehicle regulation and of the structure of the taxi industry in Connecticut, and staff findings and recommendations were prepared and presented to the Committee on December 9, 2008. The Committee accepted the staff report on December 17.

One of the issues of foremost concern to the Commission in its 2007 Annual Report was that of the status of many drivers as independent contractors rather than company employees. This status subjected the drivers to the payment of very high lease fees to the companies in order to serve in a company's franchise territory. The Commission notes that a recommendation of the PRI staff report is that the matter of whether the drivers are independent contractors or more properly actual employees of the company should be referred to the Employment Misclassification Enforcement Commission created by Public Act 08-156. The Commission is pleased that this important issue is recommended for review.

The matter of barriers to entry for new operators was also examined in detail. The report concludes in general that significant barriers to entry into the industry do not exist but notes that the median length of time from application to final decision for new operators is 224 days. This long process can operate as a barrier to admission for some applicants.

The PRI report also found a need for improved safety inspections and enforcement on taxi vehicles, and recommends that all taxicabs be inspected annually and that ConnDOT perform unannounced inspections quarterly. Some of the inspections shall be jointly performed with DMV inspectors.

The Commission believes that the operation of the taxi industry and the safety and convenience of the general public will be served by the enactment of the recommendations of the PRI study. The concerns expressed to the Commission concerning market entry should not be overlooked, and the Commission looks forward to the public hearings held during the session which will allow for additional comments with regard to the concerns of smaller and minority-owned companies. The Commission again extends its thanks to the Committee and its staff for undertaking this much needed

and valuable review of the taxi and livery industry and the regulatory environment within which it operates.

## **2008 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 2008.

<u>TOWN</u>	<u>MODERATOR</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Waterbury	Frederick Riese	May 13	Sovereign Bank
Fairfield	Richard Carpenter	May 21	Independence Hall
Old Saybrook	Russell St. John	June 3	Town Hall
Hartford	Morton Katz	June 17	Union Station
Middletown	Tom Cheeseman	September 9	City Hall
Winsted	Morton Katz	September 23	Town Hall
Willimantic	Kevin Maloney	October 8	Town Hall
Danbury	Russell St. John	October 21	Danbury Railway Museum

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

**Public Hearing**

City Hall Annex at Sovereign Bank

26 Kendrick Avenue

Waterbury, Connecticut

Tuesday, May 13, 2008 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Richard Schreiner  
Richard Carpenter  
Thomas Cheeseman  
Russ St. John

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

Fred Riese  
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing at 7:35 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the purpose of the meeting and the mission of the CPTC. He then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff present.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Dr. Yvonne Smith-Isaac**, Chairman of the Greater Waterbury Transit District, provided testimony on a number of issues:

- Although the \$5,000,000 available this year for the State Matching Grant Program is adequate, State dial-a-ride grant program funds need to be increased in the post '09 fiscal year if services are to be maintained, otherwise services will have to be cut. GWTD ran 799 trips through Northeast Transportation in April using three buses under this program.
- ConnDOT contracting procedures need review. The procedures need to be changed as they are complicated and confusing. Contract numbers are repeatedly changed, which necessitates repeated board meetings to review and re-sign the contracts. GWTD is currently working without a contract on the state dial-a-ride program.
- Smith-Isaac feels that the purpose of the proposed Waterbury Intermodal Transportation Center has shifted from a transportation project to a project intended to get people off The Green. She feels this is the unspoken reason the transportation center is being pushed. She notes that major sums of money are being talked about to realign streets to access the transportation center but no money is being talked about to upgrade the actual station.
- Smith-Isaac and the GWTD would like to use money from the federal New Freedom Initiative to start non-ADA dial-a-ride service in the evening in addition to a 211 information hotline providing information on available transportation services. This latter proposal has been delayed due to contract issues.
- Waterbury now has Sunday fixed route bus service. She would like to see money from the Governor's Bus Initiative used for bus service expansion in evenings from 6PM to 11:30 PM next fiscal year, at a cost of \$800,000 to \$1 million.

- Intercity transportation is a problem in Waterbury. Many medical facilities are moving to Southbury where there are no services outside of Peter Pan, i.e., there is no intra-town service in Southbury to pick people up once they get off at the Southbury travel center. There is no service to Gaylord Hospital in Wallingford, to other medical facilities in the Greater Waterbury area, or to Torrington or the lower Naugatuck Valley. She supports the proposal of Housatonic Area Regional Transit for subsidized bus service between Danbury and Waterbury but it would still not address the above needs.
- Wheelchair accessible taxicabs are needed. This is a statewide issue that will probably require legislative action or regulatory change.
- She would like to see a study of pedestrian crossings with an eye to safety and best designs with regard to signal timing and the construction of safety islands, especially with respect to persons with disabilities. Thomaston Avenue, Wolcott Street and Mall area are all problem areas.
- Lastly, the bus stop sign project in Waterbury needs to be moved along. The funding in place but no signs are up yet.

Chairman Tom Cheeseman noted that towns would have to provide an increased match if dial-a-ride funds were increased, and that the contract issues she cited at ConnDOT may actually be due to the Attorney General's office rather than at ConnDOT.

**Sam Gold**, Senior Planner at the Central Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments presented major points from their recently revised long range transportation plan. These included:

- Commuter lots along Route 8 and Interstate 84 are insufficient and need to be expanded. Several lots operate in excess of 100% of capacity at present. The Middlebury commuter lot at I-84 and Route 63 most urgently needs to be expanded.
- Intercity bus services to and from Waterbury need to be expanded. Currently, the only area commuter bus service to Hartford is from Cheshire. The CNVCOG is looking for state aid to subsidize Peter Pan bus service between Danbury and Waterbury and between Waterbury and Hartford. There is a need to study potential bus service corridors between Waterbury and other cities as Waterbury is increasingly becoming a bedroom community for other cities. In this regard, CNVCOG is supportive of the New Britain Busway and hopes that service from Waterbury might make use of this fixed guideway for trips from Waterbury to Hartford.
- The continued stable funding of bus services is important especially in light of the current energy crisis. Evening service expansion would be beneficial to Waterbury residents. ConnDOT should make a more concerted effort to promote and market transit. Gold especially noted that the Waterbury Branch Metro-North service is not well recognized and is underutilized, but despite this it is still growing.
- Non-ADA paratransit expansion is also important; about 30% of paratransit rides are non-ADA trips. CNVCOG supports the expansion of non-ADA paratransit service to Sundays.
- Police patrols of rail station for night arriving trains are nice to see. This has added to the feeling of security, as has the replacement of burned out lighting at the station.
- The Department of Economic and Community Development should continue its public involvement process as the Waterbury Intermodal Center proposal moves forward. The

CNVCOG has supported a study of the center but has concerns that if it is constructed, it will have a negative impact on the fixed route bus system. The primary impact of the center will be on transportation services, rather than as an economic development stimulus.

- In answer to a question from Commissioner Riese, Gold indicated that delays in the bus stop sign project were local and that the CNVCOG and Northeast Transportation need to finalize the bidding process for the installation of the signs.
- In answer to a question from Commissioner Carpenter, Gold expressed disappointment with the progress on Interstate 84 improvements between Waterbury and Danbury. The CNVCOG generally supports the widening of I-84, but doesn't view it as a comprehensive solution to congestion on the roadway. Improvements to rail freight service are needed especially with an eye to connections west of the Hudson River.

**Mike Valuchus** of Independence Northwest, located in Naugatuck, supports the Sunday bus service expansion, which has been very helpful, and the proposed expansion of non-ADA paratransit services. He supports the New Freedoms proposal for the 211 information line, which would be run by the United Way. This service would be very helpful to find rides to medical appointments and for other trip purposes, but the program is currently tied up with a contracting issue with DSS. ConnDOT is attempting to tack this item onto an existing contract between DSS and United Way but DSS is not returning calls of ConnDOT staff on this issue. Other issues and services supported by Mr. Valuchus are bus service between Waterbury and Torrington and to Hartford, provision of accessible taxi service, preservation of dial-a-ride services, and the installation of audible crossing signals including at the crossing immediately in front of this building. He noted that the ability of motorists to take right turns on red can make even audible crossing signals dangerous for blind pedestrians to use.

**Joe Spina**, Operations Manager for Northeast Transportation, spoke about the proposed intermodal center and echoed Yvonne Smith-Isaacs's comments. He feels that the proposed layout at the center cannot serve their current needs, and would require the complete modification of the bus system. Up to 25 buses are now in use at the morning peak. There is no room for this number of buses at the proposed intermodal center site. The location of the system pulse point at The Green offers clean access to the east, west, north and south. Runs are very tight with existing pulse at The Green; there is really no fat in the schedules. Moving to another location would lengthen headways, require additional buses, and increase costs. He indicated that the study consultants were not being communicative. Also, the intercity carriers are not interested in serving the proposed facility.

The Beacon Falls Jobs Access and Reverse Commute service has proven highly successful and is now carrying over 7,000 monthly trips on 5 buses AM and PM. Overall system ridership is up, with Northeast Transportation now carrying 5,500-6,000 trips per weekday, 2,300 on Saturday, and 1,200 on Sunday. About 1/3 of the trips require a transfer. Overall, the system is looking at about a 9% increase per year in riders.

In regards to the contention of some that bus riders are hanging around The Green, Spina noted that riders are just downtown long enough to catch their buses. Those hanging around on The Green are not his bus riders.

Asked about the new bus facility proposed for the site of the former Watertown Drive-In, Spina said Northeast Transportation is meeting with ConnDOT about the new facility. The increase in the size of the bus fleet is necessitating that the facility be enlarged from 90,000 square feet to 140,000 sf.

**MyKella Carter**, a local resident, indicated that she didn't think the intermodal center would work, and suggested running a shuttle bus to the train station instead, as is done in New Haven, to make intermodal connections. She thought that really only Stamford and Bridgeport had potential for successful intermodal facilities. She noted that there is not enough time to get from the afternoon train to The Green for the 2:30 pm pulse connection.

Commissioner Riese closed the hearing at 8:45 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

**Public Hearing**

Independence Hall

725 Old Post Road

Fairfield, Connecticut

Wednesday, May 21, 2008 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Richard Carpenter  
William C. Kelaher  
Kevin Maloney  
Russ St. John  
Richard Schreiner

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese  
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Richard Carpenter opened the hearing at 7:30 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:**

**David Kooris**, the Connecticut Director for the Regional Plan Association, provided testimony on a number of issues. The Regional Plan Association covers 33 counties in the Tri-State Region. Kooris began by noting the need to address climate change in our transportation planning. Enhancing mobility needs to address the three legs of the climate change strategy, namely to reduce the carbon content of the transportation fuel mix, to increase miles per gallon, and to decrease vehicle miles traveled (VMTs). Increases in VMTs can negate all the gains made under the first two strategies if it is not controlled. One crucial strategy to control VMTs is to enhance development around transportation centers.

Kooris discussed the America 2050 Infrastructure Initiative. He noted that in 1808, the first national transportation plan was prepared under the direction of then Secretary of State Gallatin. One hundred years later, in 1908, President Teddy Roosevelt convened the nation's governors to formulate a second national transportation plan, a plan which first envisioned the national interstate highway system. Now in 2008, it is time to take a look at the nation's transportation needs again.

Looking at Connecticut's piece of the national transportation landscape, Kooris sees huge potential in the Waterbury and Danbury Branches of the New Haven Line. This potential has been neglected for too long. More broadly, the state should take a leadership role in enhancing transportation options in the Northeast Corridor. There may be opportunities for bus rapid transit (BRT) projects in Stamford, New Haven and Bridgeport. It should be easy to make improvements in bus/rail connections in the corridor. Transfers between the bus transit and rail transit systems are currently difficult and need improvement.



The state should reduce its reliance on bonding and look at innovative financing. Pay-as-you-go, increases in fuel tax, and the use of public/private partnerships should be used for highway capacity improvements rather than relying on bonding. Emphasis should be shifted from roads to transit. Planners should look at the possibilities of ferry services to lower Manhattan and La Guardia. In the short term, additional parking capacity is needed along the New Haven Line, but not at the expense of walking and biking. Land use should be coordinated with transportation; look to models developed by New Jersey Transit and work with stakeholders to develop collaborate solutions for the community. Land use should be a consideration with respect to the decision of Orange vs. West Haven for a new railroad station and the selection of infrastructure improvements to ports. Other areas of the country are tying land use considerations into their infrastructure investments much more so than Connecticut. Some of the areas most noted for sprawl, such as Dallas, Phoenix, Denver and Charlotte, are now among the leaders in transit-friendly land use. He noted that the proposed third railroad station in Fairfield is badly needed.

ConnDOT is being obstructionist with respect to a multi-use trail along the Merritt Parkway that would include a bicycle path and allow for better access by emergency vehicles.

**John Weldon** of the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority emphasized that ConnDOT is a partner with the Authority in the provision of its transit services. GBTA recently completed construction of its intermodal center which includes connections to rail, intercity bus, taxi and ferry services. The new center was opened in September 2007. The agency is piloting an AVL project which will provide the location of buses to passengers at the intermodal station and other stops and the actual time before the bus arrives. The system will also allow for better tracking of route and schedule adherence by GBTA staff. GBTA also instituted an innovative pass program called *zip trip*, which received an American Public Transportation Association innovation award. Funding for its services needs to be continued and increased.

In answer to a question from Commissioner Riese, Mr. Weldon reported that the system carried 420,000 trips in April, which was up 3.4% over the same period in 2007. The system experienced a drop off after the intermodal center was opened; routes had been reconfigured at the same time to better reflect current develop patterns, and a dip in ridership was expected. GBTA uses funds from the Governors' Initiative to operate two routes from Bridgeport north to the lower Naugatuck Valley. Route 22Y runs from downtown Bridgeport to the Shelton business district and Route 23 runs from downtown Bridgeport to Stratford via Barnum Avenue, then up River Road to Shelton and Derby. Weldon noted that some commuters take the Waterbury Branch train from Waterbury or Naugatuck to Shelton and then pick up these bus routes there.

Reimbursement timeliness from ConnDOT is not typically a problem for GBTA although there is a delay at the beginning of the fiscal year. The agency uses a credit line to bridge the gap between operation of service and reimbursement.

**Pam Ritter** generally supported the remarks of David Kooris of the Regional Plan Association. She is a bicyclist and used to bike to work. She feels the state should place greater emphasis on bicycling when planning roads and include bike lanes. Her comments about the importance of

“bike-ability” in transportation planning led John Weldon to note that all GBTA buses now have bicycle racks and that bike racks are present at key locations like the library and at train stations. Adding to this, David Kooris said that the proposal for a multi-purpose trail along the Merritt Parkway in the unused right-of-way could provide a bikeway from Greenwich on east but he feels ConnDOT is unwilling to allow such a trail in this corridor.

**Bill Scalzi**, owner of Metro-Taxi, indicated that taxi firms are not being included in discussions of intermodal facilities. As the state looks at transportation options, there needs to be a consideration of the infrastructure needed for taxi services, particularly the locations for taxi queues. Taxi services carry 1.5 million passengers per year, use GPS tracking, call recording, and work with police to help solve crimes.

**Frank Rice**, a former member of the Connecticut Public Transportation Authority (precursor of CPTC) noted that when the M-2 rail cars were being placed into service 30 years ago, he suggested that there should be some interim replacement of railcars from time to time so that the car fleet did not get uniformly old and deteriorated, as it has now become until the arrival of the new M-8s. Rice was also supportive of efforts to serve Penn Station direct from Connecticut. He mentioned that the Metro Center development which will include the new Black Rock Fairfield Station was approved.

Commissioner Carpenter closed the hearing at 8:33 PM.

In addition to the verbal testimony presented at this hearing, the South Western Regional Planning Agency submitted written comments covering the following points:

- Rail parking utilization in the South Western Region is at or in excess of capacity, with permit wait lists exceeding three years at key stations. Efforts to provide additional parking capacity should incorporate parking information technology systems, sheltered storage for bicycles, improved pedestrian access, real time information on where parking is available, and the use of auxiliary off-site lots.
- Strategic rail and bus plans need to be developed to guide major investments in these systems. Expected ridership growth will necessitate difficult short-term and long-term decisions which would benefit from the development of comprehensive strategic plans for the operation of our rail and bus systems.
- Greater use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to enhance efficiency, reliability and the dissemination of information to system users.
- Greater emphasis on transit-oriented development to strengthen the link between transportation and land use.
- The need for adequate and sustainable funding for the capital, maintenance and operational needs of transit to avoid deferred maintenance, infrastructure failures, and lack of sufficient system capacity.
- The need to attain and maintain a state of good repair for our rail, bus and ITS systems.
- The need to keep transit and transportation projects on-time and on-budget during all phases of project development.
- The promotion of a user-friendly public transportation network to better serve daily riders and to attract choice riders who would otherwise not use public transit.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

**Public Hearing**

Old Saybrook Town Hall

302 Main Street

Old Saybrook, Connecticut

Tuesday, June 3, 2008 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Chris Adams  
Richard Carpenter  
Thomas Cheeseman  
Terry Hall  
William C. Kelaher  
Kevin Maloney  
Russ St. John  
Richard Schreiner

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese  
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Russ St. John opened the hearing at 7:38 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate. Commission members and ConnDOT staff present introduced themselves.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Kim Morton**, interim executive director of the Estuary Transit District provided the only public testimony at the hearing. She is employed by First Transit, normally at CT TRANSIT in Hartford, and was appointed by the State to provide guidance and assist the district in finding a permanent executive director either through the hiring process or by contracting with a management company. The district operates three shuttle routes, deviated fixed routes and dial-a-ride services. There are only three staff people, but they have to deal with the same state and federal requirements as larger transit systems.

Morton highlighted the need for an operating facility as a critical concern for the transit district. Estuary TD currently leases space at the train station including eight spaces to park buses. These spaces are often taken by the public by 8:00 am. The service is growing and they have nowhere to put vehicles. Maintenance is performed at a local garage that does not have the capability of putting vehicles on lifts. The District purchases fuel at local service stations and does not participate in any group purchase of fuel.

Ms. Morton indicated that her other major concern was timing and connections of services. She mentioned poor connections with schedules of Shore Line East and Amtrak trains and with SEAT routes at Niantic. She is working with the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (CRERPA) on this issue. The agency has a planned project under the Governor's Initiative that she wants to delay until the district has its house in order. The District's financial

situation is very tight. Due to the fiscal uncertainties at the District, Morton has asked for an extension to October 1 to implement the proposed new bus service to Middletown. Also, the District does not currently have a vehicle to run this service.

Elaborating on the maintenance situation, Morton said that the lack of a contract for maintenance means the District has no fixed price for maintenance services, which complicates budgeting. Five new vehicles are expected to arrive soon. Two of the four local garages available to perform maintenance can't even get the District's vehicles into their garages.

The three fixed routes operated by the District are the Riverside, Shoreline and Niantic routes. Marketing of these and other services is a problem; buses are not signed and some routes are not on schedules provided by the District. There are problems with people not recognizing buses or routes. Also, there is the general problem of insufficient parking at the local rail station. On occasion, the District parks some of its vehicles at the Ford dealer across the street. If a formal agreement with the dealer could be arrived at, the District could eliminate the parking spaces from its lease agreement at the train station. If the District has its own maintenance facility, it could save money on maintenance, parking and fuel. Such a facility could be owned or leased.

Estuary Transit serves nine towns. It does receive some level of municipal support.

Moderator St. John closed the hearing at 8:20 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**  
**Public Hearing**  
Union Station  
One Union Place  
Hartford, Connecticut  
Tuesday, June 17, 2008 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Thomas Cheeseman  
Russ St. John  
Morton Katz  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Richard Sunderhauf  
William Kelaher  
Kevin Maloney  
Christopher Adams  
Edward McAnaney

**CPTC EX OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Susan Simmat  
Connie Mendolia

**CONNDOT STAFF**

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Morton Katz opened the meeting at 7:34 pm. He welcomed the attendees, gave a brief description of the purpose of the hearing and the function of the CPTC, and introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff in attendance.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Mayor Eddie Perez** of Hartford began his testimony by stating that the Hartford region cannot compete with other parts of the country without a first class transportation infrastructure. As energy prices continue to soar, the most important element to the vitality of the Capitol Region is efficient, affordable transportation that is built on a smart growth model, that reduces demand on other types of infrastructure, and that utilizes new transportation projects as an impetus for development.

Mayor Perez is working on a major transportation initiative that will have six major tenants to it. These are: 1) that Hartford must have a quick, convenient and efficient connection to Bradley Airport, 2) Hartford must have a commuter friendly transportation system that moves people into and out of the city to area towns, 3) the region needs to think about transportation in terms of smart growth, transit oriented development and green technologies, 4) there is a need to address areas where transportation has hurt the region and to correct those wrongs, such as the Interstate 84 viaduct, 5) provide efficient and affordable connections to New York and Boston, and 6) provide transit links from the city to the first ring suburbs.

Commissioner Maloney asked if, in the Mayor's opinion, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) was the appropriate vehicle to go through in order to enable the regional transportation cooperation that the Mayor thought was so important. The Mayor stated that

CRCOG is an important player with respect to regional transportation issues, in particular because of its connections to ConnDOT, but that it lacks the resources to be significantly effective. Chairman Cheeseman asked how important the help of the business community was to this effort and how can we keep citizens from fleeing the state. The Mayor remarked that the aid of the business community is very important and that we need to look at these types of problems from a regional rather than a local perspective.

**State Senator Donald DeFronzo** spoke of the inordinate amount of time it takes to get transportation projects accomplished, giving as an example the New Britain/Hartford busway which was projected to cost 80 million dollars when originally proposed in the 1990's but now is projected to cost 450 million dollars and ground has yet to be broken. DeFronzo sees rail freight lines as underutilized both for the movement of freight and for their passenger potential. He cited the line from Waterbury to Berlin to Hartford as an example of the latter. The Senator stated that state income from fuel taxes had dropped for the first time and that the public's reaction to the cost of fuel presented the state with a unique opportunity to provide affordable public transportation. Chairman Cheeseman complimented the Senator on his accessibility since taking over as Co-Chair of the Transportation Committee and opined that the cost of fuel is now the number one problem in the state's transit districts. He expects his costs to literally double when his fuel contract comes up for renewal shortly. Commissioner Maloney asked if there was any way that the portion of fuel taxes that now go into the general fund could be redirected to their original purpose of supporting the state's transportation infrastructure. The Senator said that while that would be desirable, it was highly unlikely that this change could be made in light of the recent decline in state revenue. Commissioner St. John asked if the Senator envisioned a different future direction of the DOT in light of the fact that the new head of the department will be the first with a mass transit background. The Senator stated that regardless of his background, the new department head will not be effective if he has to deal with the fragmented decision making process that now exists. He must be given the authority to make the necessary decisions on his own.

**Robert Painter** stated his support for the comments of both Mayor Perez and Senator DeFronzo and added that "we need to think green". He emphasized that the I-84 Viaduct issue needs to be addressed with emphasis placed on determining viable alternatives. He also stated that in his opinion, political pressure has hamstrung effective transportation planning in the area. Lastly, he noted that there is no quick way to get from Hartford to Storrs.

**William Harper** related his visits to Chicago, where HOV lanes were successfully converted to mass transit lines, and suggested that a similar conversion could be accomplished here.

**Shannon Stone**, of the firm Becker & Becker, which is developing a 500 unit mixed-income apartment building in New Haven, presented and read a document encouraging the expansion of the rail service to and from the State Street Rail Station in New Haven. Commissioner Adams inquired as to what presented the primary roadblock to expansion of the rail service at the State Street Station and Ms. Stone answered that she did not know. Commissioner Maloney asked if frequent bus shuttle service between the State Street Station and Union Station in New Haven where there was greater frequency of service might be a viable alternative. Ms. Shannon stated that an increase in rail service would be preferable. Commissioner Kelaher asked if an increase

in the Shore Line East service is as critical as an increase in the Metro-North service and was the demand greater for inbound or outbound service? Ms. Stone answered that increased service on the shore line was just as important but did not know whether inbound or outbound service presented the greater need. Commissioner Kelaher also asked if a portion of the parking garage proposed for the development would be available to the public and was told that about 135 of the five hundred parking spaces proposed were slotted for public use.

**David Steward** of the Peter Pan Bus Company testified that bus ridership is up and his company has added new buses. On the down side, he noted that there are no provisions in the New Britain/Hartford busway project for a parking lot at the main bus station in New Britain. In his opinion, a parking lot is necessary to encourage people to use the busway and also to insure their safety, which he thinks is a problem in downtown New Britain. He also thinks that there should be free parking at Union Station in Hartford. Commissioner Loteczka asked if Peter Pan's business has been affected by the increase in fuel costs. Mr. Steward replied that indeed it had. Peter Pan has been in the process of hiring more drivers and purchasing additional equipment.

Commissioner Katz adjourned the hearing at 8:50 pm

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

**Public Hearing**

Middletown City Hall

Council Chambers

245 DeKoven Drive

Middletown, Connecticut

Tuesday, September 9, 2008 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Thomas Cheeseman  
Richard Carpenter  
Russ St. John  
Richard Sunderhauf  
Christopher Adams  
Kevin Maloney  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Edward McAnaney

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

Fred Riese  
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Tom Cheeseman opened the hearing at 7:30 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate. Commission members and ConnDOT staff present introduced themselves.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Gil Hayes**, deputy first selectman of the Town of East Windsor, noted that public transportation in his town is limited to Dial-a-Ride service for riders 60+years of age, with no service for disabled riders, unless they are over 60 years of age. This is due to funding. Hayes would like to get Connecticut Transit service to come to East Windsor. Particularly, he would like to see service to Mill Pond Village, a mixed population apartment community of 360 units which are at 94% occupancy.

Hayes noted that Independent Transportation Network (ITN) service will begin in October for 60+ or legally blind riders, but he still sees a need for Connecticut Transit service to Mill Pond Village. Twice a day commuter service to Hartford would help East Windsor. The large parking lot at Saint Catherine's Church, which has previously been used as a commuter lot and which holds more than 100 cars, could be used for this service. Since St. Catherine's is only ¼ mile from Mill Pond Village, a twice daily run out of this lot would be useful to village residents.

Richard Sunderhauf suggested that perhaps an East Windsor stop could be added either to the 'H' Line to South Windsor, to the Enfield and Windsor Locks Express, or to the 92 bus from Copaco's to Buckland Hills. He suggested that Hayes contact Charlie Carson at Connecticut Transit who runs the Routes and Scheduling Office.



Hayes said another purpose that Connecticut Transit service to East Windsor would accomplish is that it would open up the area to ADA service also. He notes that there are quite a few handicapped residents at Mill Pond Village.

Following the testimony of Gil Hayes, CPTC Chairman Tom Cheeseman discussed the \$19.1 million earmark for the Middletown Transit District designated to improve transit and parking services within the district. The District has settled on three projects for funding with this earmark: (1) building a new garage for Middletown Area Transit, (2) returning street cars to Middletown, and (3) constructing three small parking garages. Towards meeting the first objective, Middletown Transit District has acquired property containing a two year old 20,000 square foot building and three smaller buildings, with help from some state and local matching funds. MAT's current facility is very antiquated and is too small.

Cheeseman also noted that under the new fuel purchase contract for Middletown Area Transit, fuel costs have gone up by \$1.00 per gallon, creating an immediate \$100,000 deficit for the system.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

**Public Hearing**

Winsted Town Hall

338 Main Street

Winsted, Connecticut

Tuesday, September 24, 2008 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Thomas Cheeseman  
Morton Katz  
Russ St. John  
Richard Schreiner

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

Fred Riese  
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Morton Katz opened the hearing at 7:38 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate. Commission members and ConnDOT staff present introduced themselves.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Carole Deane**, executive director of the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District (NWCTTD) reported that the district's operations situation had not changed; they were still storing buses outdoors. Some meetings on a new bus facility have taken place in the last year, but progress has been slow. Preliminary site investigation has been completed and some preliminary design work has been done. Fee negotiations with the environmental consultant preparing the environmental impact evaluation will occur next month. Design completion is expected by late 2009, with construction to begin by 2011.

Ridership is up on regional bus services, especially for the state dial-a-ride funded program and Jobs Access. The District has initiated weekend services in many of the towns in the service area, including Torrington, Litchfield, Canaan and Salisbury. Jobs Access ridership is also up. The District runs three Jobs Access trips to Canaan and Salisbury, and the Route 183 service which has seen a big increase in ridership in the last six weeks. A Jobs Access shift return run to Waterbury also operates at 3 pm, with Northeast Transportation of Waterbury performing the morning shift run.

ConnDOT and NWCTTD have just completed a redesign of bus schedules. The new schedules, which will be available in Braille and large print, will reflect the recent addition of new service on the Litchfield to Bantam run.

After an inquiry by Commissioner St. John, there was some discussion on the status of taxi services, an issue that has come up at prior hearings in this region. Taxi availability is very

limited. Mr. King offered an explanation of the differences between taxi and limousine services and the regulatory limitations placed on each form of transportation.

**Tammy Ostroski**, assistant director of NWCTTD, reported that the District was recently approached by officials at Becton-Dickinson with regard to transportation. The firm has three shifts and is looking for Jobs Access bus transportation to their facility in Canaan. Becton-Dickinson may be willing to subsidize a Torrington-Canaan run.

**Richard Lynn**, planning director for the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials (LHCEO) identified the priorities for public bus services in the Litchfield Hills Region. The top priority is the construction of a centralized transportation facility for the transit district. He reemphasized the slow progress on this front and that a study in 2004 confirmed the need for such a facility. However, Lynn is encouraged to see that a specific site has been settled on by the City of Torrington and ConnDOT from among the several potential locations that had been identified for the proposed facility.

The Locally-Coordinated Human Services Transportation Planning (LOCHSTP) process has been a valuable one, and led to the identification of needed service enhancements in the region. Chief among these is the creation of a transportation coordinator position within NWCTTD to assist in marketing and in coordinating service delivery. It is often the case that citizens do not know what services are currently available. Other priorities identified in the LOCHSTP process include expanded dial-a-ride service to the Canaan area and purchase of an accessible vehicle for the evolving Rural Independent Transportation System (RITS) in the region. Operating funds are also key for the RITS program, which would be operated through the transit district. A grant application to cover three years of operating funds has been submitted to ConnDOT.

The RITS program is based on a community transportation model developed in Portland, Maine that uses volunteer drivers and small vehicles. RITS would particularly cater to people who cannot easily ride on regular transit services because of physical conditions or medical needs. Dialysis patients are one example cited by Lynn. Current planning calls for the RITS service dispatch function to be housed at the NWCTTD.

Commissioner Katz noted the potential insurance problems with the volunteer approach. Mr. Lynn concurred and suggested that CPTC might help push for legislative measures that would make it easier for volunteer transportation services to operate in Connecticut. Tom Cheeseman mentioned that Vermont has passed legislation to shield volunteers from liability. An attempt to pass similar legislation in Connecticut was opposed by the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and did not get out of the Judicial Committee of the General Assembly.

Initially the RITS service would operate in three towns, then be expanded to all 11 towns of the transit district. Ideally, the service would ultimately cover all 20 towns of northwestern Connecticut. The RITS service would use cars and vans and one wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

Mr. Lynn pointed out that the demand for public bus services will increase in the Litchfield Hills Region as the population ages. While 12% of the population is 65 years or older nationally, this figure is 20% for the Litchfield Hills Planning Region. In 20 years, the national 65 year+ figure

is projected to be 20% while for the Litchfield Hills Region, 40% of the population will be 65 or over. A transit system with reliable operating funding will be needed to meet the transit needs of this area.

Commissioner Katz read a letter from **Phillip Little** into the record. Mr. Little advocated better bus service within Torrington and Winsted as well as improved connections to Simsbury, Canton and Avon.

Commissioner Katz closed the hearing at 8:40 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

Windham Town Hall  
979 Main Street

Willimantic, Connecticut

Wednesday, October 8, 2008 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Kevin Maloney  
Richard Carpenter  
Thomas Cheeseman  
Yvonne Loteczka

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

Fred Riese  
Susan Simmat

Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Kevin Maloney opened the hearing at 7:35 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the purpose of the meeting and the mission of the CPTC. He then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff present and read the public hearing notice into the record.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Sherry Goldman**, a resident of Mansfield, sees a need for additional public transportation between Mansfield and Hartford. Windham has a comparable service but Mansfield does not. As Mansfield, or Storrs specifically, is 7.4 miles north of Willimantic, it does not make sense to travel 7.4 miles south to catch a 25 mile ride to Hartford.

Goldman provided several reasons to back up her call for a transit connection from Mansfield to Hartford. First, the University of Connecticut has 16,348 undergraduate students on campus, 6,067 graduate and professional students, and 4,288 full-time employees. The university also creates opportunities for reverse commutes. Windham Regional Council of Governments (WINCOG) figures show potential ridership is increasing as enrollment increases to 6,794 freshman and sophomores on campus who aren't allowed to have cars.

In addition to UConn, the Bergin Correctional Facility has 1,037 inmates and over 200 employees. On average, the inmates receive collectively 15 morning visits, 20 afternoon visits, and 50 evening visits, with over 100 daily visits on the weekends. There are also three senior housing projects near the UConn campus. Airport connections are a problem as a round trip to Bradley from Storrs costs \$100. Lastly, 2,000 UConn students participate in internships, many in the Hartford area, and need transportation to access these jobs. University plans call for increasing the number of internships to 2,300.

Lastly, Goldman discussed downtown development plans for Storrs, which will increase the demand for public transportation from Storrs. As an employee of UConn, she sees firsthand that students need transportation between Hartford and Storrs.

**Rose Krucinik** of the Windham Regional Transit District (WRTD) reported that ridership is up 27% over last year. The buses are full. They are falling apart but they are full. She expressed her opinion that a better connection between UConn and Eastern is needed. There is no connection at all in the evening. Also there is no transit in the area south of the Willimantic River. WRTD run two vehicles at peak hours on the Storrs-Willimantic route but at non-peak hours there are two hour headways. Krucinik sees a need for transit service to Manchester to access retail jobs there and to access bus connections to Hartford. Also, there is no evening service in the area.

Krucinik also highlighted the need for a facility to store and maintain the District's buses. WRTD has a 31-bus fleet parking in two locations, with vehicles fueled at a third location, and the District's offices in a fourth location. This is very inefficient. The District could lower its costs significantly if it has its own facility. At present, every maintenance or repair task must be contracted out because of the lack of a facility. If WRTD had its own facility, it could cut out the middleman on parts and service. These concerns are heightened because the fleet is old. Her transit buses are 1995 models. Her Dial-a-Ride vans are 1998s. WRTD has one new Gillig bus coming in by the end of 2008.

**Janet Franiere**, Manager of Transportation at UConn, mentioned that the school has 6,700 freshmen and sophomores on campus who are without vehicles plus many international students who typically have no vehicles. There is no service from Storrs to Willimantic on Sunday. Franiere receives many requests to provide UConn shuttle service to many off-campus apartment complexes which are presently not covered by any service. Most of her fleet is 1997 Gillig buses. She noted the 2-hour headways on the Willimantic-Storrs service.

**Betty Gardner** is Chairman of the Mansfield Transportation Advisory Council. Last night at a meeting of that group, she voted to endorse the concept of a commuter bus to Hartford. She also distributed ridership data for the Storrs-Willimantic bus showing 34,579 riders in FY '04, 36,583 in FY '05, 49,177 in FY '06 and 63,586 in FY '07.

**Helen Koehn** of Storrs also is a member of the Mansfield Transportation Advisory Council and serves on the Mansfield Town Council. She asks for reinstatement of the Storrs-Hartford bus service with inbound service to Hartford in the morning and a return run in the afternoon. Arrow previously operated such service until it ceased 12 years ago. Bus service to Hartford is needed for the full-time employees who work there. Currently, employees in Hartford would need to drive to Coventry and catch a bus from there to Bolton, then get a bus to Hartford. Koehn also lauded the pre-paid fare program called Free Fare run by WRTD which serves Mansfield residents and UConn students.

**Jeanne deSmet** worked in Hartford for many years. It was two years before she knew that there was a commuter bus to Hartford from Willimantic. It was not well known that such a service existed. deSmet said that more frequent local service is needed. ECSU buses come every half hour but on no fixed time schedule, which limits their utility. She also noted that Willimantic used to have train service when Amtrak's Montrealer came through town. She would love to see train service restored.

**Mark Paquette**, Executive Director of the Windham Regional Council of Governments, reiterated that the WRTD's bus fleet consists of very old vehicles, which is a factor in being able to provide service efficiently.

**Mayor Betsy Patterson** of Mansfield would like to see more rail freight service in the area to get trucks off the road. She also noted that the Town of Mansfield helps fund the Storrs-Willimantic bus service. She mentioned that more bike paths have been built around the UConn campus. College students now need to have jobs to support themselves and this requires transportation to reach those jobs.

**Dan Britton** is a Mansfield resident, and a former UConn student, grad student and UConn employee. He is a rider on the WRTD Willimantic-Storrs bus, which he says has seen a dramatic increase in ridership recently. This service is well used but very limited, with one or two hour headways. More frequent service is needed. Britton acknowledges the challenges of providing transit services in rural areas, however, with more economic development occurring in the region, more transit service will be needed for restaurants and cultural sites and events. More public transportation to Hartford from the Mansfield and Willimantic areas would be helpful. More public transportation would make the area more attractive to young people.

**Maria Gogarten**, a Mansfield resident, sees a need for public transportation in the area. This is a good time to get people into the public transportation habit. Foreign visitors she knows are very surprised to find so little public transportation here.

**Cynthia van Zelm** would love to see Storrs to Hartford bus service. She noted that the development plans for downtown Storrs include 690 units of housing.

**Mayor Patterson** said that she has just recently returned from a trip to Dublin and was very impressed with the very frequent, well used, excellent bus service there.

**Jim Hintz**, Director of Off-Campus Student Services at UConn, sees a need for bus service options along Routes 195 and 32 to serve graduate students and others. Bus transportation is also needed for students involved in community outreach work. There are some community outreach opportunities in Storrs and Willimantic, but bus connections are necessary in order to take advantage of the larger opportunities for community outreach service in Hartford.

Commissioner Maloney closed the hearing at 8:45 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission  
Public Hearing**

Danbury Railway Museum  
Union Station  
Danbury, Connecticut  
Tuesday, October 21, 2008 – 7:30 PM

**CPTC VOTING MEMBERS**

Dick Carpenter  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Kevin Maloney  
Russ St. John  
Richard Schreiner

**CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS CDOT STAFF**

Fred Riese  
Dennis King

**INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Russ St. John opened the hearing at 7:30 PM, welcoming the attendees and giving a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate. Commission members and ConnDOT staff present introduced themselves.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Ira Pollock**, president of the Danbury Railway Museum welcomed the Commission to the museum.

**Bob Rush**, New Milford resident and member of the New Milford Rail Service Restoration Society expressed his support for improvement of rail service on the Danbury Branch Line and its extension to New Milford. He feels there have been too many studies and too many delays in actually implementing this service. He has even heard unofficially that the contract for the Washington Group, the consultant doing the Danbury Branch Study, has been amended to look at extending service all the way to Pittsfield. He feels the focus should be on movement of people from Greater Danbury along the congested route 7 corridor down into southern Fairfield County.

**David Hannon** is Deputy Director of the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO), based in Brookfield. HVCEO is comprised of ten municipalities with Danbury as the major urban area. Mr. Hannon thanked the Commission for its past support of transportation projects in the region.

HVCEO has concerns about the continued delay of the centralized traffic control (CTC) project on the Danbury Branch, which has been scheduled on the TIP for 20 years. All the options for service improvements outlined in the current study are predicated on the installation of this system. The current system for movement of trains is antiquated and is based on a manual switch system which has been used for over 100 years. Over the years, estimates for the cost of



the CTC system have grown from \$17 million to \$110 million. The state recently lost \$9 million in federal funds for this project as a result of the long delay. The CTC system is now being redesigned to get the cost down to \$75 million. The redesign process will take 12-18 months. The actual implementation of the CTC project is expected to take two to three years to complete.

Hannon echoed Bob Rush's comments and noted that HVCEO has supported the extension of Danbury Branch service to New Milford for years. Mr. Hannon indicated that, based on ConnDOT data, extension of service to New Milford would increase overall ridership on the Branch by 33% almost immediately. Current plans would provide a station stop just north of the historic New Milford station to better accommodate parking and motor vehicle traffic. The mayor of New Milford has expressed her concern that trains stopped at New Milford station not block traffic on Bridge Street, hence the consideration of a station site north of the historic station.

Service on the Branch is slower and less frequent than it was 100 years ago.

Mr. Hannon indicated that HVCEO would like to have the rail schedule examined with an eye to travel patterns into and out of the region. The current rail schedule on the Danbury Branch is based on travel to Grand Central Terminal. Most commuters travel between the Housatonic Region and southwestern Connecticut. Reverse commute trains up into the region would be desirable. The two new mid-day trains have just started operating about 10 days ago. There is no ridership data on them yet but they should help.

He thought that the examination of service up to Pittsfield could be beneficial. New York State is an active participant in the provision of Harlem Line bus shuttles operated by HART. Massachusetts might also participate in cost sharing for the resumption of passenger service to Pittsfield.

**Mike McLachlan**, chief of staff for Mayor Boughton of Danbury, reiterated concerns about delays in the implementation of the CTC system on the Danbury Branch. He indicated that the cost per mile to extend service to New Milford is low in comparison to the majority of rail expansion projects nationally. The communities to the north are in favor of the service. The low level of service on the Danbury Branch is costing the line ridership which is going to New York's Harlem Line.

**Peter McLachlan** was a locomotive engineer with the New Haven and Housatonic railroads between 1956 and 1998. Mr. McLachlan questioned the approach of the consultants working on the Branch Line Study and the need for engineering improvements to increase track speed. The study consultants claimed that major realignments and grade improvements will be necessary to increase the train speed to New Milford above 25 miles per hour. When Mr. McLachlan was an employee for the New Haven Railroad, track speed between New Milford and Danbury was 50 to 60 miles per hour with the existing track geometry, albeit with the track in better condition than it is today. This is consistent with timetables up until 1972 which allowed 24 minutes from Danbury to New Milford and substantially quicker than the 38 minutes postulated for this trip by the consultant studies. He also suggested that more southbound service could be provided without the construction of sidings by running trains coupled to New Milford.

Mr. McLachlan expressed frustration over the number of studies and time it is taking to expand rail service 14 miles north of Danbury.

**Marty Grossman**, a retired Metro-North employee suggested that a rail connection should be sought between Danbury and Brewster, linking the Harlem and Danbury Branch Lines via the Maybrook Line.

He also suggested that light rail might be a lower cost option for expansion in the region. New Jersey has instituted light rail on freight lines linking Camden and Trenton in that state.

Commissioner St. John closed the hearing at 8:37 PM.

## **SEC. 13b-11a. Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SECTION 13b-32**

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