

1999 CPTC ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, ACTING THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OR OTHER APPROPRIATE AGENCIES, ENCOURAGE THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS TO RETURN THE DOWNTOWN BUS STOPS TO THEIR PRE-JUNE 28, 1998 LOCATIONS.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSE:

It is not correct that “most” of CTTransit’s downtown bus stops were moved from the New Haven Green. The City eventually imposed a “compromise plan” that preserved the Green as the transfer hub for bus service. The major changes involved truncating the heavily used stop on Chapel Street at Church and moving the stop on Temple Street at Chapel to the Elm Street end of the block. As such, only some customers’ transfer connections at the Green were worsened (mainly transfers between southbound and westbound routes). However, it is certainly correct to say that no one’s transfer connections were improved, and one effect is to leave two of the special wrought iron and glass waiting shelters on Temple Street with no bus service.

The fact that 50% of customers make transfers at the Green was usually cited by *proponents* of moving the stops who argued that the transfer hub could be relocated off the Green without affecting mobility. In fact, the more powerful argument against moving stops was that “downtown” was the destination of at least half the customers who alighted at the Green. Absent a detailed origin-destination survey and transfer study, relocating major stops from the Green area could have a major impact on ridership.

We are most concerned by the statements of some City officials intimating that the current downtown bus stop plan is only “interim” and that the City still intends to relocate the transfer hub to the corner of State and Chapel Street. Plans to construct a new State Street rail stop for Shore Line East commuters are proceeding. City staff has intimated that the so-called Shartenburg corner across from the new rail station is intended to become the new transfer hub.

At the time the relocation of bus stops was being hotly debated, the City engaged consultant Herb Levinson to analyze the cost impact. Levinson’s conclusion was that the existing bus stops on the Green appeared to be optimal in terms of customer convenience and that moving the transfer hub to State and Chapel would add some \$300,000 in annual operating expense, not to mention the capital cost of bus shelters and relocating the CTTransit information booth.