

1999 CPTC ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS AN EXPANDED MARKETING EFFORT TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE STATE-CONTRACTED DATTCO COMMUTER BUS SERVICE BETWEEN HARTFORD AND NEW HAVEN. FEW PEOPLE, EVEN WITHIN THE TRANSIT USING COMMUNITY, ARE AWARE OF THIS SERVICE, ESPECIALLY IN THE NEW HAVEN AREA. RIDeworks AND RIDESHARE WOULD BE APPROPRIATE PARTNERS IN PUBLICIZING THE AVAILABILITY OF THIS VALUABLE SERVICE.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSE:

ConnDOT has had limited success generating new ridership from its marketing of this service in The Commuters' Register. Budget constraints, among other factors, prohibit us from more aggressively advertising in other media. There is also a concern that private over-the-road operators would object to our heavily marketing a service that utilizes vehicles purchased with 80% federal funding and that runs in competition with these private services. In addition, private operators may find it offensive that any losses generated by this service are fully subsidized by the state.

It is also difficult to effectively market this service because most trips do not readily adapt to prime-time work starts. This situation cannot be easily remedied since these trips are not original dispatches of bus equipment, but rather are run in lieu of deadhead trips which would be made by DATTCO equipment prior to or following the Hartford to Old Saybrook and S-Route coastal route trips. The result of this situation is that the schedule as it stands is all that can be afforded without significantly increasing expenses by dispatching additional vehicles. The present daily cost of operating this service is reasonable and any change, even marginal, would be very costly.

ConnDOT will continue to market this service through The Commuters' Register and other "low-key" outlets. We hesitate to more aggressively market this service for the reasons stated above.