

AGENDA

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MEETING

Thursday, September 4, 2003 - 1:30 PM

Legislative Office Building, Hearing Room 1B

Hartford, Connecticut

1. Approval of the August 7, 2003 meeting minutes
2. Peter Cohen, Director of Government Affairs, Amtrak
3. Comments from the public
4. Report from operating entities
5. Chairman's report
6. Old business
7. New business

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CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE

THURSDAY, August 7, 2003

Department of Transportation, Conference Room B

Newington, Connecticut

VOTING MEMBERS

Dorothy Adamson
Linda Blair
Arroll Borden
Dennis Brenner
Tom Cheeseman
N. Terry Hall
Morton Katz
Yvonne Loteczka
Richard Schreiner
Russell St. John
Richard Sunderhauf

GUESTS

Melissa Leigh
Michael Morehouse
Mario Marrero
Anthony V. Savino
Bradshaw Smith

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Cindy Gollareny
Laila Mandour
Harry Harris
H. James Boice
David Balzer

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Minutes

August 7, 2003

(Meeting convened at 1:30 p.m.)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 10, 2003

Mrs. Jean Pottinger was inadvertently omitted from the July 10 minutes list of attendees. Minutes revised to reflect her attendance.

Accepted as revised.

FEATURED SPEAKERS – KEY POINTS

Melissa Leigh, Special Projects Manager of South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA), with Michael Morehouse, Manager of Transportation Planning, Wilbur Smith Associates, reported on “Vision 2020”, South Western Connecticut Congestion Mitigation Systems Plan. The study consists of recommendations for travel options which will reduce traffic congestion, improve accessibility and mobility, support growth and increase transportation system capacity in Southwestern Connecticut. The approach of the study consisted of data collection and review, public involvement through an advisory committee, telephone surveys, focus groups, public meetings, presentations and media.

The identification of strategies to mitigate traffic congestion in the study area was subject to several constraints as follows: the analysis focused on trips starting and ending within the study area and on peak period work trips, the expansion or alteration of the Merritt Parkway was not considered due to its status as a federally designated historic landmark, and the analysis of land use strategies assumed maintenance of local jurisdiction of land use regulations.

“Vision 2020” recommendations include: *Immediate Actions* (0-2 years) involving public education, land use and review, the expansion of Travel Demand Management (TDM) Programs and project feasibility studies. *Short-term Actions* (2-7 years) involve improvements of transit operations and I-95 safety and operation, traffic systems and truck parking management and revision of zoning regulations. *Long-term Actions* (7-20 years) involve strengthening the Coastal Corridor by expanding the rail and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, the development of inland rail and BRT connections, strengthening intermodal hubs, and pricing strategies to manage demand.

The next steps of the study involve public awareness of the plan, sharing results with policy makers, updating the long-range transportation plan, and the development of a congestion management system.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

REPORT FROM OPERATING ENTITIES

Mr. Harry Harris, Bureau Chief of Public Transportation, reported on proposed changes to the Waterbury rail service and Shore Line East rail service. Effective October 2003, the department will eliminate the midday service on the Waterbury Branch service and replace it with three buses operating from noon to 5:00 P.M. This will improve the amount of alternative service available for individuals to get from Waterbury to Bridgeport, as well as save approximately \$120,000 per year. It will also allow for Waterbury equipment to be sent to Stamford during the day, improving the maintenance service on the equipment as well as the maintenance on the track itself.

Ridership on the Shore Line East rail service has increased significantly and continues to increase. Therefore, Shoreline East will resume operation of all trains, which will be reflected in the October 2003 schedule.

Mr. Harris also reported that the Stamford garage is near completion. Within the upcoming weeks, construction will begin on a taxi control system to improve the taxicab service at the Stamford station. This system will require all taxicabs to go to a specific area and pass through a gate-controlled queue line similar to that of the EasyPass. Approximately 10 taxicabs will be permitted within the area at one time and they will be required to pay a \$1.00 fee each time they access the queue line. There will be a holding area nearby for taxicabs waiting to access the queue line. A public hearing will take place in September to discuss the implementation of a surcharge by the taxicab companies to compensate for the fee.

Mr. Harris also reported that the new contracts to the Transit Districts are going out now. The Department is in the process of moving from a system of monthly reports to a quarterly system which will cut down on paper work and on ConnDOT staff time needed for reviews. It will also allow for up-front funds to be distributed to the transit districts.

Richard Sunderhauf reported that CTTransit's Hartford Division received 7 new MCI commuter buses.

Richard Schreiner attended "Public Transit 101" – a seminar regarding the Job Access program in Southwestern Connecticut.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Cheeseman reported that the State of Connecticut will be implementing a re-certification process for ADA riders through a third party. This is an effort to avoid having ineligible persons using the service and thereby ultimately denying rides to truly eligible individuals. An extensive discussion followed on the relative merits of self-certification versus third party certification and the role of independent medical evaluation by doctors to document disabilities.

Mr. Cheeseman also stated that he is working with the State and National organizations to ensure that the gas tax formula is not reworked so that the State of Connecticut will not lose \$100 million annually.

OLD BUSINESS

Fred Riese reminded the commission members to submit January through June reimbursement forms.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Riese announced the next public hearing will take place on September 25, 2003 in Bristol. Other hearings will be held in Torrington and Danbury.

(Meeting adjourned at 3:34 P.M.)