



# Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

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*Windham Region Transit District Bus Facility*

# Connecticut Public Transportation Commission



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

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**DATE:** December 31, 2015

**TO:** Honorable Dannel P. Malloy, Governor  
  
Honorable Sen. Andrew Maynard and Rep. Antonio Guerrero  
Co-Chairpersons of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation  
  
Honorable James P. Redeker, Commissioner of Transportation

**FROM:** Kevin Maloney, Chairman  
Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

I am pleased to submit to you the 2015 Annual Report of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission as required by the Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11c(d). The six recommendations contained in this year's Annual Report reflect public input received at the seven public hearings conducted by the Commission across Connecticut and information gathered at our monthly meetings, as well as the expertise and experience of our members. These six recommendations relate to a broad range of issues including funding, technology, communication and service concerns.

## **Overview of Recommendations**

The first recommendation supports Governor Malloy's call for a constitutional amendment to protect the Special Transportation Fund from reallocation of its resources to other state uses. But this support is conditioned on any such constitutional amendment not only safeguarding the existing balance in the Fund but also protecting all revenue streams that are by law programmed to go into the Fund from being diverted to other uses before they are collected and deposited in the Fund. The latter situation is what has historically occurred with diversions from the Special Transportation Fund.

The second recommendation calls for standardizing fare collection technology between transit operators through the use of a universal pass which can be processed through mobile devices.

A need for better communication between transit operators, both rail and bus, and their passengers is addressed in the third recommendation. This recommendation addresses the need for better communication to rail passengers on train platforms about delays and track changes, information to bus riders about bus arrival times and route changes, and communication to passengers on trains which are stopped for unusual or emergency situations.

The fourth recommendation recognizes the success of the taxi voucher program in the Hartford and New Haven areas and calls for the expansion of this program, suggesting measures to interest more taxi companies, especially smaller operators, to participate in similar programs.

The fifth recommendation calls for the extension of bus service to the Pershing Drive commercial area along the Derby/Ansonia border. A significant number of major commercial businesses here are located just a few blocks beyond the reach of the existing bus service.

Lastly, the Commission calls for the extension of Shore Line East service eastward to Westerly, Rhode Island as soon as practical, even if the initial extension of service operates at a minimum level.

Members of the Commission welcome your comments on the recommendations contained in the Annual Report. We appreciate your consideration of these proposals and welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss actions that can be taken to implement them.

# **CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

## **ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

DECEMBER 31, 2015

### **COVER PHOTOS:**

The new bus storage and maintenance facility of the Windham Region Transit District on South Frontage Road in Mansfield. Construction of the 9,740 square foot administrative offices and vehicle repair building and the 14,560 square foot enclosed vehicle parking facility was substantially completed in June 2015 and operations were moved into the facility during the second half of 2015. A formal facility dedication ceremony is planned for early 2016.

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## ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION IN 2015

Kevin Maloney served his sixth year as Chairman of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission in 2015, with Richard Schreiner serving as Vice Chairman, also for the sixth year. Frederick Riese continued as the Commission's Administrative Vice Chairman. The Commission held 12 monthly meetings and conducted seven public hearings during 2015.

### Monthly Meetings

As set forth in Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11c(i), the Commission met on the first Thursday of each month. For 2015, six of these meetings were held at the Connecticut Department of Transportation headquarters in Newington, four were at Union Station in New Haven, one took place at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford and one meeting was held at the offices of Middletown Area Transit.

Two thousand and fifteen featured a succession of interesting speakers and timely presentations. Kevin Dillon, Director of Operations at Bradley International Airport, spoke at the January meeting concerning upcoming improvements at that airport and at the regional state-owned airports. At the February meeting, Kate Rattan, ConnDOT's Non-motorized Transportation Coordinator, spoke on bicycle, pedestrian and trail/greenway issues. An update on the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail service was presented by Bruce Olmstead, Transportation Supervising Engineer, at the March meeting. Frank Rogers, Vice President for Marketing at the Providence and Worcester Railroad, spoke on the state of his railroad's freight operations in Connecticut at the Commission's April meeting.

Danielle Herbert spoke at the Commission's May meeting concerning her work as a Mobility Manager for a 37-town region of north central Connecticut and as Program Coordinator for Way To Go CT which helps seniors and disabled citizens navigate transportation options. The June meeting featured a presentation on transportation studies and initiatives in the Capitol Region presented by Jennifer Carrier and Tim Malone of the Capitol Region Council of Governments. In July, the Commission visited the bus facility of Middletown Area Transit where Andy Chiaravallo, Administrator of Middletown Area Transit (MAT), outlined the services MAT provides and its ridership levels, and then discussed the building of the new bus storage and maintenance facility for MAT.

Michael Sanders, Transit and Ridesharing Administrator at ConnDOT, briefed the August meeting on the operation of CTfastrak to date and discussed the ridership levels that are being experienced. In September, Eric Feldblum, ConnDOT Project Engineer for Facilities Design, spoke about the construction of the new bus storage and maintenance facility in Watertown for North East Transportation and discussed the features that

facility would have. Barbara Kalosky, General Manager of North East Transportation, then spoke of the improvements that facility would mean to the operation of the Waterbury area bus system. The October meeting featured Doug Hausladen, Director of Transportation, Traffic and Parking for the City of New Haven, discussing transit initiatives in or affecting New Haven including the upcoming NHHS rail service, the bus route study, and new bus shelters. The Commission's November and December meetings were dedicated to the preparation of the Annual Report.

These 2015 featured speakers provided valuable insights into current developments on many of the salient issues in public transportation in Connecticut. The Commission is very appreciative of their presentations.

## **Public Hearings**

Pursuant to C.G.S. section 13b-11c(b), the Commission conducted seven public hearings during 2015 to gather input from transportation providers, transit users, local officials, regional planning organizations, non-profit organizations and members of the public. These hearings were conducted across the state and split between spring and fall schedules. The Commission conducted hearings in Norwich, Plainville and Hamden in May and June, and visited Derby, Old Saybrook, Windsor Locks and Stamford in September and October. Testimony at the hearings covered a mix of purely local issues and issues which were raised in multiple venues or which the Commission has heard at other hearings in recent years.

The main topics of the extremely well attended Norwich hearing were a desire to have Shore Line East service extended eastward to Westerly, Rhode Island and concerns about local bus service routes operated by Southeast Area Transit (SEAT). SEAT was in the midst of an evaluation of its bus routes and operations at that time and there were many concerns expressed about particular local routes. There were also requests for service from Norwich to Willimantic and Colchester as well as requests for evening service on some routes.

Plainville hearing concerns centered around the need for a second bus shelter downtown, preservation of local bus routes, a desire for service to the Northwest Industrial Area and the Cancer Center and Medical Arts Building, and completing a local gap in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. Speakers at the Hamden hearing brought good news about growth in ridership at the Greater New Haven Transit District and the value of the taxi voucher program but discussed the difficulty of making trips to destinations outside the region.

The Derby public hearing led off the fall schedule. The foremost issues discussed at the Derby hearing were the development of on-demand transportation services for disabled riders, the need for a bus connection to the Pershing Drive commercial area on

the Ansonia/Derby border, the lack of interregional bus connections to Bridgeport, Waterbury and New Haven, and Metro-North Waterbury Branch improvements including passing sidings, signalization and the need for a later northbound train on the line. Issues discussed in Old Saybrook were the dramatic growth in ridership on Estuary Transit District's 9 Town Transit system, the need for a better connection between the Estuary Region and Middletown and a proposed service along Route 81 to address this need, and the need for a vehicle storage and maintenance facility for the Estuary Transit District vehicle fleet.

The Windsor Locks hearing largely focused on the opportunities for downtown development arising from the enhanced passenger rail service to town when the New Haven/Hartford/Springfield service begins, and the interest developers are already expressing in downtown properties in anticipation of this service. This interest is predicated on the anticipated relocation of the Windsor Locks train station to a downtown site adjacent to the historic train station. The growth in ridership on Enfield's Magic Carpet bus service was also highlighted. Several Capitol Region Council of Governments planning studies for the region were also discussed.

The Commission's 2015 hearing schedule closed with a robust hearing in Stamford that brought forth a host of rail and bus issues. A need for better communications between transit operators, both rail and bus, and transit riders was a common thread throughout much of the hearing. Train riders on the platform need to know of delays or track changes that are announced in the station but not on the platform. Bus riders need to know if a bus has been re-routed so they are not left waiting for a bus that is not coming. There is a need to post the bus schedule in bus shelters. When a train is stopped for some unforeseen event, there is a need to communicate to the riders so that they can adjust their expectations and make plans. Several speakers said fare collection technology should be standardized across transit districts and operators. The increasing use of bike racks at train stations was also highlighted.

More detail on the testimony given at the seven public hearings can be found on pages 13-39 of this Annual Report.



## **PROJECTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. THE COMMISSION IS VERY SUPPORTIVE OF GOVERNOR MALLOY'S CALL FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PROTECT THE ASSETS OF THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND FROM USE FOR NON-TRANSPORTATION PURPOSES. HOWEVER, THE COMMISSION'S SUPPORT OF THIS LOCKBOX IS PREDICATED ON AMENDMENT LANGUAGE WHICH CLEARLY PROTECTS BOTH THE EXISTING BALANCE IN THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND FROM USE FOR NON-TRANSPORTATION PURPOSES AND ALSO PROHIBITS ANY AND ALL FUNDS LEGISLATIVELY DESIGNATED FOR ALLOCATION TO THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND FROM DIVERSION FOR OTHER PURPOSES BEFORE THEY CAN BE DEPOSITED IN THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND.

As Connecticut continues to find itself in a state of on-going fiscal challenges, the temptation to divert the resources of designated funds to solve budget problems demands that the Special Transportation Fund have the strongest possible level of protection in order to ensure that all its assets, both current assets and those legally programmed for deposit in the Fund, are dedicated to the uses for which they were raised and intended.

The resources of the Special Transportation Fund must be reserved to address the needs of Connecticut's roads, bridges, and transit systems. The use of these funds for other purposes not only leaves our transit assets wanting for lack of investment but such use also undermines any discussion of creating new funding sources to support transportation. Any effort to increase transportation funding, whether through sales tax support, tolls, a vehicle miles of travel (VMT) tax, increases in bus or train fares or motor fuels tax, or any other methods which are recommended by Governor Malloy's Transportation Finance Panel depends on the public trusting that any new or increased fees it is asked to pay will ultimately support the transportation infrastructure and services on which it relies. The repeated diversion of funds from the Special Transportation Fund violates this trust. The State simply cannot ask users to pay more without a guarantee that they will get what they are paying for.

In the hope that a constitutional amendment to create a lockbox to protect the assets of the Special Transportation Fund would be legally binding and may protect these assets for their intended use, the Commission supports the Governor's call for such an amendment, provided its language is inclusive of current and programmed funds. The language of the Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Protect Transportation Funds that was considered and voted upon during the General Assembly's Special Session of December 8, 2015 is not clear as to whether it would or would not accomplish the purpose of protecting all funds legally and legislatively designated to be deposited in the Special Transportation Fund. It is the Commission's hope that this resolution will again be considered during the regular session of the General Assembly and that, with the benefit of public review and comment, clear and unambiguous language will be agreed upon to unequivocally prevent future diversions of all funds designated for allocation in the Special Transportation Fund.

2. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS IMPLEMENTATION OF A UNIVERSAL PASS TO FOSTER SEAMLESS TRAVEL THROUGHOUT THE STATE BY TRANSIT. MANY REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING ATLANTA, SACRAMENTO, MINNEAPOLIS/ ST. PAUL, SEATTLE, PHILADELPHIA AND WASHINGTON, D.C., HAVE SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED INTEGRATED PASS PROGRAMS ACROSS VARIOUS MODES AND JURISDICTIONS. NEW TECHNOLOGICAL OPTIONS ARE MAKING WHAT WAS ONCE A COSTLY PROPOSITION MUCH MORE ACHIEVABLE.

The Commission recognizes that the differential in fare structures among transit providers makes taking longer trips more complicated than it need be. A consistent fare policy is a critical component of regional transit mobility. Connecticut, however, is not unique either nationally or internationally in having a variety of transit providers in close proximity. Single fare transit options that allow for universal travel have been an option for decades in Europe, for example. In Japan, users can access public transit, taxis and shop with a single pass.

Historically, fare integration across platforms has required the expensive process of coordinating the purchase of electronic fare collection equipment and software. Such systems have typically employed smart cards with integrated chips. Emerging smart phone technology now allows for a more cost effective and flexible approach. Applications allow for purchase of transit media through mobile devices that produce a digital ticket. The system currently in use in Portland, Oregon, launched almost two years ago, processes more than 1.5 million tickets per month. A similar program covering multiple agencies is rolling out in the Chicago area this year.

3. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT ADDRESS COMMUNICATION GAPS THAT PREVENT NECESSARY INFORMATION FROM GETTING TO TRAIN AND BUS RIDERS. THE NEED FOR TRANSIT PATRONS TO GET INFORMATION ON BUS AND TRAIN ARRIVALS, DELAYS AND TRACK OR ROUTE CHANGES HAS BEEN EXPRESSED REPEATEDLY TO THE COMMISSION AND WAS RAISED BY THE COMMISSION IN BOTH ITS 2011 AND 2012 ANNUAL REPORTS. THE EXPLOSION IN THE AVIALABILITY OF REAL TIME INFORMATION HAS ELEVATED THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE RIDING PUBLIC.

Calls for better communication between transit operators and transit users came up at several Commission hearings this year but this issue was most prominently raised in Stamford. As concerns bus service, there were calls for the posting of schedule information at bus shelters, the need for bus riders to be informed when buses are rerouted, and a desire for information on the arrival time of incoming buses. One speaker in Stamford cited the lack of communication to would-be riders when buses are detoured from normal routes. This can lead to riders waiting for hours for buses that do not come. With the increasing use of automatic vehicle locator (AVL) technology, the mounting of display boards at transit hubs and high volume stops would be a valuable tool for informing riders of these situations, as well as providing bus arrival information as is currently done at *CTfastrak* stations.

On train platforms, riders are not able to access the schedule and track information that is available inside the stations. As noted at the Stamford hearing, simply running a wire to a display board located on the platform would remedy this problem.

On a positive note, the Commission recognizes efforts at CT Transit, Greater Bridgeport Transit and the Norwalk Transit District, in particular, to develop mobile applications and install electronic message signs for public information purposes. Efforts should be made to coordinate these platforms and others as they develop across the state to facilitate usage across jurisdictions.

4. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS THE SUCCESS OF INITIATIVES TO INTRODUCE ACCESSIBLE TAXIS AROUND THE STATE, AS WELL AS PROGRAMS TO SUBSIDIZE FARES ON THESE VEHICLES, WHICH HAVE GREATLY INCREASED COMMUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS WHO ARE ELDERLY OR LIVING WITH DISABILITIES. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THE EXTENSION OF INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE SMALLER TAXI COMPANIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE PROGRAMS.

ConnDOT provides incentives to companies that are interested in acquiring accessible vehicles. Cab companies that do so are able to expedite the regulatory process; the State waives fees and exempts the addition of accessible vehicles to existing operator's fleet from the hearing process, and the accessible cabs can also be used in traditional cab service when not required for persons with disabilities. The introduction of these vehicles has been especially effective when coupled with voucher programs.

While these efforts have brought larger firms on board, notably Metro Taxi of New Haven and Yellow Cab of Hartford, extensive areas of the state which are served by smaller owner-operated ventures are still unserved by accessible cabs. Additional incentives could include the creation of a sensitivity awareness course for cab drivers. Attendance at these sessions could confer partial or full payment of the license renewal fee of cab operators who attend such training sessions.

Owners of small operations may be hesitant to get involved with even a subsidized lease for an accessible vehicle, given the increased maintenance costs and the lower productivity and increased dwell times for accessible trips. In recognition of the extra time required and increased maintenance costs, drivers of accessible cabs could be provided an additional per-trip payment perhaps \$2-\$5 for each trip that requires use of the ramp.

A potential source of funding for these enhancements could be the Federal Section 5310 program, which has provided the support for existing accessible taxi and taxi voucher programs.

Options for expansion of the taxi voucher concept, particularly into the state's smaller urban, suburban and even rural areas, may be fruitful ground for development in the upcoming Statewide Paratransit Study, and the Commission recommends that this concept be further explored within that study.

5. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THE CREATION OF A BUS TRANSIT CONNECTION TO THE UNSERVED PERSHING DRIVE AREA ON THE DERBY/ANSONIA BORDER. THIS MAJOR COMMERCIAL ZONE INCLUDES THREE GROCERY STORES, BJ's WHOLESALE CLUB AND MULTIPLE SHOPPING PLAZAS AND FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS.

At the commission's Derby hearing, the Naugatuck Valley COG identified the Pershing Drive/Division Street commercial area as a location in significant need of transit. The nearest service provided by CT TRANSIT's F Route accesses Division and Clifton near Griffin Hospital, up a very steep hill and across busy Pershing Drive.

A significant number of the major retail businesses in Derby and Ansonia are located along Pershing Drive and Division Street here. These include Stop and Shop, Shop Rite, Aldi's, CVS, BJ's Wholesale Club, dozens of smaller stores, banks and restaurants.

If schedules do not permit a full extension of transit to this location, it may be possible to reroute service between Derby and Ansonia via Pershing Drive to at least serve the border of this commercial area. ConnDOT recently initiated a statewide bus study, with an anticipated completion date of late 2016. Connections to this important commercial area should be a consideration during the course of that analysis.

6. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT EXTEND SHORE LINE EAST SERVICE EASTWARD TO MYSTIC AND WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND AS SOON AS PRACTICAL, EVEN IF THE INITIAL EXTENSION OF SERVICE OPERATES AT A MINIMAL LEVEL.

The Commission received voluminous testimony in support of an extension of Shore Line East service to Mystic and Westerly at its May 5 public hearing in Norwich (see pp. 13-18 of this report). The necessary rail infrastructure for the service is in place in the form of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, though perhaps a new siding may be needed and additional rolling stock may need to be acquired.

Some previous planning on service to Westerly has occurred both within the Department and with the State of Rhode Island for the operation of Shore Line East to Westerly. The ample parking available there, the opportunity to also provide service to Mystic and the eventual link to MBTA service to provide an alternate connection to Providence and Boston are significant incentives to extend Shore Line East service from its current eastern terminus at New London eastward to Westerly. Such service is envisioned in both the State Rail Plan and Governor Malloy's Let's Go CT initiative.

The Commission certainly recognizes that the enhanced passenger service between New Haven, Hartford and Springfield is the Department's top rail priority and that construction of the infrastructure for that service and the actual launch of the service rightly consumes the Department's attention. This understandably means that Shore Line East service to Westerly is not currently a front burner concern. However, planning to provide for a very basic level of service to Westerly, even if only three or four connections per day where it can most optimally be accommodated in the Shore Line East schedule, would provide a valuable service. This in turn would be greatly enhanced if coordinated with a similar extension by MBTA to reach Westerly from the north, but testimony given at the Norwich public hearing attests to the independent utility of the Westerly extension even in the absence of any extension by MBTA.

## OTHER ISSUES ARISING FROM THE COMMISSION'S PUBLIC HEARINGS

The following section discusses issues were raised at one or more of the Commission's 2015 hearings or follows up further developments with issues raised at 2014 Commission hearings. While these issues do not lend themselves to recommendations, they do merit mention as topics of either statewide interest or strong local concern.

**Interregional bus connections:** With the upcoming Statewide Bus System Study, it is a fitting time to again raise the topic of bus trips crossing the regional boundaries of transit districts or CT Transit divisions. Two thousand and fifteen was no exception to the pattern of recurring testimony concerning the difficulties of making longer bus trips which require connections between neighboring but often not connected transit services. Examples raised at this year's hearings began with our initial hearing in Norwich where the mayor and an official of Three Rivers Community College discussing the need for connections from Norwich to Willimantic for access to employment and educational opportunities. The latter speaker also mentioned Norwich to Colchester service as important to her school's students.

At the Commission's Hamden hearing, the Executive Director of the Greater New Haven Transit District discussed the challenges of making trips from her region to the Hartford region, a commonly requested but difficult to arrange trip. In Derby, the Commission heard testimony from the Executive Director of the Council of Governments about the very limited or non-existent transit links from that city to Bridgeport, Waterbury and New Haven, all important destinations to area residents. The limited connections from the Estuary Region to Middletown were cited as a problem at the Commission's Old Saybrook hearing, with a service along Route 81 proposed to address this need. Lastly, at a student transportation forum at UConn at which the Commission took testimony, the desire for connections from Storrs to Manchester were strongly expressed, as such needs have been over the years at Commission hearings in Storrs and Willimantic. There is a strong unmet demand for at least a basic level of access from the transit services of one region to those of a neighboring region or regions primarily for employment and education purposes but also for shopping and cultural needs or access to more affordable housing, which was an added purpose of the UConn students desire for connections to Manchester. It is the Commission's hope that the upcoming Statewide Bus System Study will evaluate options to implement interregional connections.

**UConn Transportation Issues:** On November 16, the Commission participated in a transportation forum involving graduate students in the transportation field. As one element of the forum, the Commission solicited testimony from the students and UConn staff present as to their needs, experiences and suggestions relative to public transportation. The four dominant issues, each expressed by multiple speakers, concerned a strong desire for later evening service on the Windham Region Transit District's Storrs/Willimantic route, a desire for some level of regular transit service to Manchester, interest in the proposed *CTfastrak east* service and in how the University could be connected to it, and a desire for connections from the Storrs campus to Bradley Airport, Hartford's Union Station and the outside world.



Relative to the later night WRTD service, the last bus from Storrs to Willimantic currently departs at 8:30. Some classes run until 9:00. Campus activities of many sorts run well beyond 8:30. Many UConn students do not have cars or access to them so the lack of later service limits some combination of their class, job, entertainment or housing choices. Ideally, service until 11:00 pm on the Willimantic route is needed.

Service to Manchester is sought to allow students to have access to more affordable housing there as well as to shopping opportunities and part-time employment. Access to Manchester would also enable students to connect to CT Transit Hartford Division service there, thus opening up access to Hartford, including the upcoming downtown UConn campus, and to the existing Farmington UConn campus.

**Bus Service Linking the Danbury and Waterbury Campuses of Naugatuck Valley Community College:** A strong desire for bus service connecting Naugatuck Valley Community College's main campus in Waterbury with its Danbury campus was brought before the Commission at its 2014 public hearing in Waterbury. As discussed in its 2014 Annual Report, the Commission saw a potential opportunity to use the existing Peter Pan bus service between these two cities to meet this need. Peter Pan runs seven trips in each direction daily between Danbury and Waterbury. Further, the Danbury Peter Pan stop is in very close proximity to both the existing Naugatuck Valley Community College building and to a new facility the college will be moving into shortly.

During 2015, the Commission has worked with Peter Pan and NVCC representatives to formulate an arrangement whereby the bus company would sell discounted commuter tickets to the college. The NVCC Student Government Association voted during 2015 to allocate \$25,000 of its transportation funds, which are raised via a \$10 per semester assessment on all students, toward supporting this service. This will allow an additional small discount to the ticket prices. The college will also be looking into additional support from ConnDOT to get the out-of-pocket ticket price for students down to an affordable range. Peter Pan has given an assurance of no fare increase for NVCC students through at least June 30, 2017. All parties are hopeful this arrangement can be brought to fruition early in 2016.

**2015 PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**SCHEDULE AND SUMMARIES**

# Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

IEWINGTON, CT 06131-7546



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## 2015 Public Hearings Schedule

In accordance with C.G.S. Section 13b-11c(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 seven public hearings, as listed below, during the spring and fall of 2015.

<u>TOWN</u>	<u>MODERATOR</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Norwich	Frederick Riese	May 5	Norwich City Hall
Plainville	Francis Pickering	May 13	Plainville Municipal Center
Hamden	Richard Schreiner	June 3	Hamden Government Center
Derby	Richard Schreiner	September 9	Derby Town Hall
Old Saybrook	Chris Adams	September 30	Old Saybrook Town Hall
Windsor Locks	Frederick Riese	October 6	Windsor Locks Hall
Stamford	Frederick Riese	October 13	Stamford Government Center

## **Connecticut Public Transportation Commission Public Hearing**

Norwich City Hall  
100 Broadway, Room 335  
Norwich, Connecticut  
Tuesday, May 5, 2015 – 7:00 PM

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Frederick Riese  
Robert Rodman

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing at 7:03 pm. He welcomed the attendees, thanked them for coming to tonight's hearing and briefly explained the work of the Commission and the purpose of tonight's public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members present.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Mayor Deb Hinchey** spoke of the importance of business recruitment and retention and said that transportation to work is one of the biggest issues in that effort. She has visited 80 local businesses and they continually cite the need to get workers to their sites. She noted that many employees in Norwich are from Willimantic. She mentioned a large laundry service in the industrial park as typical of the businesses whose employees rely on public transportation. But often the bus service does not get workers to their jobs at the times that are convenient to the employees. This problem is a mixture of both the frequency of service and the limited hours of operation. The laundry service has a first shift at 6:00 a.m., and the next shift at 3:00 p.m. Workers in this latter shift have no bus service to get them home.

A lack of evening bus service is part of the problem. Residents would like to get out at night for cultural and social events, church and employment, but can't. Another limitation is the lack of good connections from Norwich to Hartford and to Windham/Willimantic. Mayor Hinchey mentioned a large nursery business in Lebanon with no easy way for transit-dependent workers to get there due to a lack of any public transportation. She did say that she has never heard any complaints about the cost of the bus service.

**Jean Gagnier** is a member of the Westerly, R.I. Town Council. He stressed that Westerly, R.I. and Pawcatuck, Conn. function as one community. The Westerly train station has capacity for over 100 cars, with room for expansion on the north side and a former National Grid property that also could be used for parking. He supports an extension of Shore Line East train service to Westerly, as does Town Council President Chris Duhamel. If the MBTA extends service southward to Westerly, a Shore Line East extension would provide a connection to T. F. Green Airport.

**Rob Simmons**, Selectman from Stonington and former U. S. Congressman, noted that during his ten years of employment at Yale, he commuted to work by train and could put that time to productive use. Similarly, his wife commuted by train from Mystic to her job in Boston. He strongly encourages the extension of Shore Line East service to Mystic and Westerly. He called Shore Line East a success story and noted the improved stations on the line and the restaurants that have opened up at the Old Saybrook station. Ridership continues to grow. The service has been able to flexibly accommodate special events such as OpSail and SailFest.

**Mike Carroll**, General Manager at the Southeast Area Transit District (SEAT), first thanked volunteers from Local 1209 of the Amalgamated Transit Union for driving some of tonight's attendees to this hearing. SEAT service normally ends at 7:00 p.m. so the volunteer drivers made it possible for transit-dependent people to attend tonight's hearing.

Carroll pointed out that farebox revenues cover 20-25% of SEAT's operating costs. The State of Connecticut pays for 70% of the transit operating budget. Towns provide most of the remaining operating funds. About ½ of New London County towns belong to the transit district.

SEAT is in the midst of a major study of its route system. The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments is coordinating the study. The website for the study is [www.seatbusstudy.com](http://www.seatbusstudy.com) Carroll said that useful expansions of the service would include service to Colchester and evening bus service. Over 1,000,000 passengers per year use SEAT service.

**Mike Spellman** is a selectman from Stonington. He quoted a former senator who said "Infrastructure improvements are the foundation for growth." To that end, Spellman supports the extension of Shore Line East service to Mystic and Westerly/Pawcatuck. He said Stonington is dead center between New York and Boston. He believes the tourism potential is huge if the area can get Shore Line East service.

**Nicole Caswell** spoke of her friend's mother who suffered brain damage and uses a universal walker. This woman is dependent on public transportation for her mobility.

**Enock Petit-Homme** works for the Norwich Public Schools but attended the hearing tonight representing Moriarty Environmental Sciences Magnet School. Many parents of Moriarty students cannot get to evening events at the school because of a lack of transportation. He requested that SEAT's Run #4 be extended to 20 Lawler Drive, which is Moriarty School, to serve both school hour and evening events. He presented a petition signed by over 40 Moriarty School parents to this effect.

**Jaroslav Pizunski**, Business Agent for ATU Local 1209, called for a 50% increase in funding for SEAT. He said he supports rail service, but buses are needed to get people to the trains.

**Stephen Bissette**, a former Stonington selectman, is a lifelong resident of Mystic and his family has been in Mystic since 1860. His family ran a foundry that made railroad parts there until the hurricane of 1938 wiped out the business. Bissette supports the extension of Shore Line East to Mystic and Westerly and said that there is strong community support for this move. Within four days of setting up a *Bring Shore Line East to Mystic* Facebook page, he had 300 people endorse

the service extension. He said that Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium are big supporters of the extension of Shore Line East service.

**Meg Wichser** is Retention Specialist Director at Three Rivers Community College. She noted there is good cooperation between SEAT and the college and that bus service to Three Rivers is well coordinated. Transportation to the college is very important in allowing students to achieve their educational goals. She noted that many people in the rural areas north of Norwich do not own cars and need transportation for education and jobs. In particular, she requested that bus service be instituted between Norwich and Colchester. Bus service to Willimantic is also important for community college students to access the different educational offerings there. Lastly, she noted that Three Rivers Community College is one of the recipients sharing in a \$15,000,000 grant supporting manufacturing education and training, a fact which speaks to her previous point about different offerings at different schools.

**Ralph Davis** expressed concerns as to whether SEAT's Run 4 to Taftville was going to be discontinued.

**Jeannette Paquette**, a 22-year resident of Taftville, said she would be devastated if she lost Run 4.

**Tom Dangelo** asked if smoking could be banned at the Norwich Intermodal Center. His answer came from Mike Carroll of SEAT that this decision was up to the City of Norwich.

**Mary Metcalfe** said that the bus to Taftville is essential for her. There are no other options for transit-dependent residents of Taftville. Metcalfe said that 60% of the residents of the Pequonnock Village in Taftville are transit-dependent.

**Julia Contu**, a resident of Pequonnock Village, said she is mobility-impaired and dependent on the bus to Taftville.

**Rita Serio** drove six Pequonnock Village residents to the hearing tonight to testify on the need for continued bus service.

**Ann Gauin** is not a resident of Pequonnock Village but she expressed concerns about bus service to that complex.

**Terry Hall** supports the extension of Shore Line East service to Westerly to establish a low cost travel option to Boston and to provide access to shoreline points between New London and Westerly. Senior citizens would be one important market for this service. He noted that there is additional capacity on the rail line to accommodate the service extension.

**Chris Bailey** works at BJ's Wholesale Club in Waterford. He is concerned about the Run 3 bus service to that commercial area. Normally he works until 4:30 p.m. but if he has to work late, he needs to find another way to get home since the 4:30 p.m. bus is the last one of the day. Also, the bus service to the commercial area runs every two hours so missing a bus makes him two

hours late to work. Walmart, BJ's and Lowe's are located in the same commercial area. He said there is no weekend bus service to this area.

**Alinda Covey** is an employee of Mohegan Sun Casino. She works variable hours between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m. The last bus out of Mohegan Sun is at 10:30 p.m. On weekends, the last bus is at 1:30 p.m. but she works until 5:00 p.m. She uses the 1 Bus, 5 Bus and 7 Bus. It is the 7 Bus that runs until 10:30 p.m.

Also, the last bus service to Norwich Free Academy ends at 7:00 p.m. so she can't attend evening school activities.

**Sandra Alexandra** expressed concern about Bus Run 11 which ceases at 8:00 p.m. She would like to see hourly service to New London and Norwich from Groton. The last bus home that she can catch is at 6:00 p.m.

**Steve White**, President of Mystic Seaport, favors more transportation, more ways for people to get from place to place. He favors more trains, more buses, more boats, more taxis. He supports extending Shore Line East service to Westerly or even to Kingston.

**Douglas Low**, a Niantic resident, said he is ecstatic about the possibility of a new Shore Line East station at Niantic. Shore Line East service promotes our communities to employers as well as to tourists.

Low also stressed the importance of achieving 286,000 pound capacity on the New England Central and P&W rail lines to our economic competitiveness in eastern Connecticut. More marketing of our 286,000 pound capacity in eastern Connecticut is needed.

A speaker who did not identify herself spoke of a huge need for more bus and train service. In particular, the Norwich Shop Rite is no longer served by SEAT, which is a real problem in her view.

**Tom Dangelo** expressed a need for later service on Bus Run 5.

A final speaker addressed comments to Mike Carroll of SEAT concerning her commute which takes 2 hours to get to work and 2 ½ hours to get home.

Moderator Frederick Riese closed the hearing at 8:40 p.m.

In addition to the testimony presented at the public hearing, two letters and 11 e-mails presenting testimony were received.

The Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board helps job seekers in eastern Connecticut access employment, education and training through American Job Centers in Norwich, New London, Willimantic and Danielson, operated through the Connecticut Dept. of Labor. The Board works closely with the Eastern Connecticut Regional Transportation Collaborative, which directly funds transportation for work-related activities such as employment, job searches,

interviews and child care. The Collaborative provides rides to approximately 2,000 individuals and coordinates with the region's transit services such as SEAT.

Transportation has historically been the number one barrier for low income individuals returning to the workforce. Successful bus and transportation service is critical to our workforce and would provide a productive return on investment as the region's workers are better able to realize economic opportunities.

The **Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce** supports the expansion of public transportation services in the region, specifically the extension of Shore Line East to include a stop in Mystic, and the implementation of service options from the SEAT bus service study to better serve area visitors and residents alike. Employees of many local organizations depend on SEAT bus service to get to their jobs. SEAT bus service eases traffic congestion, keeps local roads safer and sustains the local economy.

**Frances Bennett** supports extending Shore Line East service to Mystic and potentially to Westerly. She notes that there are a number of regular commuters to New York in this area who presently must either depend on the limited Amtrak schedule or drive to New Haven.

**Pamela Cullis**, Marketing Director of the Stonington Merchants Association, supports the extension of Shore Line East service. She feels that the southeastern corner of Connecticut has been exceptionally hard hit economically in recent years and Shore Line East service to the area could open up a huge opportunity to attract Connecticut natives to visit Mystic Country and to provide an economical transfer from Metro-North trains into the area.

**Brian McGlynn** of Mystic grew up in Riverside, Conn. and later in life commuted by rail from there to his job with Pfizer in New York City. He endorses a robust expansion of rail service to Mystic as soon as possible. Furthermore, he believes that a rail service connection between New London and Bradley Airport would put Connecticut on a stronger economic footing. Currently, he must take Amtrak to Newark Airport.

**Jim O'Brien** supports the extension of Shore Line East rail service to Mystic, which would bring economic benefits to the area, greater convenience to travelers and reduce summer congestion on Route 26 in Mystic.

**Verna Sodano-Richards** of Mystic supports the extension of Shore Line East service to Mystic and Westerly. She has had job offers in New York City and Norwalk which she could have accepted if Shore Line East ran to Mystic. She wants to be able to use her work commuting time more productively. Shore Line East would help immensely in this regard. Shore Line East service would alleviate travel restrictions for employment of southeastern Connecticut residents.

**Richard Fabricant**, President of Mohegan Oil Company in Mystic, believes rail service is essential for the economic vitality of eastern Connecticut. New London County is lagging behind the rest of the state in its economic recovery. The rail service would help tourism but, more importantly, it can attract commuters from New York who would enjoy the less hectic pace of eastern Connecticut for their families, not to mention the very attractive real estate prices



relative to Fairfield County. A commute of this distance is not unheard of in the New York metropolitan area.

**Abby Bruce, Janet Gezari, Joyce Olson Resnikoff, Andrew Bellinghieri and Kit Hartford** also submitted short statements of general support of Shore Line East rail service to Mystic and/or Westerly.

## **Connecticut Public Transportation Commission Public Hearing**

Plainville Municipal Center  
1 Central Square  
Plainville, Connecticut  
Wednesday, May 13, 2015 – 7:00 PM

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Francis Pickering  
Robert Rodman  
Richard Schreiner  
Kevin Maloney  
Frederick Riese

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Francis Pickering opened the hearing at 7:08 pm. He welcomed the attendees, thanked them for coming to tonight's hearing and briefly explained the work of the Commission and the purpose of tonight's public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members present.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Mark DeVoe**, Plainville Town Planner and Director of Economic Development, said Plainville's foremost public transportation needs are to and from the central business district and to Tunxis Community College. It is also important that transit service be preserved to the Connecticut Commons, a large retail area on Route 372. Service to the Northwest Industrial Area would be highly desirable and could be accomplished via an extension of the Corbin Avenue route. Transit service to the Cancer Center and Medical Arts Building on Journey Road, off Route 372, would also be very desirable. The owner of the Cancer Center recently met with CT Transit concerning getting a bus stop at this location. This area is in a bio-science zone and shows promise for future medical/health/research development which would benefit from a transit stop. In general, current service is meeting most local needs.

DeVoe next mentioned an apparent discrepancy between the CT Transit route map and the route schedule as to the location of some stops. For instance, the *CTfastrak* Route 102 map shows stops along Route 372 at Grant Street, Route 10, Norton Place, Pierce Street and Strong Court before heading into Bristol. The map does not show a stop for the Plainville Public Library, however, on the schedule for Route 102, the Library is the only stop listed. This could be confusing for the novice bus rider.

DeVoe is hopeful concerning *CTfastrak* service and he complimented the attractive and advanced design of the stations on the line. In contrast, he noted that Plainville has only one bus shelter, located in front of the public library on Route 372. Riders heading in the opposite direction congregate across the street in front of the Webster Bank but there is no shelter at this location. In bad weather, riders use the shelter at the library and then dash across the street to

catch the westbound bus. Plainville would like to construct a shelter at this location and has negotiated an agreement with Webster Bank to use a parcel of its property for a shelter, but to date has not been able to access any funding to make this shelter a reality.

Moving on to the subject of trails, DeVoe said Plainville has been trying to develop its part of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail for over twenty years now. Plainville was thinking about trails before most other towns in the state. However, Pan Am Railway has not been interested in cooperating on developing this trail, even on the unused segment of track north of Plainville. Beginning in 2009, the Town began looking at trail alternatives off of the rail alignment. Funding ran out before the trail scoping study was completed but Plainville is now working with CRCOG and the State to complete the study. The goal is to find a final route alignment that can be constructed without the use of the rail corridor. This will be a daunting task.

Lastly, DeVoe said Plainville has been participating in the Central Connecticut Rail Study through study meetings, workshops and focus groups and providing data and mapping. The Town is very supporting of this initiative for possible passenger rail service between Waterbury and Hartford.

**Jean Kelly** is a non-driver who depends upon Dial-a-Ride service to get around. The service has its limitations: it stops at 4:30 pm, it has capacity issues and it doesn't go everywhere. To use bus service, it is a 1.5 mile walk for her to the library to catch *fastrak*, which is too far of a distance for her. She feels more bus stops are needed including farther out from the town center and along Route 10. A lot of people would use the bus if more stops were available. A stop at the senior center would also generate much ridership.

**Roselean Peters** asked for a bus stop at Norton Park.

**Mark DeVoe** said the bus route extension to Connecticut Commons has generated significant ridership but not all such side trips can be accommodated. He also noted that the local senior center is a very active one with many activities. He was not able to give a definite answer when asked if the Cancer Center/ Medical Arts Building or Route 10 bus service was the more pressing unmet local need.

Moderator Francis Pickering closed the hearing at 7:46 pm.

## **Connecticut Public Transportation Commission Public Hearing**

Hamden Government Center  
2750 Dixwell Avenue  
Hamden, Connecticut  
Wednesday, June 3, 2015 – 7:00 PM

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Richard Schreiner  
Kevin Maloney  
Frederick Riese  
Robert Rodman  
Yvonne Loteczka

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Richard Schreiner opened the hearing at 7:05 pm. He welcomed the attendees, thanked them for coming to tonight's hearing and briefly explained the work of the Commission and the purpose of tonight's public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members present.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Donna Carter**, Executive Director of the Greater New Haven Transit District, said the District is currently operating out of two separate locations. It purchased the first site in 2000, a building it outgrew in 2011. Prior to 2000, the District did not operate its service directly but rather contracted with American Medical Response (AMR) to run the service. Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) now has outgrown its combined space including the site it has leased since 2011. Carter said ConnDOT has been very cooperative in helping the District with its proposal for a new, consolidated facility. She wants very much to be able to store all of GNHTD's vehicles indoors.

The demand for GNHTD's services has grown dramatically in recent years. Four years ago, the District had 4,500 registered users for its services. This has grown to 11,500 registered users today.

Carter cited the Metro Access Taxi Voucher Program as a wonderful program. GNHTD encourages people to get a Metro Access card as a fallback for emergencies or for medical appointments.

Inter-regional trips continue to be difficult to arrange. Carter said trips from the region to Hartford are commonly requested but not easy to do. To get to another region, the transit district or other operator from that region has to be available to provide a return trip for the GNHTD outbound trip.

Carter said the District plans to have its hydrogen-powered vehicle back on the road by July 1. This vehicle was originally purchased through a demonstration program in 2010 but ran into a glitch getting its hydrogen fueling station up and running.

The District has set up a Sect. 501(c)3 charity called the GNHTD Foundation. A current project of the Foundation is the Art in Motion project. Through a \$5,000 grant from the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging, one District vehicle has been wrapped in an artwork decal done by a local artist. This decal cost \$1,000. The remaining \$4,000 of the grant went to the District to fund additional service.

Currently the GNHTD has 64 vehicles in its fleet. It really would need 12 additional vehicles to cover all the service requested. The District provides 1,000 trips on Wednesdays, which is its peak demand day. It provides 800-900 trips on other weekdays. The District does have on-site fueling at its facility.

The District has an option on property in North Haven for a potential site of a new facility. ConnDOT has taken over administration of the project so that it can undertake the environmental studies on the site and any necessary environmental clean-up.

Carter expressed worry about the security of funding for ADA paratransit in particular because that service, unlike the others run by the District, is mandatory. To date, the District has not run into any situations where rides have been denied.

The Regional Rides Program, operated in ten participating towns within the District, serves trips outside of ADA corridors but is limited in capacity to 60 trips per day.

**Suzanne Burbidge** is the Director of Elderly Services for the Town of Hamden. She noted that 12,400 of Hamden's 61,000 residents are age 60 or older. The Hamden Senior Center has a service agreement with GNHTD to provide service through the Town of Hamden Elderly Services budget. Normal fares are 50c per ride, but the trips to lunches at the Senior Center are free.

Burbidge characterized existing paratransit service as a hodgepodge in need of streamlining and coordination. Multiple agencies provide transportation services and there should be more coordination with and between them. Her senior center requires two weeks of notice to reserve rides, a requirement that just went up from two days.

She noted that North Haven, which provides its own senior transportation rather than contracting with GNHTD, recently encountered a situation where it had no drivers for two weeks so it could not offer service during this time.

Burbidge encouraged outreach to other states to find out what challenges they have encountered and what solutions they have come up with. She also feels that towns need to coordinate ride availability.

**Charles Smyth** uses GNHTD services for just about all his rides. He reserved a 6:00 pm ride to come to tonight's hearing but it didn't arrive until 7:05 pm. He feels the service has gotten worse in the last couple of months.

Smyth lives just off Route 34 in Orange. He can't use regular bus service because he can't get across Route 34 in his wheelchair.

The taxi voucher program is a godsend to Smyth. He uses it to get to his sister's house in Woodbridge. Previously, GNHTD considered this trip to be an ADA trip and provided the ride. When he could no longer take this trip as an ADA trip, he used the Regional Rides Program, but that program is now limited to trips for medical purposes so he can't use that to visit his sister. The Regional Rides Program had been a very good way for him to get to many places Smyth could not otherwise access. In contrast to the Town of Orange van, which ceases service at 4:30 pm, Regional Rides got him to town events in the evening. GNHTD runs its ADA paratransit vans until 8:30 pm. He would like to see GNHTD become a 'point of service' operator that you could call on the day you needed a ride.

Smyth formerly used ADA service on Sundays but the cessation of CT Transit fixed route Sunday service on Route 34 meant that ADA service on that route also ceased.

Smyth would love to see the Metro Access Taxi Voucher Program be on a 75/25 basis rather than the current 50/50 basis. If riders only had to pay 25% of the fare, that would help out greatly.

As a final point, Smyth concurred with Suzanne Burbidge that an over-arching brokerage operation is needed for paratransit, similar to what medical transportation has.

**Matt Weinstein** of Stratford has been a caregiver for his mother for much of this year. She has lost much of her mobility and function. Though she was not in a wheelchair, she was not able to board a van. The Town of Stratford would not allow her to use the van's lift without a wheelchair. Commission member Rick Schreiner corrected that misinformation saying that ADA regulations stipulate that riders with disabilities can use the lift even if they are not in a wheelchair. He also said that Weinstein's mother might be able to use the GBT Access service, which Matt said he hadn't looking into yet.

Donna Carter spoke to Matt's points saying that most towns have some senior citizen transportation run out of their senior centers. She also said Matt should call GBT to get his mother registered with them. Then, if necessary to access Yale-New Haven Hospital, a destination Matt had mentioned, hopefully GBT and GNHTD can provide a reciprocal trip.

Weinstein recently started a new job in Stamford. Concerning the bus leg of the multi-modal transit trip from his home in northern Shelton to Stamford, he has found that GBT's bus service to Shelton, and also to Monroe, is geared to reverse commute trips. His Stamford office is conveniently five minutes from the train station, but the bus system of GBT can't reliably get him out to the Stratford/Shelton line at the end of the day because of its reverse commute format. GBT's Route 22 would be ideal if it were not geared to the reverse commute trip. A northbound

Route 22 departure after 6:00, say 6:15 pm, would attract more riders, with hopefully one late northbound run at 7:00 as a safety net. He now uses the 5:45 pm northbound bus, which fortunately is usually running 15 minutes late at 6:00. It was explained to Matt by several Commission members that both the Shelton (Route 22) and the Monroe routes are operated as Jobs Access services to get low income urban workers out to job sites in the suburbs, hence their reverse commute schedules.

Weinstein lamented that there is no Sunday bus service between Derby and New Haven, cities only ten miles apart. He feels that Connecticut suffers from the lack of county-level government and services. He is from Westchester County, NY which operates its own countywide transit agency.

**Carlos Quiles** of Meriden has his own vehicles but, due to his disability, relies heavily on paratransit. He works for the Hospital for Special Care in New Britain. One event sponsored by the Hospital for Special Care is the Amazing Journey, which challenges kids to get to an assigned location solely by public transportation, and leaves it up to the student to figure out how to do it, and to actually make the trip.

Quiles said that paratransit has a bad reputation. More coordination and streamlining are needed. It is understandable that medical trips are priority #1 but social trips and other needs are very important too, to mental and physical health.

Quiles feels that other states have more comprehensive paratransit systems than Connecticut does. He cited New Jersey where he can call for a ride, pay the fare, and have no need to reserve the trip in advance. Jersey City is the system he is familiar with.

Moderator Schreiner closed the hearing at 8:32 pm.

## **Connecticut Public Transportation Commission Public Hearing**

Derby Town Hall  
Aldermanic Chambers  
1 Elizabeth Street  
Derby, Connecticut  
Wednesday, September 9, 2015 – 7:00 PM

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Richard Schreiner  
Kevin Maloney  
Frederick Riese  
Robert Rodman

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Richard Schreiner opened the hearing at 7:06 pm. He welcomed the attendees, thanked them for coming to tonight's hearing and briefly explained the work of the Commission and the purpose of tonight's public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members present.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Mayor Anita Dugatto** said that although Derby has a very compact downtown, more local bus service is needed. In particular, fixed route service between Derby and Shelton is needed, as is service linking Downtown and the train station. The widening of Route 34 (Main Street) will create new local needs. She would like to see a bike path as part of the project to widen Route 34 to four lanes.

**Margaret Mixon** is a mobility coordinator for the Kennedy Center. By way of introduction, Mixon explained that the Kennedy Center is a community-based, person-centered resource providing recreation day programs, employment services and travel training. The travel training service, which is provided free of charge, teaches people how to ride trains and buses. Staff makes the desired trip with the client to make sure he or she is comfortable with the process. Kennedy Center has seven travel trainers on staff and provides this service statewide. Kennedy Center also provides statewide ADA technical service for transit districts. In addition, it serves as the regional mobility manager.

Mixon introduced Rick Davis, the mobility manager for the Southwestern Region of Connecticut. She then explained that Kennedy Center staff help people find transportation options in their communities and also work to identify gaps in the transportation services available for the disabled.

Last December, the Kennedy Center received a grant award to evaluate on-demand transportation options for the disabled. A Project Advisory Committee has been set up to oversee this study. From the Lower Naugatuck Valley, clients have travel needs both within the region and outside it, principally to Waterbury, New Haven and Bridgeport. The study, to be



completed by September 30, is funded by the Connecticut Council on the Developmentally Disabled. The grant includes \$100,000 per year for two years to operate pilot on-demand transportation services for the disabled as identified in the study.

**Dennis Fletcher** is with Speer Davies Glebe, a consulting firm doing the on-demand transportation services study. Among the gaps in local transportation services available for the local disabled community, he noted there are no accessible cabs in the valley. The study will look for ways to fill such gaps and ways to provide services at lower costs. Goals are to expand the amount of service, the span of service (especially to provide evening hours service) and the area of service. Two approaches are to look at a higher level of service at a higher cost, such as taxi-based service that is truly on-demand, or a lower cost service option with a slight response time, such as requiring a morning reservation for a trip that evening. Without predicting the outcome of the study, Fletcher said that one outcome could be to build capacity in the local taxi company to serve disabled riders and to include training for drivers on customer service for disabled clients. A program structure like the Metro Access Taxi Voucher Program might be a structure of value to disabled clients. Other concepts that might be identified as useful are a zone bus to provide access to a central node such as a hospital, train station or mall, or some form of feeder bus service to provide the first mile and last mile connections to a fixed route bus system.

Other points made by Fletcher include the need for a central communications facility to coordinate trips for disabled riders, the potential use of volunteers to provide rides, the potential to have a central dispatcher employ Uber or a similar service on behalf of disabled riders, and the very good experience with the Metro Access Taxi Voucher Program in the New Haven and Bridgeport areas, though he was not sure if that concept was transferrable to the Lower Naugatuck Valley.

**Rick Dunne**, Executive Director of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, explained that his Council represents 19 municipalities and that the region remains part of the Greater Bridgeport Metropolitan Planning Organization for Federal purposes. The Council of Governments is also the Federal Transit Administration grantee for the four towns (Seymour, Ansonia, Derby and Shelton) of the former Valley Regional Planning Agency.

Dunne is looking forward to increased cooperation between the Valley Transit District and the Greater Waterbury Transit District. Currently there is a very low level of service provided by the Greater Waterbury Transit District compared to that provided by the Valley Transit District.

The Valley Transit District has implemented computerized dispatch and tracking and now has much better information on its operations. The Council of Governments is evaluating whether there is an opportunity to implement some measure of deviated fixed route service by the Valley Transit District.

Dunne said there are no real commuting options from the Valley to Trumbull and Bridgeport. Bridgeport Avenue is the only transit route out of the area to the south. He would like to see bus rapid transit (BRT) service in the Route 8 corridor, and he noted that ConnDOT acquired a very wide corridor for the Route 8 Shelton and Trumbull segments in the 1960s. Thus, a BRT service

would not involve any acquisition costs for this corridor. A Route 8 corridor study is an upcoming project for the Council of Governments.

Many newer workers in Stamford and lower Fairfield County commute from the Naugatuck Valley to their jobs because of the lower cost of housing in the Naugatuck Valley. This has added to the level of congestion on Route 8. If some of these workers could be moved from autos to transit, either bus or rail, the need to expand Route 8 could be avoided. Dunne noted that transit service is very scalable; highway expansion is not. On this subject, he noted that passing sidings and signalization will be coming to the Waterbury Branch, which will significantly increase the capacity of the line. Dunne believes that the option of converting the Waterbury Branch to a diesel shuttle service feeding a transfer platform at Devon should be looked at.

Dunne feels the Waterbury Branch train service needs more capacity. The current schedule does a good job of getting people from the Naugatuck Valley to Fairfield County in the morning, but getting home in the evening can be a problem. If you miss the 6:00 connection at Bridgeport, the next train is at 8:45. Another issue is the lack of a good train connection from New Haven to the Waterbury Branch. A transfer platform at Devon would solve this problem and avoid the need to go through Bridgeport to connect to or from New Haven.

Moving on to bus service, Dunne said good connections from Derby are lacking. The CT Transit published map says the Seymour bus will continue on Route 67 to Woodbridge and Westville upon request, but the bus won't actually do that. There is no commercial bus service from Derby to Pershing Drive/ Division Street commercial area of Ansonia and Derby. If the route went down Division Street hill into Ansonia to the Pershing Drive area, it would serve a great need. Griffin Hospital is the nearest point to Pershing Drive that CT Transit currently goes. Also, there is no good connection between the Lower Valley and Waterbury. Waterbury bus service goes to Naugatuck, and CT Transit service gets into Seymour, but there is no connection between the lower Naugatuck Valley and Waterbury.

Lastly, Dunne discussed the Waterbury Area Fixed Route Transit Study which is looking at implementable modifications to schedules and routes. New service to the Lakewood Road commercial area and better service to Naugatuck are likely recommendations of the study. The Lakewood Road service has consensus support. Repurposing the Prospect Street parking garage site to serve as a new bus system pulse point, complete with rest rooms and shelters, is one idea being closely evaluated. This would relocate the pulse point off The Green with minimal impact to bus schedules.

**Kevin Watley** of Naugatuck said his brother, who also lives in Naugatuck, commutes to work in Norwalk. They would like to see a Coastal Link-type bus service run along the Route 8 corridor. Also, Watley would like to see a late night northbound train from Bridgeport to Waterbury.

Watley also handed in written testimony covering several points. In addition to advocating for a Coastal Link-type bus service along Route 8, he asked for late night bus service in Waterbury and better Waterbury-to-Naugatuck bus connections. He suggested that the major cell phone carriers make donations to support public transportation. He feels there should be more

incentives to get people to use public transportation. All bus systems should be better integrated with the train system and schedules.

Moderator Schreiner closed the hearing at 8:18 pm.

## **Connecticut Public Transportation Commission Public Hearing**

Old Saybrook Town Hall, Main Level Conference Room  
302 Main Street  
Old Saybrook, Connecticut  
Tuesday, September 30, 2015 – 7:00 PM

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chris Adams  
Kevin Maloney  
Frederick Riese  
Robert Rodman

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Chris Adams opened the hearing at 7:06 pm. He welcomed the single attendee, thanked him for coming to tonight's hearing and briefly explained the work of the Commission and the purpose of tonight's public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members present.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Sam Gold**, Executive Director of the Lower Connecticut River Council of Governments, said he would be presenting remarks on behalf of both the Council of Governments and the Estuary Transit District. Speaking first for the Estuary Transit District, Gold presented comments from Leslie Strauss, Board Chairman of the District. On behalf of Strauss, Gold first presented a resolution of the District's Board of Directors expressing its opposition to "any effort to rebrand, consolidate or take over transit services operated by the district" and that the board "believes local control of transit systems is critical to strong communities, particularly in suburban and rural areas." In support of this resolution, the ETD board noted the ridership on the transit routes operated by the District had doubled over six years to 100,000 trips annually and that further ridership growth last fiscal year moved the annual ridership to 107,000.

According to the ETD, it can provide transit service at half the cost of the CT Transit system, providing a better value for the taxpayers' dollars. The District's twelve member towns contribute both operating funding and management through the appointment of board members who govern the district, enabling the acquisition of both needed funds and greater local buy-in. Despite its increased membership to twelve towns, the ETD still calls its service *9 Town Transit*, a name that has been well established and accepted in the communities it serves.

The District's Shore Line Shuttle service has been very successful. The District would like to extend the hours of operation of this service on both ends of the day. It would also like to add service on Route 81 to Middletown and, if successful in its quest for a CMAQ grant, will do so.

Two other issues raised by the District were the need for a vehicle maintenance and storage facility and for formally designated bus stops on its system. Regarding the former, bad winters such as this past year's really impact the transit district as it has no indoor storage of its vehicles.

Regarding the latter, Gold said that his experience in formally designating bus stops in Waterbury proved it to be a difficult procedure. Local approval must be obtained for the stops on local roads while the Office of State Traffic Administration approval is needed for the stops on State roads. There is no workable procedure to obtain the latter approvals. The ETD is running into the same problem. In Waterbury, ultimately the Police Commission approved the stops on local streets and ‘endorsed’ those on State roads, both of which were largely stops that had been in use for decades. There is also an issue of regulatory vs. non-regulatory bus stops. The former automatically create a no parking zone when they are designated; the latter do not. Gold said that though there is some perception of liability from approving specific bus stops, designated stops are actually a safety improvement as some sub-standard traditional stops can be eliminated from the system.

Gold’s observations on the consolidation issues were that if the State took control of the local transit district operations, the towns that financially support the transit districts would no longer do that. Though a statewide system could yield some efficiencies, he believes this approach amounts to “throwing the baby out with the bath water.” However, the Council of Governments would like to see more coordination between the Estuary Transit District, Middletown Area Transit and CT Transit.

Moving on to Council of Governments issues, Gold noted that some funds have been allocated for a new ferry house at the Chester Ferry to provide office space and rest rooms for the ferry operators. Gold also believes the ferry’s hours of operation should be extended from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm on weekends during the summer tourist season.

Gold next mentioned that the Council of Governments recently completed a study of the Valley Railroad dealing with possible restoration of the tracks on the northern portion of the line to allow a connection to rail lines in Middletown. The northern seven miles of the Valley Railroad corridor are not useable at this time. A 2009 TIGER Grant application to restore this link provoked a lot of public opposition from residents along the railroad. The purpose of the recent study was fact-finding. It made no recommendations. It analyzed the potential markets and commodities for freight movement on a restored line and found that sand and gravel, and recyclables were the only cargoes with any current market potential to move on the line. There is a local fear of heavy volumes of freight movements, including crude oil, on the line. The City of Middletown has some interest in having Valley Railroad reach Middletown for passenger service including special Christmas excursions.

On a personal note, Gold, who lives in New Haven, prefers to take Shore Line East to Old Saybrook and then bike to the COG office in Essex. The Shore Line East train that best fits into his schedule is actually an Amtrak train which honors Shore Line East tickets under a code-sharing arrangement. Though Shore Line East trains allow bicycles, Amtrak trains do not. This seems like a lost opportunity to Gold.

Lastly, Gold observed that the CT*fastrak* station passenger canopies provide very good shelter for bus riders but that the bicycle racks are not under the canopies. This design is not ideal.

Moderator Adams closed the hearing at 8:07 pm.

## **Connecticut Public Transportation Commission Public Hearing**

Windsor Locks Town Hall  
Ella T. Grasso Conference Room  
50 Church Street  
Windsor Locks, Connecticut  
Tuesday, October 6, 2015 – 7:00 PM

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Kevin Maloney  
Frederick Riese  
Edward McAnaney

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing at 7:06 pm. He welcomed the attendees, thanked them for coming to tonight's hearing and briefly explained the work of the Commission and the purpose of tonight's public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members present.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**First Selectman Stephen Wawruck** welcomed the Commission to Windsor Locks. He spoke about several facets of renewed development interest in downtown Windsor Locks tied to the upcoming expansion of passenger rail service. The Graziani property on the north end of Main Street has been remediated and will become an incubator building for new businesses. John Barbaro has purchased seven or eight buildings in town and is in the process of acquiring the old Post Office. The Town has acquired the former downtown railroad station from Amtrak for \$1.00 and has a request for proposals out now to do roof repairs, brick work and painting. Both ConnDOT and Governor Malloy have committed to relocating the Windsor Locks train station from its current location south of the town to a site adjacent to the historic train station.

**Jennifer Rodriguez** has been the Windsor Locks Town Planner and Zoning Officer for just over 10 years. She discussed several transportation and development issues. On the transportation end, she sees a need for a multi-modal center for Windsor Locks.

The Town strives to create a feel of authenticity for its central business district. She oversaw the conceptual design for the new railroad station. She also noted that a walkability audit of Windsor Locks, performed by the North Central Health District, found the town scored very well in this quality.

The Town has created a Main Street Overlay Zone which will give developers flexibility to design new developments 'as-of-right' as long as the development meets certain criteria. Existing downtown residential development consists of single family bungalow and Victorian style houses behind the wall of commercial development along Main Street.

Milone and MacBroom is undertaking a housing study for the Planning Commission to look at residential development options, chiefly downtown, but also along the Route 75 corridor. Plans call for a significant residential component in the area of Route 75 near Route 20. The Windsor Locks Housing Authority is excited about encouraging mixed use commercial/residential development on the north end of Main Street. Also, park benches and amenities are planned to be added along the Windsor Locks Canal Trail.

Rodriguez also noted that the Connecticut Airport Authority has committed to operating a Bradley Shuttle that will meet every passenger train that comes into Windsor Locks.

In another favorable development, many downtown commercial property owners have been undertaking façade improvements to their buildings.

**Cara Radzins**, Principal Transportation Planner at the Capitol Region Council of Governments, discussed several regional initiatives and studies. First Radzins spoke about the Comprehensive Transit Analysis being undertaken by CRCOG. Nygaard Nelson is the consultant on this study. Three potential levels of improvements to the Capitol Area bus system are being evaluated:

- A cost-neutral tweak to the system
- A complete overhaul of the system
- A hybrid of the above options including local level improvements.

The Study Advisory Committee will hold its next meeting in November, with public outreach meetings scheduled for December. The final report is expected out in spring or summer of 2016. With the recent addition of New Britain, Plainville, Southington and Berlin to the Capitol Region, these towns have been added to the study scope. Funding to implement the recommendations of the study will involve some state funding, perhaps some federal support, and possibly funding from Let's Go CT.

Two studies are underway to examine access to UConn facilities. The Eastern Gateway Study is examining access along the Route 195 and US 44 corridors leading to the main campus, while a second study is looking at the Farmington UConn campus and the upcoming Downtown Hartford campus. Sporting events and other special events require specific traffic management measures. CRCOG will create a special traffic generation model to look at UConn traffic because student traffic patterns and schedules are different than those analyzed by traditional traffic models.

CRCOG is also studying options to complete the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Plainville and northern Southington where active Pan Am Railroad operations preclude the use of the rail corridor as a trail alignment. A trail gap also exists in Farmington but its closure is under design now. Another aspect of the study is looking at routes to connect the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail to the multi-use trail running along the *CTfastrak* busway.

CRCOG is also overseeing a program to add some bus shelters in the Capitol Region. Phase I of this initiative will add shelters in Wethersfield, South Windsor and Windsor Locks. The program is behind schedule due to some issues with the installation of the shelters but these

issues are being worked out now. Phase II, in 2016, will add shelters in Bloomfield, Hartford and East Windsor. Phases I and II will see a combined 65 new bus shelters added in the region.

The Policy and Planning Group at CROCG has been monitoring transit-oriented development along the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail line. A progress report was assembled in April 2015 and quarterly updates have been done since. This effort tracks municipal zoning changes and development plans along the corridor.

Lastly, Radzins discussed a 1.8-mile segment of North Main Street in West Hartford planned to undergo a road diet. This section between downtown West Hartford and Bishops Corner is being studied with a focus on improving safety and bike/ped conditions via a slimming of the vehicle traffic profile of the road.

**Pamela Brown**, Director of Social Services for the Town of Enfield, provided an update on the Magic Carpet bus service which began operations in January 2013 following a CROCG study of potential routes and local service needs.

Magic Carpet bus service has provided nearly 80,000 rides since it began. Ridership has grown annually and now averages 3,500 rider per month, or 150 rides daily. Forty per cent of the riders are adults between the ages of 18 and 65, while 30% of the riders are seniors or disabled, 8% are teens, 4% are under the age of 5, and 17% are Asnuntuck Community College students. Purposes of trips taken on Magic Carpet break down as 26% work trips, 25% shopping trips, 20% medical trips, 20% trips for leisure and 10% school trips.

Service is provided from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 7:00 am until 9:00 pm on Saturdays, with service on an hourly basis. Two routes are run. In response to surveys, one of the routes was expanded eastward to serve the Scitico area of Enfield and to reach two senior residential facilities. Demand for other routes to serve other senior housing sites and to go north on Route 5 to Mass Mutual and the state line is strong.

Moderator Riese closed the hearing at 8:31 p.m.

In addition to the testimony presented at the hearing, **Karen Burnaska**, Coordinator for Transit for Connecticut, submitted written testimony. Transit for Connecticut is a statewide coalition of 33 businesses, social services, transportation, planning and civic organizations dedicated to increasing the public awareness of the benefits of bus transit and advocating for increased investment in transit. Burnaska expressed that bus transit is the backbone of public transit in Connecticut. Commuter buses continue to provide relief for congestion on our roads and provide mobility for our most economically-challenged citizens. Investment in transit generates jobs and transit gets people to their jobs.

Transit for Connecticut sees a need for increased capital and operating investment in bus transit and that funding needs to be more reliable to allow for service planning. Demand for new services is strong but cannot be met without reliable funding sources.



Improved inter-regional service, more bus/rail shuttle service, new bus rapid transit service and more dial-a-ride service are seen as specific needs. Transit for Connecticut endorsed the expansions of bus transit service contained in the Governor's Let's Go CT initiative.

With the state's aging population, with more young people desiring to live in urban areas near work and other amenities, and with the state focused on climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increased and improved public bus transit is supported.

## **Connecticut Public Transportation Commission Public Hearing**

Western Connecticut Council of Governments  
Stamford Government Center  
888 Washington Boulevard  
Stamford, Connecticut  
Tuesday, October 13, 2015 – 7:00 PM

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Richard Schreiner  
Frederick Riese  
Robert Rodman

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing at 7:05 pm. He welcomed the attendees, thanked them for coming to tonight's hearing and briefly explained the work of the Commission and the purpose of tonight's public hearing. He then introduced the Commission members present.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**

**Sheila Williams-Brown** has been a Stamford resident since 1981 and a bus rider since 1984. She began her remarks on a positive note saying the installation of bus stop signs was a big improvement for the Stamford bus system. However, the location of the bus pulse point under Interstate 95 is problematic. In rain or snow conditions, drainage, snow and debris from the highway comes down on waiting bus riders. This location also has poor lighting. Williams-Brown also spoke of a need for more bus shelters to provide protection from the weather. Existing shelters are irregularly and infrequently spaced and many lack benches so that riders are forced to stand. The lack of shelter is a special problem for handicapped riders. She also said that bus schedules need to be posted at all bus shelters and, if possible, at other stops.

Williams-Brown also spoke of a lack of communication to would-be riders when buses are detoured from their normal routes. This lack of communication can lead to riders waiting for hours for buses which do not come. Lastly, she spoke of a need for a second east-west route across Stamford to supplement the East Main Street route.

**Chris Kozicki** elaborated on two of Williams-Brown's comments saying the single east-west bus route does not completely cross town. He also expressed that wireless LED-based message boards at bus shelters would be a help in addressing the issue of notifying riders of bus detours. This idea was seconded by two other attendees. Kozicki said an automated vehicle locator (AVL) system needs to speak to a central communications system and that communications technologies need to be standardized between and across Connecticut's bus systems.

**Robert Sachnin**, Senior Planner at the Western Connecticut Council of Governments, said the transportation system in his region is at capacity and the resulting congestion on the system is

constraining growth and impacting air quality. Investments in the area's transportation infrastructure are needed. Sachnin listed the top investment priorities as:

- Achievement of a state-of-good-repair on the Northeast Corridor and branch lines
- Achievement of high speed rail service without sacrificing local service
- Improved infrastructure along the branch lines including the extension of Danbury Branch service to New Milford
- More rail station parking
- Foster transit-oriented development
- Employer backing of transit use
- Better connections to Westchester County Airport, LaGuardia, JFK and Danbury Airports
- Any improvements that will reduce congestion on Interstates 95 and 85 and on US-7.
- Better bicycle to rail multimodal accessibility
- A comprehensive needs analysis for the Norwalk Transit District
- A Stamford bus and shuttle study to better feed Stamford Station. An RFP has just been issued for this study.
- A new West Avenue pulse point for the Norwalk Transit District's WHEELS system. A TIGER grant application has been submitted for this project.

**Chris Kozicki**, who lives in the Springdale section of Stamford, added some points to his earlier comments. First, parking at railroad stations should remain as close to the platforms as possible. Stamford is the prime example but this also applies to Fairfield and Westport. We don't want to see shuttles needed to bring people from the parking lots to the stations. This point is especially pertinent for wheelchair users and other mobility-impaired train riders. Kozicki also appreciates the use of hybrid technology transit vehicles.

**Jennifer Johnson**, a member of the Board of the Westport Transit District, said Westport had a very robust transit system in the 1970s. Funding problems led to the collapse of the Westport Transit District as an operating entity and its services were turned over to the Norwalk Transit District. The Westport Transit District now provides policy oversight. Johnson sees accessibility needs beyond the operation of the bus system. There is a need to improve accessibility to the buses. This includes more sidewalks, bus shelters, posting schedules on the bus shelters, LED information displays, and bicycle-to-bus multimodal access. Riders need a safe place to wait for the bus and a system that tells them where the bus is as they wait. The technologies need to work across districts. Some places riders currently catch the bus are not safe. Formal bus stops are not always the answer but a mixture of fixed stops and flagged stops may be best for her area.

**Foti Koskinas** is the Deputy Chief of Police in Westport and has responsibility for operating the train stations in that town. He said the bike racks at the two Westport train stations are typically 95%-100% full. Of the rack capacity, 65-70% is under cover from the weather. Westport has quadrupled the number of bike racks at its stations over the last three years. As they add bike racks, those racks fill up. He noted that only two bicycle thefts have occurred at the train stations in the last three years. A system of cameras at the stations helps in this regard.

**Mary Daly**, also of Springdale, uses the New Canaan Branch station there. She would love to have signage at the Stamford Station telling riders when the next train is coming and whether it is an Amtrak or Metro-North train. There is a lack of communication to riders. She sees a lot of confused riders at Stamford when she comes off the New Canaan Branch train.

**Kim Morton**, General Manager of the Norwalk Transit District, heartily agrees with the comments of Rob Sachnin and Jennifer Johnson. Investment in our transit infrastructure is very important including investment in safe pedestrian routes, accessible shuttle services and maintaining a state-of-good-repair. Also, more use of ITS technology is needed.

Growth in transit service has been significant. The Norwalk Transit District bus facility was built twelve years ago to house the District's 60 vehicles. The District now has 85 vehicles, which necessitates the outside storage of some of them.

Morton noted the LoNo (Low or No Emissions) Program, a Federal program to promote the use of low or no emissions transit vehicles. There are a limited number of grants the program is making around the country. In California, by law, all transit systems over a certain size are required to use low or no emissions vehicles.

Morton noted that there has been some discussion of late in Connecticut as to the best administrative structure for transit systems in the state, whether there should be one huge statewide provider or multiple systems. She noted that regardless of the format chosen, we should be using coordinated, standardized farebox systems, coordinated fare structures, and coordinated information systems across all of Connecticut's transit systems.

Morton reported that significant transit-oriented development is occurring in Norwalk. A trend to date has been the operation of individual shuttle services by each developer or employer. She observed that a circulator system serving all the new developments would be a more efficient way to meet the transit needs of these new developments.

**Jeffrey Maron**, a member of the Metro-North Commuter Council, first spoke about the lack of communication to train riders saying it is a very significant problem with a very simple solution. One notable aspect of it is that people on the station platforms can't see the schedule information that is displayed inside the station. Simply running a wire to a display on the platform would address this.

Maron then discussed the parking situation at Stamford Station. Nine years ago the State decided to stop fixing the older parking garage and instead to replace it. Only minor maintenance has been done since then. It has now gotten to a point where falling debris in the garage is damaging vehicles. A hole developed in the deck of the third level of the garage six months ago. The result was the closing of the old garage and the resultant significant loss of parking. Private parking operators in the area can and did increase their rates after the closure. Maron also mentioned that ConnDOT has done a study of the physical condition of the old parking garage, the closure of which eliminated almost 800 parking spaces. There has been no further word on where the study stands or what it has found.

Maron then spoke about traffic circulation problems at the Stamford Transportation Center garage saying it is very difficult to pull out of the garage onto Station Place. Three entrances/exits come out of the old garage onto Station Place. One comes out on Atlantic Street through the newer section of the garage. Other developments to be added at the station site for retail and residential use will add traffic to this already very congested situation. As it is, traffic backs up at Station Place.

The City of Stamford has not had a role in the decisions concerning the new parking facilities to be built at Stamford Station, Maron said. He noted that a project developer had been selected over two years ago but the contract has yet to be signed.

Maron was late arriving for tonight's hearing. He explained that this was due to police activity which stopped his train shortly after it departed Grand Central Terminal. There was no announcement made on the train concerning this situation.

**Foti Koskinas**, Deputy Police Chief of Westport, elaborated on the Police Department's role in running the Saugatuck and Greens Farms train stations in Westport. As far as he can determine, Westport is the only place in the country where the Police Department runs the railroad stations. He said the Westport Police Department operates as one-stop shopping for all matters concerning the Saugatuck and Greens Farms Stations including building maintenance, snow plowing, permits, parking and cleaning. This arrangement arose out of a police investigation of undocumented expenses at the stations years ago. Koskinas mentioned that there are cameras at both stations that show passengers if a train is approaching.

**Jennifer Johnson** said that a seamless transportation experience for riders is needed, noting again that how we get passengers to the train station is an issue in Westport.

**Rick Davis**, Regional Mobility Manager at the Kennedy Center, says his agency fields a lot of requests for information as to how to get from one town to another. He said the Kennedy Center's study of on-demand mobility needs and solutions for disabled riders has just been completed and released and is available on the Kennedy Center website. Solutions that his agency is working on include an expansion to the taxi voucher program which began with Metro Taxi. Kennedy Center is just now beginning to work with Norwalk Taxi on this issue. One limitation is that Norwalk Taxi does not operate any accessible vehicles. Kennedy Center also is updating its guidebook of all local transit services and it expects to have the new edition ready by year's end.

Moderator Riese closed the hearing at 8:56 pm.

In addition to the testimony presented at the hearing, **David Fine** of Danbury submitted written testimony for tonight's hearing. Fine has lived in Danbury for two years. Despite his efforts to inform the Mayor, Police Department and the community about bicycling needs and infrastructure, there has been no bicycling infrastructure added to Danbury roads, even though some roads have recently been rebuilt or relined. He has come to think that town leaders in Danbury feel that adding cyclists to the roads is dangerous. However, according to Fine,

research shows the opposite, that the greater the number of cyclists and the more cycling infrastructure that is added, the fewer accidents occur on the roads.

Fine sees progress in Brookfield and has heard positive comments and plans voiced in Bethel but little or no progress in Danbury. He makes two suggestions to the Commission:

- 1) To encourage these towns to follow the Bicycle Friendly Community and Safe Routes to School program concepts, and
- 2) Towns and cities that add a Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator position to their staff have shown good success in supporting bicycling. It would be logical to place such a position within the Western Connecticut Council of Governments.

## **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 Energy and 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 seventeen 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 served 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 served 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.

### **Robert Hammersley**

Mr. Hammersley is a program manager with DTC, an engineering and environmental consulting firm headquartered in Hamden. Prior to joining DTC in 2012, Mr. Hammersley was employed by the State of Connecticut, working for both the Legislative and Executive Branches. For over decade, Mr. Hammersley served as the manager of the Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board (TSB). In that role, Mr. Hammersley actively managed the strategic process of development, presentation and advocacy of the State's short and long-term plan for multi-modal transportation. Mr. Hammersley was the primary advocate for the successful securitization of multi-billion dollar legislation which provided for numerous improvements and enhancements to Connecticut's transportation infrastructure.

### **Morton N. Katz - Bus User**

A member of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission since 1984, Colonel Morton N. Katz (ret) is a lawyer in practice since 1951. Morton has been a consistent user of the Avon-Canton commuter bus to and from Hartford since its inception. He also travels by train and bus extensively in the Northeast Corridor. Traveling in Europe, he has studied and reported on rail transportation in England, France and Italy and the light rail Metro in France. Morton rides the Amtrak Acela service to visit family in the Philadelphia area.

Mort serves with Connecticut Legal Services providing *pro bono* legal services to indigent clients. He is the 2010 recipient of the Hartford County Bar Association Pro Bono Award and is a recent recipient of the French Legion of Honor for his services in the liberation of France in World War II.

### **William C. Kelaher – Rail Labor Representative**

Mr. Kelaher is the Assistant National Legislative Director 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.

### **Nicholas E. Lownes, PhD, PE**

Dr. Lownes is an Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Connecticut. In 2010, he became the director of the Center for Transportation and Livable Systems and earned his Professional Engineering license. In 2012, he was named an F. L. Castleman Professor in Engineering Innovation at the UConn School of Engineering. His primary teaching and research interests are in public transportation systems and network modeling. He has over 60 publications in refereed journals and proceedings. His recent research efforts have focused on a collaborative initiative improving public transportation data management and analysis for transit planners and operators in Connecticut. Dr. Lownes joined the Commission in 2014.



## **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, during 2010, he was reelected as 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. In 2012, Mr. Maloney was appointed to the Regulatory Fairness Board (Region I) of the Small Business Administration and was appointed Region I chairman in 2013.

## **Edward G. McAnaney**

Mr. McAnaney is the former First Selectman of Suffield, being first elected in November 2011 and serving two terms. He served as the Judge of the Suffield-East Granby Probate District for 11 years through 2011. He is also 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 and a trustee of the Railroad Museum of New England.

Mr. McAnaney served in the U.S. Navy for 28 years, commanding ten units during that time including Naval Coastal Warfare Squadron 25 in Iraq and, briefly, the George Washington Carrier Battle Group.

## **Francis Pickering**

Francis Pickering is the Executive Director of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG), the region with the highest transit ridership in Connecticut. At WestCOG, Francis oversees a multimodal program that includes rail and bus intercity and local transit, highways, freight, bicycles and pedestrians. Prior to joining WestCOG, he served as Deputy Director at the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA). Under his leadership, CCRPA worked to improve transportation and integrate multimodal transportation into community planning. These efforts won CCRPA's Innovative Plan of the Year in 2013 and NADO's Innovative Award in 2014. Francis is also active in the development of major regional transportation initiatives and serves on the Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board.

## **Robert Rodman**

Mr. Rodman, a resident of Avon, represents transit users who are sixty years of age or older. Transportation modes have been intertwined with his life. He initially lived in

the Boston metropolitan area where he was a rider on a variety of transportation modes including trolley cars, buses and trains. Upon moving to the suburb of Sharon, Massachusetts just prior to World War II, he traveled on the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad that served as an important transportation link to Boston.

### **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 (HARTransit) 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 more than thirty-five 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 advisory board chairman and client of the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind.

## **Ex-Officio Members**

### **James P. Redeker**

Mr. Redeker was appointed Commissioner of the Department of Transportation in 2011, after serving as Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Public Transportation, a position which he also still holds. He joined the Department in 2008 after a 31-year career in public transportation in New Jersey, culminating with the position of Director of Capital Planning for New Jersey Transit.

### **Senator Andrew M. Maynard**

Senator Maynard represents the 18th Senatorial District which encompasses Griswold, Groton, Stonington, North Stonington, Plainfield, Preston, Sterling and Voluntown 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 Robert Klee of the Department of Energy and 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.

### **Garrett Eucalitto**

Mr. Eucalitto represents Secretary Benjamin Barnes of the Office of Policy and Management. Garrett serves as Undersecretary for Transportation Policy and Planning at OPM. As the Governor's staff agency responsible for policy and budget formulation, OPM also plays a key role in land use, capital development, and transportation financing. In addition to sitting on the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission, Garrett is also a member of the Connecticut Port Authority and the Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory and Blue Plan Advisory Committee. Before joining OPM, Garrett spent six years as a staff member with U.S. Senator Joseph I. Lieberman. He served as Legislative Assistant, where he advised the Senator on appropriations, transportation, infrastructure, energy and the environment, as well as federal response to Superstorm Sandy.

**AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION**

**Connecticut General Statute Section 13b-11c**  
**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission Implementing Statute**

Sec. 13b-11c. 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 Energy and 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. 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) On or before January first, annually, the commission shall submit in writing to the commissioner and the Governor (1) a list of public transportation projects, which, if undertaken by the state, would further the policy set forth in section 13b-32, including projects specifically for elderly and disabled users; (2) recommendations for improvements to existing public transportation service and projects, incorporating transportation service and projects relative to the needs of elderly and disabled persons and including proposals for legislation and regulations; (3) recommendations for disincentives to free parking, including urban and suburban

employment centers; (4) off-peak transit services; and (5) the establishment of urban center loop shuttles. The commissioner shall notify members of the joint standing 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.

(e) 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.

(f) 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.

(g) 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.

(h) 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.

(i) 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.

(j) 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.

## **CPTC Guiding Principles, C.G.S. Section 13b-32**

Sec. 13b-32. Declaration of policy. 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.