



Connecticut Public Transportation Commission



Inauguration Event for Evening Bus Service in Waterbury
Naugatuck Valley Community College
October 24, 2011

DATE: December 30, 2011

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 2011 Annual Report of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission as required by the Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a(e). The eight recommendations contained in this year's Annual Report reflect public input received at the eight public hearings conducted by the Commission across Connecticut and information gathered at our twelve monthly meetings as well as the expertise and experience of our members. The Commission is cognizant of the fiscal situation currently faced by the State of Connecticut. As a result, this year's recommendations focus on communications and planning issues rather than on new services.

Before summarizing the recommendations of this year's Annual Report, I would like to mention two general issues which transcend any individual recommendations or projects. The first of these is communication. Communication, or the lack of it, is at the heart of several issues that came before the Commission this year. This is reflected in three of the eight commendations in this Annual Report. Whether it is a lack of communication from a train crew to passengers on a stranded train, failure to promptly update transit districts as to the next steps in a facility development process, or not successfully explaining the operation and benefits of a major transit project to the host communities, the lack of timely and effective communication usually results in less than optimal relationships with various transit clients or groups. Though more effective communication does take a little extra effort, it is both relatively inexpensive and is capable of generating substantial goodwill.

The second issue, upon which the success of much of Connecticut's transportation infrastructure and services depend, is that of adequate staffing at the Department of Transportation. In a recent presentation to the Commission, Commissioner Redeker related the greater than anticipated number of retirements that ConnDOT had experienced recently and his concern with the ability of the department to adequately respond to the public need as a result of those retirements. The Commission would like to go on record as sharing those concerns.

Overview of Recommendations

The Commission heard a very strong appeal at its September 7, 2010 public hearing in Waterbury concerning the need for evening bus service in that city. Such service was needed to provide access to second shift retail and manufacturing jobs and to evening classes at Naugatuck Valley Community College. The Commission's first recommendation thanks ConnDOT for designating a portion of its federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding to cover the operating cost of the evening bus service and for making a commitment to fund such service for a minimum of three years, a timeframe which will allow the ridership potential for the evening service, which began operation on October 24, to fully develop.

The Commission's second recommendation endorses the Action Plan developed by Metro-North in the wake of the heat-related train service interruptions of last July 22. This recommendation calls for periodic assessment of the measures that have been put into place to ensure that these procedures do not grow stale in terms of readiness for implementation. The recommendation also points out the valuable role of more frequent and timely communication of information from train crews to passengers during events which interrupt regular service or, at the worst, strand trains on the tracks.

Again revolving around the need for effective communication, the Commission's third recommendation stresses the need for ConnDOT to take an active role in informing the public about the progress on the New Britain Busway as the project advances, and the services and benefits the facility will provide. At the Commission's October 25 public hearing in Plainville, the bulk of the public testimony displayed deep misconceptions about the operation of the busway as well as about its financing. While public opinions about the desirability of undertaking this project can and will differ, the public discourse should be based on a factual understanding of the project. It was apparent at our hearing that much of the public does not adequately understand how the busway works. The Commission encourages ConnDOT to work to promote this better understanding of the busway.

The fourth and fifth recommendations point out the valuable roles served by Jobs Access transportation and by dial-a-ride paratransit, respectively. The Jobs Access transportation services are funded through ConnDOT and the Department of Social Services along with some federal assistance. The enhancements to transit services that this funding supports allow many low income and other transit-dependent workers to attain and maintain employment. Similarly, dial-a-ride services are critical to many of our older citizens and often make the difference as to whether they can maintain their independent lifestyles in their own homes or must seek assisted-living arrangements. The value of these programs and their impacts on the lives of two large segments of our population are highlighted to help inform future budget discussions.

Effective communications is again stressed in the Commission's sixth recommendation. The long-awaited bus storage facilities in Torrington and Willimantic took a major step forward when the State Bond Commission approved funding for the preliminary design of these facilities at its August 26 meeting. These facilities will ultimately allow the two local transit districts to move their vehicle fleets from rented outdoor lots to secure, weather-protected indoor storage. However, both districts expressed some frustration in the delay between the approval of the Bond Commission funding and the first communication from ConnDOT as to the next stage in the process. From the Department's perspective, there was no urgent news to report but from the transit district's point of view, this is an unfamiliar process to them and they were concerned the plans were proceeding without local input

being sought. No harm, no foul, but the partnerships necessary to see these two projects through to successful conclusions will benefit by keeping the lines of communication in frequent use.

The seventh recommendation takes note of a very interesting proposal being developed by the Housatonic Railroad to operate passenger rail service over its Berkshire Line between Danbury and Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The proposal is still at a conceptual stage, though some marketing research has been done to assess its viability. Housatonic envisions serving some non-traditional markets, largely drawing from New York City and its metro area and drawing extra fares to Metro-North as these passengers access the new service from Danbury. The proposal estimates providing 2,000,000 passenger trips per year on an unsubsidized basis. Upgrading of the existing tracks to passenger service standards would be necessary. At this early stage, the Commission simply asks ConnDOT to take note of this proposal and assist in whatever fashion may be useful.

Lastly, the Commission commends the new State grant program to fund transit-oriented development (TOD) planning along transit corridors. To facilitate such planning, grants were awarded to eleven municipalities on October 13 under this program. Both the Commission and ConnDOT see much value in TOD, from a land use perspective and also to increase transit ridership. These grants were awarded on a one-time basis and at present no subsequent round of grants is programmed. The Commission notes that TOD applications along proposed new services, notably the Springfield Line rail service and the New Britain Busway, figured prominently among the chosen applicants. The Commission suggests that, in any future round of TOD planning grants, proposals for projects served by existing transit services should be given a preference over those on proposed services and that a broader distribution among urban and suburban municipalities should be represented in the award recipients.

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

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**ANNUAL REPORT
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

DECEMBER 30, 2011

COVER PHOTO:

Inauguration of evening bus service in the city of Waterbury was marked by a public event at Naugatuck Valley Community College. A student activity fee which the college's student body voted to impose on their semester billings is one element of the funding which will support the three years of evening bus service begun on October 24, 2011.

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ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION IN 2011

Kevin Maloney served his second year as Chairman of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission in 2011, with Richard Schreiner serving as Vice Chairman for the second year. Frederick Riese continued as the Commission's Administrative Vice Chairman. Keiran Ryan joined the Commission during 2011. Departing from the Commission during the year were Gail Lavielle, who was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly, and Ronald Kilcoyne who left Connecticut to become the general manager of the Lane Transit District in Eugene, Oregon. We will certainly miss the contributions of these two valuable members.

Monthly Meetings

As set forth in Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a(j), the Commission met on the first Thursday of each month. In 2011, five of these meetings were held at the Connecticut Department of Transportation headquarters in Newington, three were held at Union Station in New Haven, three at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, and one meeting was held at the Bozzuto's, Inc. distribution center in Cheshire.

The monthly meetings featured presentations by invited speakers on timely transportation topics. In January, Jennifer Carrier, Director of Transportation Planning at the Capitol Region Council of Governments, gave an overview of the Interstate 84 Hartford Viaduct Study. Tom Maziarz, ConnDOT Bureau Chief for Policy and Planning, outlined the Springfield Line High Speed Passenger Rail Service proposal and gave an update on its current status at the February meeting. A budget update and an evaluation of possible bus and rail fare increases were discussed in March by Michael Sanders, ConnDOT's Transit and Ridesharing Administrator. Homeland security issues as they apply to various modes of transportation were outlined by David Bassett, TSA Security Director for Connecticut, at the Commission's April meeting.

The Commission's May meeting was held at Bozzuto's, Inc. Cheshire distribution center where the Commission was briefed on driver training issues and then had the opportunity to try out the driver training simulator. In June, Al Naudus, Operations Manager at the Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) and Mike Klebek, GHNTD's Maintenance Manager, discussed the District's accessible taxicab program and also the plug-in hydrogen/electric hybrid 22-passenger bus the District would be operating in the very near future. The July meeting featured Jonathan Rubell of the Kennedy Center outlining the travel training programs provided by his agency to mobility-impaired transit riders. Charles Hunter, Vice President for Governmental Relations at RailAmerica, gave an overview in August of RailAmerica's nationwide structure and then of its Connecticut operations consisting of the Connecticut Southern and New England Central railroads.

Mike Riley, President of the Connecticut Motor Transport Association, discussed trends in the trucking industry and in cargo movement generally at the Commission's September meeting. The October meeting featured a tour of a new Metro-North M-8 train set at New Haven Yard. ConnDOT's Director of Rail Operations, Gene Colonese, led the tour. Susan VanBenschoten, President of Fitzgerald and Halliday, and Craig Lader, Transportation Planner at the South Western Regional Planning Agency, briefed the Commission on the Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study in November. Lastly, ConnDOT Commissioner James Redeker addressed the Commission's December meeting outlining the vision for the 'New DOT'. Challenges facing the department and major new initiatives and projects on the planning horizon were described.

These 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

The Commission conducted eight public hearings during 2011 to gather public input from transportation users and providers, local officials and planners, non-profit organizations, and other members of the public. In the spring, the Commission held hearings in New Milford, West Haven, Meriden and Willimantic. In the fall, the Commission traveled to Torrington, Westport, Wilton and Plainville. These hearings, a requirement of C.G.S. section 13b-11a(b), provide information which is then used both in the formulation of the Annual Report, and also to resolve conflicts, issues and questions raised at the hearings, either by providing the information at the hearing or by facilitating the contacts necessary to achieve a resolution.

Topics raised at the public hearings tended to reflect local or regional issues rather than statewide themes. The very well attended New Milford hearing focused on calls for passenger rail service to New Milford and potentially also to points farther north, either by the extension of Metro-North's Danbury Branch service to New Milford or through the implementation of privately-funded passenger rail service between Danbury and Pittsfield as has been proposed by the Housatonic Railroad. Similarly, the rapid implementation of the proposed Springfield Line passenger rail service was roundly endorsed by all speakers at the Commission's Meriden public hearing, with this service seen as desirable both for its transportation benefits and its importance to economic development efforts in Meriden.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Plainville hearing featured a large number of speakers opposing a new transit service, the New Britain Busway. These speakers, predominantly from Bristol and Plainville, opposed the busway as either too expensive or as unlikely to attract significant ridership, though multiple speakers expressed a desire to

see passenger rail service implemented in the corridor and extending it to Bristol, if not all the way to Waterbury.

Most of the other five public hearings also featured one dominant topic. For Willimantic, that topic was the need for a new bus storage and maintenance facility to replace the current outdoor lot used by the Windham Regional Transit District for vehicle storage. Other significant topics raised at the Willimantic hearing included a need for later hours of bus service than the current schedule provides, for direct bus service between the UConn and Eastern Connecticut State University campuses, and for bus service linking the Windham Regional Transit system to Manchester and the Buckland Hills shopping area, as well as to Hartford.

In West Haven, the salient issue was the need for route alternations, particularly the Connecticut Transit Route O, to better service the Marsh Hill Road area of Orange where United Illuminating is opening its new central facility, and where Yale's new West/Orange campus and several major economic development opportunities are located. Other issues raised were the need for increased bus service to Westville and Woodbridge from New Haven and to the new Fairfield Metro train station in Fairfield, as well as a route extension to the Milford Schick plant for second and third shift workers from Bridgeport.

The foremost issue of the Torrington public hearing, as in past years, was the need for a new bus storage and maintenance facility for the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District to replace the leased outdoor storage yard it currently uses for its vehicles. The need for better communication from ConnDOT to the transit district and the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials as to the next steps in the process following the recent approval of State bond funds for the bus facility project was also stressed.

The Wilton public hearing also featured a dominant issue, that being a desire for a higher level of service on the Danbury Branch both in terms of frequency of service and of faster travel times to and from Grand Central Terminal. Lastly, the Westport hearing did not focus on a dominant topic but rather several issues including the need to maintain a high level of investment in the New Haven Line infrastructure in part to prevent incidents such as the July 22 service interruptions which stranded passengers and trains in 100 degree heat. The need for the proposed rail fare increases was questioned, and the established high level of ridership on Metro-North was contrasted with the speculative ridership projections for new services such as the Springfield Line passenger rail service and the New Britain Busway, a distinction which the speaker felt should be kept in mind when setting investment priorities.

More detailed discussion of these issues and other testimony can be found on pages 20-52 of this Annual Report.

EVENING BUS SERVICE IN WATERBURY

1. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS THE DEPARTMENT FOR DESIGNATING A PORTION OF THE CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY (CMAQ) FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EVENING BUS SERVICE IN THE CITY OF WATERBURY. THIS VALUABLE SERVICE BEGAN OPERATION ON OCTOBER 24 OF THIS YEAR AND IS ALREADY ATTRACTING A RIDERSHIP OF 450-500 PASSENGERS PER EVENING.

Last year's Annual Report contained a recommendation for the institution of evening bus service in Waterbury. The need for such service had been identified by numerous local entities including the City, Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC), the Central Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments and North East Transportation. The unmet evening transportation needs were strongly voiced at the Commission's public hearing in Waterbury on September 7, 2010. The lack of evening bus service after 5:30 pm prevented students from accessing evening classes at NVCC and limited the employment opportunities for second shift retail and other jobs in Waterbury.

Working cooperatively, North East Transportation developed a modest proposal to operate 15 routes over the hours of 6:30 pm to 12:30 am. ConnDOT identified CMAQ funds which could be used to fund this service, and NVCC instituted a \$10 per semester fee on all its students to generate revenue which directly supports the bus service in return for which registered students received U-passes enabling them to ride the buses without charge. Initially, \$761,000 has been budgeted for first year of evening service with funding rising to \$881,000 by the third year of service. NVCC funding to support the evening service will be assessed based on the number of U-Pass rides actually provided but will be a minimum of \$75,000 per year with a cap of \$175,000 annually. Early ridership figures are showing heavy usage by NVCC students.

The initial ridership amply demonstrates the need for this service. Ridership figures for November show that over 10,000 rides were provided that month on the new evening service. Though the CMAQ funding will support three years of evening bus operations and though ridership levels will grow as more potential riders find evening employment now that the service is available, the early ridership figures give strong testimony to the value of this service. The Commission gratefully acknowledges the support of

ConnDOT in making this life-changing service available to the citizens of Waterbury.

METRO-NORTH ACTION PLAN FOR HEAT-RELATED EMERGENCIES

2. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS METRO-NORTH FOR THE SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN DEVELOPED IN THE WAKE OF THE JULY 22 HEAT-RELATED SERVICE OUTAGES ON THE NEW HAVEN LINE. THIS 20-ITEM ACTION PLAN WILL IMPROVE COMMUNICAITON AND COORDINATION SHOULD A SIMILAR FUTURE EVENT RESULT IN POWER OUTAGES AND STRANDED TRAINS. THE COMMISSION NOTES THAT IMPROVED COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TRAIN CREWS AND PASSENGERS WOULD ADDRESS THE BULK OF THE FRUSTRATION EXPERIENCED BY PASSENGERS ON JULY 22.

On July 22 of this year, Metro-North experienced a cascade of equipment failures due to temperatures exceeding 100* and the effect of this heat on the catenary system, the pantographs on the train cars, and, to a lesser extent, on the tracks and switches. Several electric substations also overheated and went out of service, taking lines of track with them. These equipment failures led to severe operational repercussions including several trains becoming stranded on the tracks. Of the well-documented problems that occurred that day, the most infamous was that of train #1532 which became disabled about 2:51 pm in Westport near the Sherwood Island connector, with no power, no air conditioners, and no ventilation due to the sealed windows. Temperatures on three of the cars of the seven-car train exceeded 90 degrees. The number of track outages, broken pantographs, malfunctioning switches, substation fires, air conditioners that were nonfunctioning even before the trains lost power, and even buckled track made continued rail operations and the rescue of stranded passengers very challenging.

The root causes of most of these conditions will not be completely addressed until the New Haven Line catenary system replacement is completed in 2015 and the full complement of M-8 cars is in service allowing the older M-2s, M-4s and M-6s to be retired. In the interim, events like those experienced last summer are likely to recur. To address such situations when they occur, Metro-North developed a 20-item Action Plan noting many areas of communication, operations and crew training which must be addressed. As this Annual Report goes to press, all but two of the Action Plan items have been implemented, with the remaining pair expected to be completed early in 2012. The Commission encourages ConnDOT and Metro-North to regularly assess the measures that have been put into place to

ensure that the protocols, training, communications and working relationships that have been developed under the plan remain fresh and current in the minds of the personnel who would be involved in carrying them out.

The Commission notes that much of the public frustration experienced that day resulted from a lack of communication by train crews to passengers about what was being done to move the disabled trains and when the trains might ultimately arrive at a station. While recognizing that the situation was very fluid that day and events could not be predicted with a high degree of specificity or assurance, passengers would have benefitted from periodic updates, even if only to repeat that there had been no changes from last report but that rescue measures were continuing. Such communication would have been very helpful in allowing passengers to properly set their level of expectations until the situation was resolved.

NEW BRITAIN BUSWAY

3. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT CONNDOT KEEP THE PUBLIC INFORMED AND ENGAGED ON THE NEW BRITAIN BUSWAY PROJECT AS IT PROGRESSES, AS TO BOTH THE PROJECT'S STATUS AND ITS BENEFITS. THOUGH FTA FUNDING HAS BEEN AWARDED AND THE PROJECT CONSTRUCTION WILL COMMENCE EARLY IN 2012, THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND DEBATE ABOUT THE BUSWAY WILL CONTINUE. THE COMMISSION BELIEVES THAT THIS CONTINUING PUBLIC DISCOURSE WOULD BENEFIT FROM A BETTER PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THIS PROJECT. THE BUSWAY IS AN APPROACH TO MOBILITY NOT SEEN IN CONNECTICUT BEFORE, AND ITS SUCCESS WILL BE IMPORTANT TO FUTURE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS.

On October 25, 2011, the Commission held a public hearing at the Plainville Municipal Center. Although the hearing was intended to cover a variety of transit issues in the Central Connecticut Planning Region, virtually the only topic of discussion among the 19 speakers that evening was the proposed Hartford-New Britain Busway. With the exceptions of Michael Sanders of ConnDOT and Lyle Wray of the Capitol Region Council of Governments, both of whom have worked on developing this project, every one of the speakers spoke in opposition to the busway (see pp. 48-52 of this report for a summary of the Plainville public hearing). The speakers did not include any bus riders and, to that extent, the testimony of potential busway users, as well as of current transit users, was lacking.

The testimony at the public hearing gave clear evidence of many public misconceptions about the purpose and operation of the busway and a generally poor understanding of the project. In the interest of filling the information gap so clearly evidenced at the October 25 public hearing, the Commission recommends that ConnDOT, along with its partners the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency, continue the outreach to explain the purpose, operation and benefits of the busway.

JOBS ACCESS TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

4. ALMOST 12 YEARS AGO THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDED A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE CREATION OF NEW JOBS ACCESS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS. CONNECTICUT'S JOBS ACCESS PROGRAMS ARE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AND INCLUDE EVENING BUS ROUTES, CUSTOMIZED SHUTTLES TO OFFICE PARKS, AND OTHER IMPORTANT SERVICES TO SUPPORT WORKERS. CONNDOT HAS, UNFORTUNATELY, LOST MUCH OF THE INITIAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT OF ITS STATE DSS AND FTA FUNDING PARTNERS. THIS YEAR, STATE DSS REDUCED ITS FUNDING FOR JOBS ACCESS. CONNDOT WAS ABLE TO MAKE UP THE SHORTFALL WITHIN ITS BUDGET AND KEEP THE PROGRAM WHOLE. THE STATE SHOULD REINFORCE ITS COMMITMENT TO THESE IMPORTANT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES REGARDLESS OF THE SUPPORTING AGENCY AND SHOULD PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDS TO MAINTAIN THEM.

The Jobs Access program has been a major success for the state and has helped transition thousands of our citizens to meaningful employment. These workers now rely on the Jobs Access program to remain employed. In short, the current model works. Five regional coalitions, each including social service and public transit providers, have developed highly successful transportation enhancements for low income workers, enabling them to accept and maintain employment. These include expanded transit routes, evening bus services, employer-based transportation, car repairs and guaranteed ride programs.

The presence of social services experts at the table with transportation providers has proved very beneficial, allowing for example, quick adjustments in anticipation of staffing changes at employers. This model is now a requirement of the federal transportation planning process.

Connecticut's Jobs Access program began with over \$3 million from the Federal Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program annually, with matching funds provided through the state Departments of Transportation and Social Services (DSS). In FY 2006, with the passage of SAFETEA-LU and a change to funding rules from awards via competitive grants to using a formula system, Connecticut's share of federal funds dramatically decreased.

This year, federal funds provided only \$1.4 million towards the overall program.

With the reduction in federal funds, ConnDOT provided the lion's share of support to fill the gap to maintain services, with a smaller but equally crucial share from DSS. Enough state funds were available initially to allow for some expansion even with the loss in federal funds.

ConnDOT Jobs Access funds have increased by 3-3.5% annually 2006. However, DSS funds have not increased or have even been reduced some years, and federal funds have not grown. As a result, services have been reduced or providers have had to use local funds to keep services operating.

Early in FY 2012, after contemplating the total elimination of its support for Jobs Access, DSS renewed its funding commitment, but at a level short of that needed to maintain the status quo. These funds are especially critical because DSS funds target those in poverty and with dependent children. Fortunately, ConnDOT found funds outside of the Jobs Access program to eliminate the need for yet more service reductions.

The state should build on its success and reinforce its commitment to Jobs Access through both its ConnDOT and DSS partners.

DIAL-A-RIDE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

5. THE COMMISSION EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN AT THE LOSS OF STATE FUNDS FOR DIAL-A-RIDE TRANSPORTATION. LEGISLATION PASSED IN 1999 AUTHORIZED THE CREATION OF THE 13b-38bb STATE MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED DEMAND RESPONSE TRANSPORTATION WHICH WAS FINALLY IMPLEMENTED AT THE LEVEL OF \$5 MILLION FOR FY 2007. ACTUAL USAGE OF FUNDS BY MUNICIPALITIES WAS IN THE RANGE OF \$4 MILLION ANNUALLY. THE APPORTIONMENT OF FUNDS DID NOT INCREASE OVER THE YEARS AND IN FY12 WAS REDUCED TO \$3 MILLION. THIS PROGRAM IS NOT A SIGNIFICANT OUTLAY FOR THE STATE, BUT HAS A FAR REACHING POSITIVE IMPACT TO SOME OF CONNECTICUT'S MOST AT-RISK RESIDENTS.

A variety of dial-a-ride programs exist in Connecticut, some run by transit operators, others by municipalities or non-profit organizations. All serve seniors and persons with disabilities using small accessible vehicles. In rural communities, dial-a-ride is often the only public transportation service available.

Many seniors and near seniors favor aging in place; i.e., growing old in one's own home and remaining engaged in the community, rather than moving to a retirement facility. Providing home and community services that enable older adults to age in place has been shown to be the most cost-effective model for aging.

It is estimated that from 2006 to 2030, Connecticut's older adult population will increase by 64%, with many older adults losing their ability to drive and acquiring mobility limitations and/or physical disabilities as they age. For these individuals, dial-a-ride transportation represents a means to maintain independent living.

In spite of this growing need, support for dial-a-ride programs is decreasing. Federal Section 5307 funds for dial-a-ride were lost to most urban communities a decade ago as metropolitan areas with populations in excess of 200,000 lost their eligibility to participate in the program.

Non-profit organizations have scaled back their services as well. Over the past two years, American Red Cross stopped providing transportation to medical appointments. In the Danbury and New Milford area alone, this

service carried over 300 trips per month. In the Middletown and Central Connecticut areas, the Red Cross has also shut down its dial-a-ride programs. Church-based FISH (Friends in Service Here) transportation programs are declining statewide due to a lack of volunteer drivers and increased insurance costs. Dial-a-ride services provided by municipalities are thus becoming even more important.

Recognizing the fiscal realities of 2011, the State should consider carefully the broader impacts of reducing a small funding program like the Section 13b-38bb matching grant program which has such a far reaching benefit.

STATE-LOCAL COORDINATION ON NEW BUS STORAGE FACILITIES

6. THE COMMISSION ACKNOWLEDGES AND APPRECIATES THE STATE BOND COMMISSION FUNDING AND CONNDOT'S SUPPORT FOR THE MUCH NEEDED BUS STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES FOR THE WINDHAM REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT AND THE NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT TRANSIT DISTRICT. STATE BOND COMMISSION APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR THESE PROJECTS IN AUGUST OF THIS YEAR CLEARS THE WAY FOR THEM TO ADVANCE. HOWEVER, IN BOTH CASES, THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT DELAY IN THE FLOW OF INFORMATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO THE TRANSIT DISTRICTS AND LOCAL PLANNING ENTITIES ABOUT THE NEXT STEPS IN THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

At its August 26 meeting, the State Bond Commission authorized \$556,540 for the design of bus storage and maintenance facilities in Torrington and Willimantic. This authorization will allow the process to address long-standing needs of both those transit districts to begin. As noted in past Annual Reports of this Commission, both the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District and the Windham Regional Transit District have, of necessity, been storing their vehicle fleets at leased outdoor lots, removed from their administrative offices, and with no capacity for repair or fueling of their vehicles on site. Vehicle security, as well as employee safety, has also been at risk due to the use of outdoor parking facilities remote from transit district offices.

The successful development of the Torrington and Willimantic bus facilities will require frequent and open communication between all stakeholders if these facilities are to effectively satisfy the operational and maintenance needs of the local transit providers. Very productive meetings between ConnDOT and the local stakeholders (the transit districts, regional planning entities and municipalities) have occurred recently in Torrington on November 30 and in Willimantic on December 2. By all accounts, much was accomplished at these two meetings to move these projects forward. However, in the months following the Bond Commission approval of design funds on August 26, there was a perception on the part of the transit districts of a lack of information from ConnDOT as to the next steps in the process. While all parties recognize the staff shortage at ConnDOT and while the department may have felt that there was no news to impart during this interval, it was understandably unsettling to the transit districts, which do

not go through a facilities development process on any regular basis, to be without information. Therefore, the Commission expresses its hope that the atmosphere created by the recent collaborative planning meetings is maintained as these two long-planned projects move forward and encourages the department to keep the districts regularly informed as to the progress, or even, at certain points, the lack of progress, with these projects. Communication is a no-cost item which is very effective at promoting healthy relationships and partnerships.

PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE PROPOSAL BY HOUSATONIC RAILROAD

7. THE COMMISSION HAS FOLLOWED WITH GREAT INTEREST THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROPOSAL BY THE HOUSATONIC RAILROAD FOR THE OPERATION OF UNSUBSIDIZED PASSENGER SERVICE BETWEEN DANBURY, CONNECTICUT AND PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT CONNDOT TAKE NOTE OF THIS PROPOSAL AND THAT, SHOULD THE PROPOSAL ULTIMATELY APPEAR TO BE OPERATIONALLY FEASIBLE AND FISCALLY VIABLE, THAT CONNDOT ASSIST IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN ANY MANNER THAT IT CAN.

Housatonic Railroad operates over the 90-mile corridor from Danbury to Pittsfield (as well as over contiguous track from Derby to Beacon, NY) and currently provides freight service on this line. The segment from New Milford to the Massachusetts state line is owned by ConnDOT and leased to the Housatonic.

Over the last several years, the Housatonic has been evaluating the potential operation of passenger service between Danbury and Pittsfield to a market including weekend travelers, tourists, owners of second homes, prep school students and their families, and others. The railroad has commissioned two studies to date: a ridership study by Market Street Research and a study of the regional economic benefits of the service by the Center for Creative Community Development. The former study found that the proposed service would attract 350,000 to 400,000 persons per year who would, in the aggregate, represent 2,000,000 annual trips.

Such rail service would not only benefit its users, but would provide a boost to Metro-North revenues as well since the bulk of the new ridership would come from the New York City area and would use Metro-North service to access the Housatonic passenger trains. This could result in as much as \$20,000,000 in new revenues to Metro-North, revenues which would not require any new services or expense in order to achieve.

Development of the Housatonic passenger service proposal is still in the exploratory phase with the issues of infrastructure repair financing and equipment procurement still to be fully evaluated. Therefore, it is still too early to assess the chances of this proposal coming to fruition. However, it does offer the promise of a valuable addition to the transportation picture in western Connecticut and with no operating subsidy involved. It may boost

overall rail ridership, divert some Harlem Line riders to Connecticut, augment Danbury Branch revenues, and boost economic activity in northwestern Connecticut and Massachusetts, while potentially removing some auto trips from our roads as well. Therefore, the Commission looks forward to continuing to follow this proposal with interest and encourages the department to assist in whatever ways it can.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM

8. THE COMMISSION WELCOMES THE NEW STATE GRANT PROGRAM FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) PROJECTS WHICH, ON OCTOBER 13 OF THIS YEAR, AWARDED \$5 MILLION IN FUNDS TO 11 MUNICIPALITIES, THE MAJORITY OF WHICH WERE CITIES. WHILE FUNDING DECISIONS SHOULD FOCUS ON A PROJECT'S MERITS, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT, SHOULD THERE BE A ROUND OF SOLICITATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL TOD GRANTS, THE SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR THIS MUCH-NEEDED PROGRAM EMPLOY A TIERED STRUCTURE BY MUNICIPALITY SIZE TO ENCOURAGE A BROADER, MORE DIVERSE DISTRIBUTION OF TOD PLANNING FUNDS. GREATER EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR PROJECTS THAT ARE BUILT AROUND EXISTING, RATHER THAN PROPOSED, TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

The benefits of TOD projects are far reaching and well recognized. The Commission commends the creation of a new funding program to encourage the planning and implementation of TODs in the current difficult economic environment. In Connecticut, sprawl development is more the rule than the exception. Even in more urbanized areas, sidewalks and pedestrian amenities and integrated transit, housing, attractions and services are often lacking.

In June 2011, the first ever pilot program for transit-oriented development grants in Connecticut became a reality. The \$5 million program received 23 proposals totaling \$13,000,000 that met the initial screening requirements. OPM and DOT, jointly administering the program, and assisted by input from other state agencies, made 11 awards ranging from \$250,000 to \$1 million in October.

The majority of grants were provided to cities or towns in urbanized areas, with two provided to suburban towns. Also, projects along proposed transit corridors appear to have fared better than those along existing services. While five proposals for TOD projects on the proposed Hartford-New Britain Busway or the soon-to-be-enhanced New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail line were approved, collectively only two projects along the three branches of the New Haven Line were selected for funding.

Given the level of interest in this important program, an award structure that provides an equitable distribution of future grants for rural,

suburban and urbanized areas would be advantageous. It is further suggested that proposals built around existing infrastructure and transit resources should have some priority over those on anticipated or planned transit services, assuming the projects are of equal merit.

2011 Public Hearings Schedule

SCHEDULE AND SUMMARIES

In accordance with C.G.S. Section 13b-11a(b), the Commission is directed to hold public hearings in each of the metropolitan areas within the state, as determined by the Commission, for the purpose of determining the adequacy of rail, bus, motor carrier, and other public transportation services and facilities.

The Commission conducted a schedule of eight public hearings, as listed below, during the spring and fall of 2011.

<u>TOWN</u>	<u>MODERATOR</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
New Milford	Richard Schreiner	May 4	New Milford Town Hall
Willimantic	Frederick Riese	May 11	Windham Town Hall
Meriden	Alan Sylvestre	May 19	Meriden City Hall
West Haven	Ron Kilcoyne	May 26	West Haven City Hall
Torrington	Morton Katz	September 28	Torrington City Hall
Westport	Frederick Riese	October 12	Westport Town Hall
Wilton	Richard Schreiner	October 18	Wilton Library
Plainville	Kevin Maloney	October 25	Plainville Municipal Center

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

New Milford Town Hall
10 Main Street
New Milford, Connecticut
Wednesday, May 4, 2011 - 7:30 PM

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Yvonne Loteczka
Kevin Maloney
Russell St. John
Richard Schreiner
Richard Carpenter

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CONNDOT STAFF

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Richard Schreiner opened the meeting at 7:32 pm. Mr. Schreiner welcomed the attendees, gave a brief description of the purpose of the hearing and the function of the CPTC, and then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff in attendance.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Raymond Kwiatkowski of Roxbury favors extending passenger train service to New Milford. Kwiatkowski is a local artist. When he sees the freight trains go by New Milford station, he envisions passenger trains coming to town. The riders would be potential customers for him. Kwiatkowski passed around a photo of the New Milford station and a poem he had written about its emptiness.

Bob Rush, a New Milford resident and president of the Rail Service Restoration Society, presented the CPTC with a petition requesting an extension of the Danbury Branch rail service to New Milford, signed by 50 Danbury/New Milford train riders who could not be in attendance tonight.

Bob Wohlken of Danbury spoke passionately as an advocate for the return of passenger rail service to New Milford and points north. He sees this state headed for gridlock on our roads. Therefore, we need take greater advantage of the rails to move both freight and passengers. Wohlken also noted that highway accidents such as an overturned tractor trailer can effectively close a highway so we need the rail alternative to be available.

Wohlken favors electrification of the Danbury Branch to reduce travel times. Electrified service provides for better train performance. He also sees a need to re-educate the public about rail in order to get the necessary public support for rail investment.

Moving beyond the Danbury Branch and the Berkshire Line, Wohlken advocates a statewide passenger rail network and he notes the lack of east-west travel options once you leave the coast. He would love to take his son to a UConn game in Hartford by rail or to take his grandchildren to Mystic. Such a system would help build our economy. He also expressed his opinion that we are 'light years' behind Europe and China in the development of a passenger rail system.

Tom Esposito is a New Milford Councilman and serves on the local Economic Development Commission. He presented the CPTC with results of a local survey which showed that 91% of residents either strongly supported or supported the extension of Danbury Branch rail passenger service to New Milford. Prior to 1974, New Milford enjoyed rail passenger service, which enhanced the economy of the Greater Danbury community. While Esposito appreciates the enhancements made to US Route 7, he believes that unless rail service is extended beyond Danbury, within four years, those highway enhancements will be insufficient due to the large volume of traffic anticipated because of economic growth along the Route 7 corridor. It should not take millions of dollars and additional studies to decide to make this happen. If the Empire State Building could be built in 13 months, then the restoration of rail service north of Danbury can be done in 3.5 years. The tracks are already in place; this should not take the 13 years to reinstitute service that he has heard as a timetable.

Esposito also endorses the Housatonic Railroad's proposal for passenger service on the Berkshire Line, which he feels would be an enormous boost to New Milford. Such a service would benefit businesses, prep schools, and travelers both in New Milford and all along the line. He noted that studies done by the Housatonic Railroad found such service would draw 2,000,000 passengers per year. He feels this would provide more bang for the buck than would the proposed Springfield Line high speed rail service. Moreover, this service could be run without operating subsidies.

John Hanlon, President of the Housatonic Railroad and **Colin Pease**, Vice President for Special Projects, also of the Housatonic Railroad, spoke concerning that organization's proposal to operate private, non-subsidized passenger rail service on the Berkshire Line between Danbury and Pittsfield, with connections operated by Metro-North to Fairfield County and New York City. **Deborah Minnett** of the Housatonic RR was also introduced as part of the team.

Colin Pease mentioned that it has been five months since he met with the Commission at ConnDOT in December to present the Housatonic's passenger service proposal. Since that time, gas prices have gone well over the \$4 per gallon mark. Back in December, Housatonic had completed a ridership analysis which projected that the proposed service would attract 2 million one-way annual trips in its market. The piece of research that had not been done in December was a comprehensive economic analysis of the benefits of the proposed rail service. This study, being performed by Prof. Stephen Sheppard of Williams College, is almost complete now.

The proposed service would serve the large New York City market via the Harlem Line and the more local New Milford and Litchfield County market traveling to Fairfield County using the Danbury Branch. Housatonic looked for ways to serve a substantial off-peak market to make efficient use of rolling stock and track capacity. They found that such a market does exist in the

form of weekend traffic, tourists, second home owners, students and others who are outside of the traditional commuter market. In order to capture these potential riders, Pease said the railroad needs to offer two high quality services, one over the Danbury Branch to Fairfield County and one to New York City via the Harlem Line.

Pease cited a figure from the Transportation Strategy Board's Annual Report that found Connecticut spends \$140 million annually to subsidize passenger rail service and the trend in this number is rapidly upward. This comes at a time when the ability to fund these subsidies is diminishing. Housatonic's service would not involve a subsidy and would significantly complement Metro-North service by feeding additional, new riders into the system. A large proportion of the Housatonic ridership is foreseen to be riders new to the rail system. These riders would generate \$20 million in new fares to Metro-North. The 22 million people of the metro New York area represent a substantial year-round market looking for service to Danbury, Litchfield County and Berkshire County. In addition, Pease foresees satellite offices of NYC businesses being opened here in Connecticut, especially by affluent, second home owners in Litchfield County. Also, northern Fairfield County and southern Litchfield County is an affordable housing market for younger people working in the Stamford/Norwalk area.

Pease also mentioned that many riders using the Southeast railroad station in Brewster, NY are Connecticut residents. Also, recent data shows that 600 Newtown residents work in New York City. At one time, rail service extended from Newtown to Southeast. Now, some Newtown residents make the trip by car. Some of these would be new riders who would take the proposed Housatonic service.

Although Housatonic is proposing to run a non-subsidy service, there would be start-up costs estimated at \$200 million to get the new service running. These costs would include track upgrades, new and upgraded stations, and the acquisition and rehabilitation of locomotives and passenger cars. Potentially some surplus equipment owned by ConnDOT but not used for passenger service could be operated by Housatonic for this proposed service.

John Hanlon gave a rough fare structure of 30c per passenger mile for the proposed rail service. Service to New Milford only would not generate sufficient revenues to avoid the need for a subsidy but the addition of the long haul service to northern Litchfield County and Berkshire County, which would generate some \$30 fares, eliminates the need for a subsidy.

Mayor Pat Murphy of New Milford spoke on several points. First, she would like to see the State municipal dial-a-ride service program continued. She thanked ConnDOT for the enhancements to US-7, but would also like to see Interstate 84 widening move forward. Murphy asked that the State take a serious look fixing railroad crossings, especially the Bridge Street rail crossing; parts of that crossing have actually broken off. She also stressed the importance of the Route 37 improvements. This road provides connection to Sherman and New Fairfield and it was the only travel alternative available during the recent floods when Route 7 was under water.

Regarding the proposed Housatonic Railroad passenger service, Mayor Murphy believes that businesses in New Milford would benefit from it, as would businesses up and down the valley.

She would like to see the State consider the construction of an appropriately modern railroad station just north of the existing New Milford station.

Mayor Murphy also expressed her thanks to HART for great job they do here in New Milford. She also mentioned that she believes charging stations are needed to serve electric and flex vehicles that will be hitting the market in increasing numbers. Lastly, in response to a question about who has responsibility to repair and maintain the Bridge Street railroad crossing, Murphy noted that Bridge Street is Route 67 and thus is a State road.

In regard to the latter issue, John Hanlon noted that the Housatonic Railroad has 45 public crossings in Connecticut. Although the service life of a railroad crossing is typically 30 years, on the Housatonic, the crossings typically only last 10-12 years. Plow damage and the use of magnesium chloride which shorts out the crossing signals are two of the culprits for the reduced longevity. The rail grade crossing issue is a major public safety and maintenance issue.

Ryan Peburn owns property in New Milford with an established private rail crossing of the Housatonic Railroad. He asked how his crossing would be affected by an increase in railroad traffic if the passenger service was implemented. He expressed a safety concern and also asked who would maintain the rail crossing. **John Hanlon** replied that private grade crossings are a deeded right conveyed to the property owner and each deed is different.

John Kuck, also a property owner along the Housatonic Railroad in New Milford, is an advocate for trains but feels that the Housatonic is making this passenger proposal just to make money. This proposal would generate traffic in the area and would increase the need for upkeep at the private and public rail crossings. He does not want to see New Milford or the State being responsible for maintaining crossings if the private sector is running this service.

Gail Kaufman of New Milford spoke as an advocate for expanded rail service from Danbury to New Milford. Her son and husband work in NYC and would like to take the train from home as opposed to driving to Brewster to pick up the Harlem line. She believes that enhanced rail service would open the job opportunities and that families like hers would not have to move closer to NYC.

Michael Chelminski is a Bridgewater resident and a member of the National Association of Railroad Passengers. He mentioned that this Saturday is National Train Day. He feels that there is no question there should be an expansion of rail service to New Milford and points north. He noted that this had been an extremely difficult winter, and whereas there were many highway and road closures due to accidents and weather related incidents, for the most part trains were running and running on time. Chelminski also feels local train riders should not have to go to Katonah or Brewster where parking is not well lit and is limited even on weekends.

In addition to the oral testimony, moderator Richard Schreiner noted that two letters had been submitted as testimony for tonight's hearing. He read these letters into the record.

Rosemary and John Conner of New Milford favor the extension of Danbury Branch passenger service to New Milford and believe a new train station should be constructed in the area of Dolly's Store. Train service to New Milford would relieve congestion on Interstate 84 and US-7.

Dave Bonan of Danbury provided written testimony first on a range of rail and bicycle related topics and then addressed some bus issues.

Bonan feels commuters would definitely like to see more access in and around Danbury Station. Recently the hedgerows were trimmed which makes the place look better, and folks don't tend to throw their garbage in between the bushes.

As a year-round cyclist and supporter of mass transit, Bonan would like to see covered bicycle parking at Danbury Station (as well as at all Danbury branch stops), not just a bike rack thrown in to look good. The CT Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board is unanimously in favor of this as well. Rain can damage vital bicycle parts, and discourages riders from parking their bikes and being multi-modal. A simple bus stop shelter or lean-to structure can accommodate these needs and gain new ridership for the trains.

Regarding HART bus service, Bonan noted that when he moved to this area in 1995, HART only ran 6 days a week from 6am-6pm. It has since come a long way! He would personally like to see all buses run on clean diesel and/or electric. Additionally, he would like HART to apply for CMAQ funds for bike racks on all their buses and shuttles, not just 1/3 of the fleet. This would encourage more ridership from bicycle commuters who aren't used to long distance riding like Bonan is. It's also a tad annoying when you have to call HART and ask if a certain bus will have a bike rack at a certain time, and they aren't sure either. It's great that HART allows you to make special requests for certain timed buses to have bike racks, but having them on all buses would allow for an easier transition.

Bonan would personally like HART to have more of a social media presence and official **Facebook** and **Twitter** pages. Further, he would like HART to develop a bus app for Android/IPhones that would allow users to know where a certain bus was via GPS at any given time or if it was stuck in traffic, much like Metro-North's SoNo Station with the new *RouteFriend* screens. Perhaps the pulse point could have these screens to let riders know where a bus is and if it is on time. This would allow riders to have complete trust in the reliability and transparency of their local public transit.

Lastly, Bonan would like HART and ConnDOT to work together and revive talk of the Danbury-Newtown-Waterbury bus service. The only existing link between these two cities is via Peter Pan Bus for \$15 one way and \$29 roundtrip. For folks who rely on this service for work, that's too expensive for everyday travel. HART has previously sought to lower the one way fare to \$5-7 per trip. Maybe if this service was instituted, a monthly or weekly pass could lower costs to regular riders.

The public hearing adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

Windham Town Hall,
979 Main Street
Willimantic, Connecticut
Wednesday, May 11, 2011 - 7:30 PM

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Maloney
Yvonne Loteczka
Russell St. John

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CONNDOT STAFF

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing at 7:36 PM. Mr. Riese welcomed the attendees and gave a brief description of the purpose of the hearing and the function of the Commission. He then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff in attendance.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Melinda Perkins, Executive Direction of the Windham Regional Transit District (WRTD), explained that the District provides both fixed route and paratransit service over a 10-town region. The biggest impediment facing the WRTD is the lack of having its own transit facility. Testimony to the CPTC in May of 2005 reported on a feasibility study for a comprehensive transit facility to serve the transit vehicle maintenance and storage needs as well as to house the District's administrative offices. At that time, WRTD had vehicles parked at two outdoor locations, with fueling done at a third location and the District's administrative offices at yet a fourth location.

In December 2008, WRTD was able to move its vehicle storage and administrative offices to an outdoor parking location in town that resulted in significant cost savings and more efficient operations, as well as an improvement in morale. But the District still does not have a vehicle maintenance and storage facility, nor a vehicle fueling facility. It has no priority at the repair garage for its vehicles but must wait in line with non-District vehicles, and the repairs are billed at an hourly rate of \$110.00. The District must have four of its five fixed route buses available in order to operate its two routes, so timely repairs are a critical need.

WRTD runs two fixed routes: the Willimantic city bus and the Willimantic to Storrs route. Ridership has been steadily increasing on both routes, more than doubling from FY05 (71,326 passengers) to FY10 (142,740 passengers). Ridership will be up another 9-10% by the end of this year. The City bus serves Willimantic on an east-west route and provides service to the major commercial areas of Willimantic as well as to Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU). Headways on the run are unacceptable at times, being 20 minutes at peak but 2 hours during mid-day. ECSU receives service only four times each day, with the last trip passing campus at 5:10 p.m. More service is needed at both mid-day and in the evening. Every year

there are numerous requests by college students for late evening service, as well as direct service between ECSU and the University of Connecticut in Storrs so that the resources of both institutions might be easily accessed. WRTD is requesting additional funding to increase the frequency of service to ECSU, including later hours of service on the Willimantic City bus, and direct service between ECSU and UConn.

WRTD also receives many requests to run service to Manchester and the Buckland Hills area as well as to Hartford. Currently, the commuter express bus and Peter Pan are the only options available to reach Manchester and Hartford from this region.

Addressing the issue of the age of WRTD's vehicle fleet, Perkins said that the fleet is relatively new since the time of the CPTC's 2008 hearing in Willimantic. The fixed route bus fleet now consists of 2005 (2) and 2008 (3) models while the paratransit fleet is older but there is a budget addendum in place for ten new vehicles for the district.

On the Storrs-Willimantic route, summertime passenger counts average 12-20 passengers per bus, but during the school year, the buses on this route operate at capacity. For last July and August, the District carried 5,200 and 5,800 passengers on this route, but the October passenger count was 9,483. Ridership is again up on a year-to-year basis with February 2011 running 400 riders ahead of last year, and March 2011 up 800 riders. The fixed route buses have a capacity of 29 plus room for 17 standees. Quite a number of UConn students live in apartments south of Storrs on the Windham/ Mansfield town line and use the Storrs-Willimantic bus to get to campus.

Responding to a question about the volume of maintenance and repair work the District requires for its fleet, Perkins said the work would be adequate to keep a mechanical department busy. Currently, the District does not even have the ability to change a headlight. And for many repairs, the vehicle has to be towed to the garage. These costs would be avoided with an on-site maintenance capability. Although the District has an agreement to receive replacement parts for the fixed route buses at cost, it must pay a mark-up on parts for its 22 paratransit vehicles. Perkins mentioned that a State-owned parcel of property has been identified as a likely site for a new storage and maintenance facility. The State could use the value of this property as a match for an FTA grant.

Lon R. Hultgren, Town Engineer and Director of Public Works for the Town of Mansfield, advised the Commission that the pre-paid fare transit service in Mansfield was still up and running. UConn and the Town of Mansfield have agreed on a 50/50 split of the cost of the program. Previously, a formula had been used to assess responsibility for funding the service but the 50/50 arrangement provides more clarity. This agreement was reached after there had been a one-year gap when there was a disagreement over the formula and the pre-paid service arrangement lapsed. This saw ridership go down dramatically. Now the two parties pay the District \$20,000 apiece and all passengers showing a UConn student ID, a UConn faculty ID or a Town of Mansfield ID can ride for free.

Hultgren next discussed the new intermodal center that is planned across from Mansfield Town Hall. For over ten years, the Town of Mansfield and the University of Connecticut, in

collaboration with regional, civic, and community leaders, have been planning a new, vital and environmentally sensitive mixed-use development in Mansfield, called Storrs Center. A key component of Storrs Center will be a new intermodal center to serve university, local and regional bus services, bicyclists and pedestrians. Two FTA grants are being used toward the intermodal center, with local sources being used to match these grants of \$290,000 and \$4,900,000.

The final design of the transit center is now underway and the purchase of the site by the developer is scheduled to close next week. Among the operators who will use the transit center are the WRTD, UConn Transit's Yellow Line and the UConn apartment shuttle, Peter Pan, Mega Bus, and a short-term or shared car rental outlet such as *ZipCar*. Three vendors are being evaluated to provide the shared car service. The intercity bus connections will provide service to Providence, Boston, Hartford, Springfield and New York.

The Storrs Center development will include 800 units of new housing, placing as many as 1,000 residents within a short walk of the transit center and the services available there. In addition to the transit services listed above, bicycle storage facilities will be available along with locker rooms and showers. Also at the center will be a passenger waiting area, a transit information kiosk and a ticket counter. In total, these facilities will offer alternatives to private auto use for many trip purposes. Hultgren also expressed the hope that the presence of the transit center would tip the scale toward getting regular bus service between Storrs and Hartford.

Mark Paquette, Executive Director of the Windham Regional Council of Governments, related that the COG, in partnership with the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments and the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, received a 3-year \$225,000 Sustainable Living HUD planning grant to study the regional connectivity of transit services. In addition to assessing transit links between the three regions, they will also look at connections into Rhode Island and to the Worcester area, which are locally important connections. Paquette mentioned that the three regions have already partnered to assess homeland security measures. In addition to the HUD planning grant, Paquette mentioned that Windham is one of about 50 towns in Connecticut looking at transit-oriented development through the Home Connecticut Planning Program.

Paquette also stressed WINCOG's strong support for a new vehicle storage and maintenance facility for the Windham Regional Transit District and he concurred on the need for more service in the region to meet ridership demands.

Kenney Tala is an agent for Peter Pan Bus Company but made his remarks speaking for himself. He believes there is a need for regular bus service from Willimantic to Middletown via Route 66 and then continuing on to New Haven. His office gets requests for such service. With the increase in the price of gas, bus ridership is up, though the necessary fare increases on the buses have limited the ridership gains. On the intercity buses, it is a \$20 trip from Willimantic to Hartford, or a \$40 round trip. Currently, a bus connection to New Haven would involve traveling to Hartford first. Tala sees a demand for bus service to Middletown and New Haven because of the colleges in those cities and the colleges here. He believes that such a service, operated twice a day, would be sufficient.

Mr. Riese closed the public hearing at 8:36 PM.

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission Public Hearing

Meriden City Hall
142 East Main Street
Meriden, Connecticut
Thursday, May 19, 2011- 7:30 PM

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Maloney
Alan Sylvestre
Russell St. John
Richard Schreiner
Morton Katz
Yvonne Loteczka

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CONNDOT STAFF

Dennis King
John Bernick

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Alan Sylvestre opened the meeting at 7:35 pm. Mr. Sylvestre welcomed the attendees and read portions of the Commission's implementing General Statute to explain the composition and work of the Commission.

PRESENTATION

John Bernick, ConnDOT Supervising Engineer, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) High Speed Rail project, following which he answered questions from both the CPTC and the public. Mr. Bernick, after providing handouts on the project, gave an overview of how the NHHS would provide Connecticut and New England with vastly improved rail service and expanded regional multimodal transportation, while creating jobs and opportunities for sustainable economic development.

Among the specifics given by Mr. Bernick was that the Springfield Line service will be scheduled to meet connecting Metro-North and Amtrak trains at New Haven as well as connecting trains at Springfield to Boston and to Vermont. The project has enjoyed a high level of cooperation from Amtrak, FRA, and FTA. Permits for physical upgrading of the line will be submitted shortly to the Corps of Engineers and to DEEP.

The Springfield Line is a 62-mile corridor, originally constructed in 1844. Currently, 23.3 miles are double tracked and 38.7 miles are single tracked. There are 38 at-grade crossings.

An Implementation Plan for the service was prepared in 2005. In 2009, a Draft Environmental Assessment for the project was completed. That same year, the Springfield Line service was included in FRA's High Speed Interstate Rail Passenger Plan making it eligible for Federal funding. Physical upgrades along the line will include the addition of 44.5 miles of double

tracking and sidings, drainage work and structural improvements to 180 bridges and culverts, signal work, station enhancements, four new stations, upgrades to 38 at-grade crossings, nine new interlockings, and the installation of a positive train control system. The four future stations will be located at North Haven, Newington Junction, West Hartford and Enfield. In addition, a train layover facility will be constructed in Massachusetts to allow for more efficient 2-way operations. The preliminary total cost of the project is \$647 million. This cost does not include new train equipment or work to the Connecticut River Bridge or the Hartford Viaduct.

Phases 1 and 2 of the Springfield Line improvements are fully funded and currently under design. Phase 1, which was funded with a Stimulus grant, adds 10.2 miles of double tracking between Meriden and Newington, while Phase 2 completes the double tracking south of Hartford and adds new service during the morning and evening peaks. The physical upgrades under these phases are expected to be completed in 2014 and the additional service begun in 2016. Phase 3 would add double tracking north of Hartford and include other infrastructure upgrades. The four new train stations and the purchase of new train equipment would occur under Phase 4. Phase 5 would involve achieving an on-going state of good repair and would include repairs of the Hartford Viaduct and the Connecticut River Bridge.

Bernick noted that extensive coordination is taking place with Amtrak, the states of Massachusetts and Vermont, the freight railroads, towns and cities along the line, and with many local organizations.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Russ Gulino of the Meriden Chamber of Commerce owns apartments and commercial property in Meriden. As far as he is concerned, the new train service cannot come quickly enough. He asked about the status of the hybrid Amtrak/ConnDOT train service. He also likes the idea of the ‘up and over’ stations which allow for connections across the tracks. He said the tracks through downtown Meriden act as a divider of the city. He also asked about a potential train connection to Bradley Field. John Bernick answered that the advent of more frequent as well as higher speed train service will mean that we will need to restrict access to and across the tracks, thus the need for the ‘up and overs’.

Del Weston of Meriden asked Mr. Bernick if the expanded service would lead to more traffic blockages as the crossing gates and signals block traffic on Main Street. Bernick explained that for northbound trains, the signal system can be set up so that the last car of a northbound train can clear the island circuit, the point at which the signal system is activated, and thereby avoid having the signals and gates active while a train is at the station. This cannot be done for southbound trains. Nor would it be desirable to deactivate the crossing signals when a southbound train is at the station since the train could get from the station to the crossing before the signals could be activated. Weston then asked if the station platform could be shifted northward to minimize or avoid such closures. It would help traffic flow if this were possible.

Sean Moore is president of the Meriden Chamber of Commerce as well as a member of the Transportation Strategy Board. He said the local business community is very excited about the rail project. He very much appreciated the presentation ConnDOT gave to local business interests on April 21st. Moore expressed his opinion that ConnDOT has shown a lot of flexibility in designing the project to meet local needs. Moore also mentioned that Meriden has hired the

firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff to do a transit study of downtown Meriden including integrating bus, taxi and pedestrian services and connections.

Moore noted that the City owns 14 acres downtown adjacent to the tracks which have a lot of development potential. However, flooding problems downtown limit the development potential of this property at present.

Hilda Santiago, a Meriden city councilwoman whose district includes the Downtown HUB site, is very excited about the upcoming improvements to rail service. This project can't come soon enough. Local restaurants and businesses can't wait for the service to begin. However, the existing flooding situation downtown needs to be fixed, not just improved. Flooding events can shut Meriden down. When the flooding problem is fixed, there will be development, jobs and retail growth downtown. Santiago also mentioned that many people in Meriden do not have cars and therefore cannot get to job locations in Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury or Bridgeport. Rail service will be vital in helping residents access job opportunities.

Santiago also asked John Bernick if the new rail service can get residents to Bradley Field to catch early morning flights to Puerto Rico. Much of Meriden's population is Puerto Rican and has a need to fly back to the island on a regular basis. Currently there are no early morning Amtrak trains that residents can catch to get to Windsor Locks in time to access the flights to Puerto Rico.

Joe Spina, Operations Manager at North East Transportation, outlined the fixed route and ADA service his company provides in Meriden. He also mentioned that North East had just received 34 new buses including 17 regular diesel buses and 17 hybrid electric buses. The hybrid electrics are low floor 35' buses.

In Meriden, Spina mentioned that, as of July 2, Saturday service will be added to the C Route, running from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm, using New Freedoms program funding. North East will use 20 passenger vehicles operating on 40 minute headways to provide both the fixed route and ADA service in the corridor. By using the longer headway, Spina believes that will allow for deviations from the route as necessary to accommodate ADA clients.

Spina also mentioned that the service to Gaylord Hospital from Meriden, which is a curb-to-curb service, is still running but has been underutilized and is currently providing about 20 rides per month.

Spina mentioned that the hybrid buses are performing very well on the hills of Waterbury since they were introduced in April. He plans to introduce them on Routes A and C in Meriden. They had been tried on the B Route in Meriden but there was a problem with the bus bottoming out at one intersection, due to the low floor design. Spina mentioned that there is not enough clearance in the wheel wells of the hybrid buses to accommodate chains so some routes in Waterbury may need to be modified during snowy weather if the buses are to operate without chains, which are standard equipment in winter on North East Transportation's fleet. The high torque of the electric motors may also take some getting used to on slippery, snowy roads.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:56 pm.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

West Haven City Hall
Harriet North Room, 2nd floor
355 Main Street
West Haven, Connecticut
Thursday, May 26, 2011 - 7:30 PM

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Maloney
Yvonne Loteczka
Russell St. John
Richard Schreiner
Ron Kilcoyne

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CONNDOT STAFF

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Ron Kilcoyne opened the meeting at 7:34 p.m. Mr. Kilcoyne welcomed the attendees, gave a brief description of the purpose of the hearing and the function of the CPTC and then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff in attendance.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Barbara Fabiani, a resident of Woodbridge, asked for increased bus service from downtown New Haven to Westville center in the late afternoon. From her house in Woodbridge, she must walk a mile to catch the bus at the Jewish Community Center on Route 63 in Woodbridge. If she misses this bus, she must walk all the way to the Amity Plaza to catch a bus. There is good service frequency on this route until 5:30 pm when the headways increase to 45 minutes. She would like to see more frequent service in this late afternoon time slot.

Fabiani also noted that the City of New Haven is changing its parking policy by extending the hours of paid parking on City streets from 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight. As a result, she believes that public transportation will become an alternative for many from the Woodbridge community, which will increase the demand for service on the Westville route. Ms. Fabiani has spoken to David Lee and Phil Fry of Connecticut Transit concerning this problem and was advised that funding was a issue.

Fabiani also noted that ridership on the J route between Waterbury and New Haven is very high and the buses are crowded. She believes that a second bus between Waterbury and New Haven using Route 63 instead of Route 10 would alleviate the crowding on the J bus and would provide service to a new market of riders in Middlebury, Naugatuck, Bethany and Woodbridge.

Steven Wydra is the 4th District Councilman for the City of West Haven. He also works in security at Schick in Milford. Wydra said there are 1,000 workers at the Schick plant and the plant operates on a 3-shift, 24/7 schedule. Currently, Connecticut Transit bus service from New Haven serves all three shifts, with buses running directly to the plant. However, service to the

plant from Bridgeport by GBTA drops workers off at Cherry Street, one quarter mile away, requiring them to walk through residential neighborhoods. Schick has been in talks with GBTA to extend the bus route to the plant, and GBTA now does this for the 7:00 a.m. shift, helping the 28 Schick employees using this bus from Bridgeport. Thus far, GBTA had not extended the route for other shifts, which would add 2-3 minutes, but has expressed a hope that they may be able to do this in a couple of months. Wydra said 14-15 workers use the bus for these other shifts. He also noted that the bus from New Haven to the Schick plant is well used and frequently has standees.

Mickey McIver, a transportation consultant with Coordinated Transportation Solutions (CTS), is working with the United Illuminating Company to explore public transportation options for the approximately 1,200 United Illuminating employees relocating to their new central facility currently under construction on Marsh Hill Road in Orange. United Illuminating is strongly committed to mitigating the traffic impacts to Marsh Hill Road and surrounding roads from the addition of up to 1,200 daily commuter trips. UI has surveyed its affected employees to see which ones may be interested and able to use transit to make their daily work trips. 24% of these employees indicated an interest in using alternative transportation to get to work and 17% indicated they were very likely or somewhat likely to use public transit if it were available for their trips. CTS believes that if modifications were made to the Connecticut Transit O route during the peak AM and PM travel times, this would provide a valuable alternative for UI employees traveling from the New Haven area.

Diane Pivrotto, Vice President for Human Resources at United Illuminating, affirmed that UI wants to provide public transportation options to its employees including those of the Southern Connecticut Gas Company, which has been purchased by United Illuminating. The company needs to be able to get all its employees to their new location on Marsh Hill Road in Orange when it opens. Pivrotto requested that the Connecticut Transit O Route be modified during the morning and evening peak hours to better serve the new UI location which will host 1,000 employees.

Mickey McIver elaborated on a couple of points, explaining that CTS and UI have explored carpool, vanpool and bus route options to create as much new capacity to reach the new UI facility as possible. Bus service to and from the new West Haven train station will also help people reach the new UI center. Eighty employees currently use rail to reach their jobs at UI. Sixteen percent of UI employees live within 5 miles of the Marsh Hill Road site and 34% live within 10 miles of this site. United Illuminating is committed to providing every reasonable opportunity for its employees to use alternative transportation to mitigate impacts on traffic in the area. CTS will continue to work on behalf of United Illuminating seeking public and private alternative transportation options.

Paul Grimmer, Executive Director of the Orange Economic Development Corporation, stressed the importance of expanded bus service to the Marsh Hill Road area. Yale University may employ upwards of 3,000 people at its new West/Orange campus in the next few years. The new West Haven train station will serve a very important role in this regard.

Grimmer notes that many riders get off the O route bus and walk through parking lots to get to the Avalon housing development and to the Pez candy facility. Ten to fifteen per cent of the Pez employees ride the bus to get to work and take a ½ mile walk from the bus stop to Pez through parking lots and residential streets. A new development at the former Bernie's site will employ an estimated 200 employees coming from Fairfield County, so Grimmer is very interested in seeing better bus service from Bridgeport. This new facility is scheduled to open in three years.

In order to facilitate travel to the Marsh Hill Road area, the Town of Orange is looking to extend Edison Avenue, which is now a dead end, to connect to Marsh Hill Road and come out directly opposite the UI site. Grimmer also suggested that the CT Transit bus service on the Boston Post Road turn south at Race Brook Road to Indian River Road and then onto Prindle Hill Road to access the Avalon development and Pez candy. Even if this loop was not done by every bus, it would be very helpful to riders.

Al Naudus, Operations Manager for the Greater New Haven Transit District, speaking on behalf of that agency and of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT), discussed the potential impacts of a cut in funding to the State Matching Grant Program (Section 13b-38bb Program). The GNHTD operates paratransit services in its 12-town region and provides service beyond the mandated requirements of ADA. GNHTD operates from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. with zero refusals of service. However, in view of the cut in funding for the State Matching Grant Program, which GNHTD operates on a coordinated basis for all 12 towns, the District might have to ration trips by trip purpose, for instance giving preference to medical trips but denying personal or shopping trips.

Martha Bell of West Haven is a former City Councilwoman. She expressed concern about the frequency of service on Canton Street in West Haven. The bus service in this neighborhood starts at 5:30 a.m. and operates until 11:30 p.m. This O route service comes off the Boston Post Road at Chuck's Steak House and travels over Canton Street and Meloy Road, then into Orange. The buses come by every 15 minutes. Bell is concerned about the pollution and noise from the buses as well as their speed. She said the bus drivers frequently ignore the stop sign at Canton Street and Meloy Road. Bell did mention that the newer buses, especially the hybrid buses, are quieter than the old buses.

John Silbert, a Fairfield resident, is concerned about the lack of bus service to the new railroad station in Fairfield. This station, which is almost ready to open, would be the perfect location to promote transit and is the only handicapped-accessible rail station in Fairfield, but there is not much in the way of bus service that goes to this location.

Following Mr. Silbert's testimony, moderator Ron Kilcoyne summarized the following letters which were submitted as written testimony for tonight's hearing.

Craig Lader, Senior Transportation Planner at the South Western Regional Planning Agency, submitted comments for the hearing which are presented below in slightly condensed fashion. The SWRPA comments covered seven topics.

- **Fix It First-** While there are many worthwhile system expansion projects that may be beneficial (and even necessary) in the coming years, most of these expansion projects should take a back seat to modernizing the existing system. Examples include rehabilitation of rail and roadway bridges in poor condition, and normal replacement of an aging rail transit fleet that was subject to breakdowns during this past winter filled with extreme storms.
- **Branch lines-** In 2010, CT DOT recommended as part of its Waterbury and New Canaan Branch Line Feasibility Study a series of improvements that would modernize the New Canaan Branch. Currently, signals and track configuration limit the ability to operate trains concurrently in both directions. These improvements include extension of the signal system that ends just south of the New Canaan Station, construction of a siding at Springdale to allow bi-directional service, and construction of a second platform at Springdale. These improvements, estimated at a modest \$34 million, are among the top priorities for the region, and provide an economical opportunity to modernize the New Canaan Branch and attract new riders. Similarly, the Danbury Branch Study describes opportunities to further improve operations on the Danbury Branch in conjunction with the Centralized Train Control project that is currently underway. Track realignment and construction of passing sidings would provide greater flexibility, and allow trains to reduce their running time between Danbury and Norwalk.
- **Rail Parking and Stations-** Rail parking must be sufficiently available to promote use of the rail network and encourage economic development. As the economic engine of Connecticut, the South Western Region relies on the rail system's service and convenience as a key selling point to prospective businesses and residents looking to locate or settle here. Insufficient parking at rail stations along the entire New Haven Line, combined with lengthy wait lists for parking permits and limited information about parking policies and availability, discourages potential users from riding the train.
- **Transit Station Access-** Rail passengers in many locations are fortunate to have various modal alternatives to driving alone to access rail stations. To promote intra-regional and reverse commuting and to ensure that commuters can access their workplaces in a convenient and reliable fashion, passengers require convenient access to rail stations, whether it be by bus, commuter shuttles, bike, taxi, or on foot. Improved coordination between connecting services and rail schedules can encourage usage of transit and improve the experience for passengers. Opportunities exist to promote biking to train stations by providing additional secure and sheltered storage for bicycles. Signage directing bicyclists to bike parking is non-existent, while some stations have bike racks that are difficult to find, lacking cover, in poorly lit locations, or generally insecure; some stations do not have any bike racks or storage facilities whatsoever.
- **Interregional Bus Transit-** As the bus network continually evolves, opportunities exist to substantially change the face of bus transit. Such a change would alter the perception of buses and elevate them as a desirable mode of transit for all economic groups and for a wider variety of trip purposes. For this to occur, the bus network must be treated as a core component of the transportation system, and be funded in a manner that does not

result in constant threats of service reductions. Innovative services, such as the extremely successful Coastal Link and the proposed Enhanced Bus Service between Stamford and Norwalk originally recommended in 2009 should be supported by funding to operate them sufficiently and investment in technologies that can improve running times and provide passengers with real time information. This will allow dispatching to improve and result in improved schedule adherence and more reliable transfers between routes.

- **Transportation and Land Use Connection-** Transportation policy must be addressed in conjunction with land use policy to promote the use of transit and encourage walking and biking. Development that continues to occur away from existing transportation corridors increases automobile traffic and adds to urban sprawl. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is not only suited for larger cities; smaller scale TOD developments along the New Haven Line and its branches, as well as bus routes with frequent service, have the ability to alter the perception that automobiles are required for everyday mobility. When combined with a complete streets approach that makes streets more attractive for walking and biking, TOD that accommodates a variety of uses has many benefits for transit users and non-transit users alike.
- **Transportation for Seniors and Special Needs Travelers-** With Connecticut's senior population projected to increase by 60% over the next 30 years, it is likely that the demand for specialized transportation services will rise. Continued funding of the Municipal Dial-a-Ride Grant Program is essential to ease the burden on transit operators struggling to serve eligible recipients who otherwise rely upon ADA-mandated services, and allow for opportunities to expand the taxi voucher programs and promote wheelchair accessible taxis. Connecticut's Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (LOCHSTP) describes many transportation needs/gaps and related strategies to assist with mobility for seniors, persons with disabilities and lower income individuals, including extension of service hours, improved service in less populated communities, inter-regional services, improved amenities to enhance safety and security of transportation services, improved information dissemination and marketing, improved coordination between service providers and human service organizations, door-through-door services, and additional volunteers.

Karen Burnaska, Coordinator for Transit for Connecticut, explained that Transit for Connecticut is a statewide coalition of 32 business, social service, environmental, planning, transportation and civic organizations dedicated to increasing the awareness of the benefits of bus transit and advocating for increased funding for public transit.

Burnaska related that Wilbur Smith Associates was commissioned to prepare a report which established a framework for assessing the economic benefits of major current public transportation projects. The report provides economic value estimates for four active capital projects in Connecticut: the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter rail project; the New Britain/Hartford Busway; New Haven Rail Station parking and the West Haven Rail Station. The report estimates that these four projects will create the equivalent of 16,044 jobs. The report also highlights 13 priority transit routes throughout the state that, if invested in, would offer mobility options for thousands of state residents.

Public transportation provides unique economic opportunities for communities and riders. Transit for Connecticut is aware of these benefits provided by bus service and urges the CPTC to support adequate state operational funding to maintain existing service as well as the capital and operational funding needed to improve and increase bus service across the state.

John Garnett II is a 10-year member of the Greater Bridgeport Transit Passenger Ambassador Committee. Garnett asked that funding be maintained for critical trips made possible by the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute Program and People to Jobs. He specifically mentioned the Coastal Link and the workplace shuttles that operate in south central Connecticut including those of HART and Wheels. He also said that there are passengers who would wish to get to New Haven or Hartford earlier than can be accommodated by the first northbound Metro-North weekday trains. He also advocated that Guide-A-Ride canisters for schedules need to be embraced by agencies so passengers have critical information at their stops. These would also help to market the presence of the bus systems.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

City Hall Auditorium
Torrington City Hall
140 Main Street
Torrington, CT 06790
September 27, 2011 – 7:30 p.m

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Richard Carpenter
Morton Katz
William Kelaher
Yvonne Loteczka
Kevin Maloney
Robert Rodman
Russ St. John
Richard Schreiner

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Morton Katz opened the meeting at 7:40 p.m., welcomed the attendees and provided a brief description of the Commission and of the purpose of this public hearing. Commission members and ConnDOT staff introduced themselves.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

Rick Lynn, Planning Director for the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials (LHCEO) spoke to the commission and gave written testimony. The LHCEO prepares a regional transportation plan that identifies major transportation issues and regional priorities for improvement for both highways and transit. The agency has identified three major priorities with respect to the bus system, operated by the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District (NWCTD)

The first priority of the region is the construction of a transit facility to house the NWCTD fleet. The ConnDOT statewide bus study of 2000 identified this as the most critical need facing the region, which supported the position of the LHCEO. Federal funds to complete the design of a new facility became available under SAFETEA-LU in 2004, and a LHCEO study identified preferred locations (most have since been developed). The State Bond Commission, at its August meeting, committed the state match to fund the preliminary design of the bus storage facility. The City of Torrington would like to locate the facility, which would include a bus depot as well as vehicle storage, repair and administrative areas, as a transit-oriented development component in one of the city's incentive housing zones. Mr. Lynn thanked the Commission for its longtime support of this project.

The second major priority of the region is enhancement of transit service. Under the LOCHSTP program, service gaps were identified including needed service expansion in Torrington and Winchester/Winsted, the need for better information and marketing to increase public awareness of the available transit services, and the implementation of a Rural Independent Transportation System (RITS).

The RITS program is based on efforts in Maine, West Hartford and southwestern Connecticut. Funding for 1-2 accessible minivans will be available for the RITS program, which will be operated by the Sullivan Senior Center. Funds are being provided through the Federal New Freedoms and Section 5310 grant programs. A consultant is working on a study of the program, which is anticipated to begin service in spring 2012.

The third regional priority is the need for ongoing stable operating funds for transit. The population is aging, and it is anticipated that population and employment will increase in the region. This will increase the need for public transit. Capital funding is also an important consideration.

Carol Deane, Executive Director of the NWCTD, then spoke to the Commission. The NWCTD provides dial-a-ride service to 16 towns in northwestern Connecticut and deviated fixed route service in Torrington, Litchfield and Winsted. The dial-a-ride will go as far as UConn/Hartford Hospital and the VA hospital in New Haven. The district runs Jobs Access service to Canaan and special trips for seniors under the municipal grant program.

The weekend dial-a-ride service is particularly busy with shopping trips and often has a waiting list. The system may run a second bus on weekends depending on demand. The NWCTD coordinates its dial-a-ride service with the Sullivan Senior Center, with the center providing most of the medical trips.

Funding is a major concern; the latest issue is a potential loss in DSS funds that would impact Jobs Access service. This could effect employment for 50 people.

The system runs 17 Dial-a-ride vehicles and 5 Candy Striper buses. Vehicles are currently stored in an outdoor lot on East Main Street in Torrington. Buses are fueled through the City of Torrington (which charges the district and additional \$.25/gallon over their cost) or at local service stations. Rental of the storage lot is \$4,800/month and the District is responsible for repairs of up to \$1,000 per incident. Keeping the lot and buses clear of snow is a major cost in the winter months.

Rick Lynn responded to a question about the Rural Independent Transportation System by saying that ConnDOT believes funding will be available for two vehicles plus \$10,000 to operate the system beginning next year, with initial service in Torrington and one other town. New Freedoms and Section 5310 funding will be used.

Regarding a new bus storage and maintenance facility for NWCTD, he said he City of Torrington has identified three or four potential sites for the facility. LARC and other agencies might also store vehicles at the facility. \$800,000 in federal funding and \$200,000 in state

bonding are available to begin design and environmental work on the facility. One possibility being considered locally is to integrate the bus facility into an incentive housing zone.

Lynn mentioned that the Windham Regional Transit District received funding for a bus facility at the same Bond Commission meeting that approved funding for Torrington. Windham's funding was in the amount of \$300,000.

Both Lynn and Deane commented that to date there has been no communication from ConnDOT regarding facility design requirements, the siting process, or the subsequent administrative steps to advance the development of the bus storage and maintenance facility.

Commissioner Katz closed the hearing at 8:12 p.m.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

Westport Public Hearing
Westport Town Hall
Auditorium 2nd floor
140 Myrtle Street
Westport, Connecticut
October 12, 2011 - 7:30 PM

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Yvonne Loteczka
Kevin Maloney
Russell St. John
Richard Schreiner
William Kelaher
Richard Carpenter

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CONNDOT STAFF

Dennis King

INTRODUCTION

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing at 7:45 pm. He introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff in attendance and gave a brief explanation of the purpose of this hearing.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

State Representative Gail Lavielle (143rd District), who represents Wilton and eastern Norwalk, mentioned that some of her constituents have suggested some schedule changes for the Danbury Branch Metro-North service. She promised that the Commission would hear more details on this topic at next week's public hearing in Wilton.

Representative Lavielle criticized the recently announced fare hikes on Metro-North as coming at a bad time for riders. The three hikes of 4% each at the beginnings of 2012, 2013, and 2014 come on top of the previously announced fare hikes of 1.25% in 2012 and then 1% annually through 2018 to help pay for the new M-8 rail cars. Lavielle cited the former fare hikes as originally intended to mitigate the lack of savings from a labor concessions agreement. Since the concessions agreement was ultimately approved, she questioned the need for these fare hikes. She also said there is no guarantee that the additional revenues raised from these fare hikes will go toward Metro-North service.

Lavielle also contrasted the speculative nature of the ridership projections for the Springfield Line rail service and the New Britain Busway with the existing high level of ridership on the New Haven Line. High speed rail funding is now more uncertain than ever at a Federal level and the State of Connecticut should be focusing on obtaining funding for the enhancement of programs that currently exist. She feels that the criteria for selecting new transit projects has

now become “can we get federal funding” for the project as opposed to “do we need this project”. She feels that fixing Metro-North service should be the first priority, especially in light of the safety problems on the line as evidenced by the service interruption on July 22 which led to passengers being stranded in hot, non-air conditioned cars. Relatedly, Lavielle said she plans to submit proposed legislation to require the revenue from the rail fare increases to be used on the Metro-North service.

Lastly, Lavielle noted that a hearing on the July 22 stranded Metro-North train incident had been held in this very room on August 23, and that there had been a series of hearings in September on the proposed rail and bus fare increases. She cited these as possible causes for hearing fatigue among the public to explain the lack of attendance at tonight’s hearing.

Moderator Riese closed the hearing at 7:55 pm.

In addition to the verbal testimony of this hearing, the **South Western Regional Planning Agency**, acting through senior transportation planner **Craig Lader**, submitted the following comments.

Rail/Bus Service~ Fares & Funding Levels

The importance of a balanced and well-maintained transportation network for the South Western Region has been long established. The network must promote a first-rate quality of life for residents, economic prosperity for businesses, and connectivity to neighboring regions for intrastate and interstate movement of persons and goods, while maintaining high standards for safety and security. In order to achieve these goals, the network must be affordable for users and sufficiently funded to ensure continuous convenient, safe and reliable operations. However, the budget constraints faced by the State of Connecticut, along with the presence of aging infrastructure, could threaten the long-term prospects for the transportation network. On a typical day, many trains and buses continue to operate with overcrowding. Reliability has suffered in recent years on the New Haven Line, and safety has also been an ongoing concern.

The loss of 40% of the rail fleet during the winter of 2011, and the ensuing service reductions while repairs of damaged rail cars took place, epitomizes the challenges faced by Metro-North. Expectations for the upcoming winter are for more disruptions due to the predominance of M-2 rail cars still operating that continue to be prone to breakdown when heavy snowfall occurs. Harsh summer weather has also provided difficulties for the New Haven Line, as evidenced by the breakdown of trains during the July 2011 heat wave. One SWRPA staff member was on the stranded train in the Westport area on July 22, 2011; the same day another SWRPA staff member was on a train that was disabled in Bridgeport. Although conditions and failures were extreme that day, the lessons learned point to needs for improved communications between the railroad and its customers as well as emergency responders.

With buses and trains throughout Connecticut suffering from perpetual overcrowding and aging fleets, any reductions to service or delay in retiring aging vehicles would severely impact passengers and the economic prospects for the South Western Region and Connecticut statewide. Clearly, an infusion of funding would support long overdue improvements to the transportation network. In the short term, every effort to collect all on-board fares to prevent lost revenue from accumulating should be made.

Connecticut must begin to determine alternative approaches to obtaining the funding needed to sufficiently maintain and improve the transportation network over the long-term. The

Transportation Strategy Board's 2011 report included discussion of a series of potential financing resources that could contribute to the funding of transportation capital investments, and the South Western Region supports further analysis to determine if any of these approaches may be viable. These include increasing the gas tax, transfer of petroleum gross receipts to Connecticut's Special Transportation Fund, increase of the petroleum gross receipts tax, competing aggressively to obtain federal discretionary funding, and financing major projects with electronic highway tolling.

Communications

CT DOT has created project specific websites for certain key studies and construction projects that have been successful at providing information to the public. CT DOT website enhancement should continue, and focus on providing timely information and improved transparency. Efforts to conduct vigorous public outreach should be a continued priority for CT DOT and independent transit operators. This includes providing convenient and accessible locations for public hearings to allow for comment on impending fare increases, service changes, and study recommendations. Planning staffs at agencies such as SWRPA would greatly benefit from receiving timely information from CT DOT on proposed projects, which would allow stakeholders and policy makers to make informed decisions in a timely fashion.

Mobility Management

A particular focus area of the Bridgeport-Stamford Urbanized Area's Human Service Transportation planning program is mobility management, defined as "short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers". Stakeholders within the Region have consistently identified a lack of easily accessible, centralized information on services as a major shortcoming, along with a lack of a basic understanding about how to use the public transportation system. This is especially true among persons who have physical disabilities, and is the basis for a regional initiative that resulted in the hiring of a dedicated mobility manager to provide outreach, identify barriers preventing people with disabilities from using existing services, and assist with development and planning of new services. This mobility manager position is funded through at least 2013 at the Kennedy Center, a non-profit organization that specializes in the needs of persons with disabilities.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

Wilton Public Hearing
Wilton Library, Rimer Room
137 Old Ridgefield Road
Wilton, Connecticut
Tuesday, October 18, 2011 - 7:30 PM

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Maloney
Yvonne Loteczka
Russell St. John
Richard Schreiner
Richard Carpenter
William Kelaher

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CONNDOT STAFF

Dennis King
Robert Pettinichi
Timothy Sullivan
Andrea Robitaille

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Richard Schreiner opened the hearing at 7:34 p.m. He then welcomed the attendees, gave a brief description of the purpose of the hearing and the function of the CPTC, and introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff in attendance.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Representative Gail Lavielle (143rd District) welcomed the Commission to Wilton and, as a former Commission member, expressed her joy at seeing the members again, especially after we had worked together to get Wilton Station reopened.

Rep. Lavielle covered a number of topics affecting the local area. She informed the Commission that a planning grant had been identified to begin design work on the Norwalk River Valley Trail and that all five corridor towns strongly support this project. She also mentioned that there is a strong push in Norwalk for pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets including more bikeways, which she cited as relatively low cost enhancements.

Vendors are coming to Wilton and Cannondale Stations soon. Both stations have had vendors selected. The Wilton vendor is just waiting now to get the keys, while retail services at Cannondale Station are not quite as far along.

Lavielle cited several rail problems affecting Wilton and, more generally, the Danbury Branch. The lack of a sufficient level of service is a hindrance preventing the development of a strong ridership base. The installation of the centralized traffic control signal system will help, but it won't really address the issue of slow train speeds. Lavielle said rail service improvements would also have positive local economic spinoffs.

On the New Haven Line, the weather-related incidents of last July demonstrated the results of our antiquated infrastructure and also the poor communications between Metro-North, ConnDOT, public authorities and the rail passengers.

Lastly, Lavielle stressed the need to maintain sufficient funding for train service here. She contrasted the 37,000,000 annual riders on the New Haven Line to what she called the speculative ridership of the proposed Springfield Line passenger rail service.

Following Representative Lavielle's testimony, ConnDOT's **Timothy Sullivan**, Project Manager for the Centralized Traffic Control or CTC Project, gave a presentation on the progress to date and the status of the project. He was assisted by **Robert Pettinichi** of ConnDOT, who is the principal engineer on the project, and by **Andrea Robitaille** of URS Corporation.

Tim Sullivan described the CTC project as a partnership of ConnDOT, Metro-North and the Federal Railroad Administration. The ConnDOT Office of Rail Construction is administering the project. Gannett-Fleming is the design consultant and Metro-North is handling the construction. The overall project cost is \$67,153,000 which is supported, in large part, by \$30,000,000 in stimulus funding.

Sullivan explained that the Danbury Branch is a 24-mile long, single track line with four passing sidings. Historically, switching has been done manually. Now a signal system and automatic switching will facilitate train operations on the Branch. Two power substations are being constructed in Danbury and Norwalk by Ducci Electric. In addition, the CTC system will have one diesel generator at Norwalk for back-up power. 22.13 miles of underground cable plowing will be used to install 106 miles of underground power, communications and fiber optic cable. The project will also include 3.4 miles of cable tray for those areas where the cable cannot be buried to the desired 36"-42" depth. Ten switch heaters will be installed for the track switches at the four existing sidings and the one new passing siding. Five new grade crossing warning signal gate packages will also be installed. The cable plowing is being done on weekends.

When the CTC project is complete, the Danbury Branch will be segmented into 1-mile blocks. Twenty-eight signal houses along the line will be the brains of the operation.

Overall project construction is now 50% complete. The new passing siding being added in Bethel is currently under construction. The signal houses for the first seven miles of the Branch have been delivered to Wilton. The Danbury substation is within a couple of months of delivery. Posters detailing the progress of the project have been put up at the rail stations along the Branch and also been posted on social media sites. Full completion of the project is expected in Spring 2013. In general, work is proceeding from south to north.

John Sahikian thanked the State for the improvements to the Danbury Branch. He said that if you took a survey, you would find that many residents along the line choose not to use the Danbury Branch because of its antiquated service. These commuters go to Darien or other main line stations for better service. The service on the Branch is too slow so riders use the main line. Sahikian predicted that, with better and faster service, ridership on the Branch will increase dramatically. He noted there is a large Danbury-to-Stamford commuting base. He also asked

that ConnDOT try to coordinate the times of mid-day and evening schedules to minimize the waiting time on transfers from main line to branch trains.

Donna Sahikian commutes on the Danbury Branch out of Wilton every day. She cited a couple of trains whose schedules were adjusted maybe 12-18 months ago in what were cited as temporary changes but are still in effect. The 5:41 pm and 6:14 pm trains out of Grand Central were moved back to 5:50 pm and 6:22 pm, respectively, and these trains usually run late, she said. She would like to see the previous departure times restored.

John Sahikian noted that Wilton Station is not an easy place to get to. There is no stairway from the road above and it is not tied into the town center.

Panko Ivanov said there are six trains between 6:20 and 7:22 am to get you into NYC by 9:00 am. The trains take between 80 and 91 minutes to get to New York, with the longer ones making all the local stops. The travel times need to be faster. He has been commuting by train since January. For the return trains, only one in four is an express train and they are consistently 5-10 minutes late. Ivanov commutes out of Wilton when he can but if he is working a ½ day schedule or some other altered hours, he can't use Wilton. Echoing remarks by John Sahikian who said the Danbury Branch operates as a support system for Noroton, Rowayton and Darien commuters, Ivanov says he sees many riders get on the train at these stations but no one gets off at them. Lastly, Ivanov commented that you can't get from one side of the tracks to the other at the Merritt 7 station. A pedestrian overpass is needed at this location. **Rob Pettinichi** replied that ConnDOT and the Merritt 7 owners have been in discussions as to how to improve access at that station.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Public Hearing**

Plainville Municipal Center
1 Central Square
Plainville, Connecticut
Tuesday, October 25, 2011 - 7:30 PM

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Maloney
Yvonne Loteczka
Russell St. John
Richard Sunderhauf

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CONNDOT STAFF

James Redeker
Michael Sanders
Dennis King

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Kevin Maloney opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Maloney welcomed the attendees, gave a brief description of the purpose of the hearing and the function of the CPTC and then introduced the Commission members and ConnDOT staff in attendance.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

ConnDOT Transit and Ridesharing Administrator **Michael Sanders** provided an update on the current status of the New Britain Busway project. Final design on the busway project is now complete. Of the eleven individual component construction contracts, one has already been awarded and three others are out to bid. The Full Funding Grant Agreement is now in front of Congress where four Congressional committees are involved in the review process. The committees are in the last two weeks of their sixty-day review period. Sanders described the grant review process as very prescribed. He noted that several phases of the project require an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Permit from DEEP. Following a favorable tentative determination by DEEP, a petition for a public hearing was made to that agency. DEEP regulatory staff, ConnDOT, and four interveners will now be submitting their briefs to the hearing officer.

Regarding project funding, Sanders noted that 80% of the project funding will come from federal funds. FTA New Starts Program discretionary funding is providing \$275,000,000 toward the project. The state funding, which is 20% of the \$567,000,000 project cost, is authorized. Currently, there is a very competitive market for construction services. Sanders broke down the project costs further, first noting that about \$80,000,000 has already been spent on the project. The construction costs are estimated at \$300,000,000. Forty million dollars is included for inflation over the construction timeframe. Beyond this \$340,000,000, other projects costs include engineering, inspection, project management, contingencies and financing charges on the bonds.

Sanders stressed that the New Britain Busway is not a jobs project; it is being built for transportation purposes. However, he did note that the REMI model projected that 4,700

employment-years of work will result from its construction, including 1,400 construction jobs over the 3-year construction period. The busway will require 100 on-going jobs after its construction. The operating cost of the busway, including maintenance, will be \$10,000,000 per year of which an estimated 25% will be recovered via the farebox. Therefore, a subsidy of \$7,500,000 per year will be required to maintain and operate the busway following construction.

Mary Alford, vice chairman of the Bristol Transportation Commission and a candidate for mayor of Bristol, asked whether a certain percentage of construction jobs could be reserved for Connecticut workers. She cited this as a very emotional issue. She also said that part of the busway will need to be built twice since the reconstruction and relocation of the Hartford Viaduct will necessitate the busway's relocation in that area.

Alford said the busway will be running a \$22,000,000 annual deficit by 2030. She sees snow removal from the busway as a problem which will affect its schedule. Alford feels that America's most prosperous cities have rail transportation as the anchor of their transit systems. She said the busway is "a bad project at a bad time at a bad cost". Our roads and bridges could use this money. She said it would be awful if this project led to another tragedy like the Mianus River Bridge collapse.

Jack Dooley of Newington represents Local 700 of the International Association of Machinists and works at Pratt and Whitney. He asked those in attendance five questions:

- How many of you like to throw your hard-earned money away?
- How many of you are union construction workers?
- How many of you are opposed to the busway project?
- How many of you are in favor of it?
- How many of you commute to Hartford on a daily basis?

His opinion is that most people do not commute to Hartford these days but rather they drive through the city. He proposed that a monorail system be built from Farmington to Hartford to Rentschler Field to UConn. He also favors lengthening climbing lanes on highways, completing the Route 11 expressway, improving Route 9 though Middletown with an upper deck, and continuing Route 6 to Rhode Island. He feels there are so many better ways to keep construction workers employed, and thinks the busway project is being railroaded through.

Gary Goulette is a businessman and taxpayer from Andover. He believes that government never says what it means or means what it says. Government just spends and spends; it will go bankrupt. He's found his last two years to be the most difficult to be in business. He has no confidence in our government at any level.

Paul D'Aprile asked why full-sized buses are used when only 3 or 4 people will be on the bus. D'Aprile is against the busway but, if it is built, he recommends using small buses or minivans. In response to D'Aprile's comments on ridership, Mike Sanders said that daily bus ridership in the corridor currently is 11,000. Ridership models show ridership growing to 16,000 when the busway is opened. Sanders noted that in the past such ridership projections have proven to be conservative.

Kevin Fuller is a Bristol city councilman from District 1. He said the Bristol Transportation Commission voted unanimously against the busway. He understands that Newington also opposes the busway.

Bonnie Soucy is a former bus rider. She said she had also been in a vanpool but it folded. She would like to see an accounting of the rideshare program. The combination of better gas mileage on future cars and the personal time that bus riders give up will continue to discourage bus ridership. When she was a bus rider, she often waited in the dark and the rain because there was no bus shelter at her stop under Interstate 84.

Robert Pitkin asked where people would get the bus and how much longer a trip to Hartford Insurance Group would take using the service. If a person who rode the bus has an emergency and needs to get home, what happens then? Mike Sanders explained the Guaranteed Ride Home program and its availability for such situations.

Elliot Pena said people didn't vote for this project. The busway is the wrong road and, like any wrong road, no matter how far down it you go, you need to turn around.

Susan Pugliesi of Plainville thanked the Commission for coming to town. She said the busway is a topic of great passion to people locally. She is against the busway.

Frances Cudak of Plainville said that he would have liked to see the feasibility study for this project. If the towns around the busway are not in favor of it, he feels that the rest of the state certainly wouldn't support the project. He doubts the ridership projections for the busway and wonders who the riders would be and whether they own cars or they don't. If there are fewer riders than projected, then the subsidy will go up. He feels that ridesharing has had its problems so why should buses work. A second, independent feasibility study is needed.

Cudak asked whether the busway can be used for another purpose if it doesn't work or if it is a 'bridge to nowhere?' He feels that the surrounding towns should be given a chance to vote on the busway. He also questioned whether people will take the bus in bad weather and asked what will happen if the bus is late? He feels this project is being driven by one man, the governor, and he implored the Commission to "stop this project."

David Miller is a councilman in Bristol. He raised questions about snow removal from the busway. He feels there were not enough public hearings concerning the busway. He said Bristol is very much against this project and Bristol feels the project is "being rammed down our throats."

Jan Van Eck of DJ Engineering said he is indifferent as to whether the busway is built. He has over 20 years of experience in the rail industry. His concern with the busway is that future rail options in the corridor are not being foreclosed by ripping up or covering over rail. Mike Sanders corrected his impression, noting that no rail is being removed or paved over and that the Federal Railroad Administration had forced ConnDOT to do a study of high speed rail options to show that the busway did not preclude such options on the Springfield Line.

Van Eck said once the busway is paved, rail is not coming back. His group sells self-propelled rail cars and would like to sell their cars to the State of Connecticut. His company does not currently build any rail cars but it would like to do so. If the busway does not pave over any rail line, Van Eck says his company could build a rail car manufacturing plant in this corridor. He continued saying there are other options to gain highway capacity and noted two possibilities. We could confiscate one lane of Interstate 84 and convert it to rail use or all trucks could be banned from I-84 during daytime hours.

Jill Fitzgerald of Bristol asked if there are other areas of the country where something like this busway has been successful. She also asked why the HOV lanes don't work. Mike Sanders explained that the HOV lanes were never finished in that they do not provide a link all the way into downtown Hartford. Nevertheless, they still carry as many people per hour (2,000 people per hour) as the general purpose travel lanes. He said that if Hartford had not lost so many financial sector jobs in the 1980s, you would see the HOV lanes full today. He went on to say that Pittsburgh has three busways and Ottawa has a busway which has been so successful that it is now being converted into a light rail line. Fitzgerald said she is still unconvinced and remains opposed to the busway.

Paul Catanzaro has been a New Britain City councilman for eight years. Although he sees a need for mass transit, he has been opposed to the busway from Day 1. He feels we often start projects but never finish them. \$600,000,000 is a lot of money for a 9-mile project that he feels doesn't make any sense in these hard economic times. When we are laying teachers off, we can't afford to spend money on this busway. Catanzaro also doesn't see mass transit coming to Hartford. People are hungry. People need fuel assistance. They don't need a busway.

State Senator Joe Markley (16th District) complimented Mike Sanders as being very competent and intelligent. If we had to have a busway, Markley believes Sanders is the right guy to be in charge of it. Saying that sometimes there are worse things than doing nothing at all, Markley cited the examples of Route 72 ripping the heart out of New Britain and urban redevelopment efforts doing likewise to Meriden. Markley said that the cost of the busway project has increased dramatically in a way that makes him worry that it will escalate even more during construction. He feels demographics have changed in ways which will also hurt the busway, namely that Hartford has declined and jobs have left the city.

Markley does not question ConnDOT's intentions in pursuing the busway but he just doesn't think it will work. Furthermore, he thinks it will give mass transit a bad name. In response to Mike Sanders' statement about holding dozens, if not hundreds, of local meetings and hearings during the development of the busway proposal, Markley compared the situation to the adoption of the state income tax in Connecticut in 1991 saying that the opposition to the tax didn't materialize until it was actually passed, and he suggested that likewise, until the busway was coming close to reality, people did not pay attention to it. Markley is a believer in mass transit and has been a user of mass transit but feels that we don't have a development pattern here which lends itself to mass transit.

He feels that the busway is a bad idea and it is not too late to stop it.

Lyle Wray, Executive Director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments which represents 30 towns in the Greater Hartford area, complimented Mike Sanders as doing a great job here in the lion's den. Wray said that 60% of the congestion in the Hartford area occurs on Interstate 84 west of Hartford. I-84 needs congestion relief. The New Britain Busway project has been 13 years in planning and design. It did not materialize overnight.

Wray said Connecticut is losing its 25-35 year olds as well as losing the economic competition with other states and regions. If you look at where we are losing our young adults to, we find they are going to areas that have rapid transit systems. Denver and Charlotte were examples Wray cited. Mass transit cities are eating our lunch with attracting your people and with their economic competitiveness.

Wray said the busway would effectively serve the UConn Dempsey Medical Center and that there are many other jobs being created east of New Britain. He said that the Hartford area does not have the population density necessary to support rail transit (generally 9 or more dwelling units/acre). He also said that much public input had gone into this project over the last 13 years. Not needing a car to do everything is appealing to 25-35 year olds, Wray said, and also noted that 47 municipalities nationwide have passed referenda to fund mass transit projects.

In response to a question concerning how the busway would help reduce congestion on Interstate 84, Wray noted that there are both captive and discretionary bus riders living in the corridor. In other cities, we commonly see 2-car families become 1-car families once mass transit becomes available. But the service must be convenient, safe and clean to capture discretionary riders.

Gerald Dolan felt that the decision to build the busway has already been made and there is no value in expressing opinions at this time. He recalled when his father took him to see the last trolley ride in Hartford. But at that time Hartford was a destination; it is not today, Dolan said. Dolan feels that buses are a 20th century technology. We could learn a lot from Disney; we should build a monorail from Rentschler Field to Hartford to Farmington UConn and connecting to Bradley Field. Lastly, he feels Connecticut underdeveloped its highway system and he compared this state unfavorably to Long Island which built 6-8 lane expressways.

Mary Alford asked Lyle Wray if the other cities he mentioned have both bus and rail systems. Wray said Denver and Salt Lake City have more rail than bus, but it is really the density that determines which one to use. He noted that the Orange Line in California is now meeting its 2030 ridership projections. Most bus rapid transit systems have proven to work better than initially predicted. Alford expressed her fear that the busway will consume precious rail right-of-way and will isolate her city, Bristol. So she opposes the busway because of its excessive cost and its harm to the rail mode. She feels that 20-25 year olds will ride a train all day but will not ride a bus. Wray responded that Megabus and similar companies are making a fortune on buses right now.

Paul Kurlekurski of Bristol said that while \$570,000,000 may be the initial project cost, the busway will need to be subsidized after that. And he sees no guarantee that a Connecticut company will work on the project.

Moderator Maloney closed the public hearing at 10:00 PM.

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 thirteen years, working closely with legislators, agencies and members of the public, taking policy initiatives, and making them work in practical ways. He is interested in transportation of all types, including bicycling (he's a licensed Category 3 racer), and he serves on the Old Saybrook Bikeways Committee. But his passion is railroad transportation. He has served on the Board of Directors of the New Haven Railroad Historical and Technical Association, and currently serves as its photo archivist. He also serves 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.

Richard Carpenter

Mr. Carpenter is the former Executive Director of the South Western Regional Planning Agency, a position he held from 1966 until his retirement on March 31, 1999. In this position, he was involved in land use and transportation planning for that eight town region of one-third million population. Previous to being appointed to the CPTC, he was a member of the Governor's Railroad Advisory Task Force from 1974 to 1983, serving as its Chairman from 1974 to 1981. Mr. Carpenter's chief interest is the improvement of passenger and intermodal rail freight service. He served on the East of the Hudson Rail Freight Operations Task Force as the invited representative of Congressman Jerrold Nadler of New York. He is also a member of the Interstate 95 Coastal Corridor Transportation Investment Area Committee, one of five such committees working with the Transportation Strategy Board.

Mr. Carpenter is also the author of the book: "A Railroad Atlas of the United States in 1946 – Volume 1, The Mid-Atlantic States", published by Johns Hopkins

University Press in 2003. Volume 2, covering New York state and New England, was published in spring of 2005. Volume 3, which covers Indiana, Ohio and the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and which was published in December 2008. Volume 4, which covers Illinois, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, was published in October 2011.

Thomas Cheeseman - Transit District Representative

Mr. Cheeseman is the former Administrator of the Middletown Transit District. He was District Manager for both Trailways of New England (1980-1986) and Greyhound Lines (1971-1979). Prior to that, he worked at United Technologies in East Hartford. From 1961 to 1969, Mr. Cheeseman served in the United States Air Force. He was past president of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation and the Connecticut Bus Association. He currently serves on numerous boards and committees throughout Middlesex County. Mr. Cheeseman was appointed to the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission in 2000.

Morton N. Katz - Bus User

Attorney Morton N. Katz of Avon has been a consistent user of the Avon-Canton commuter bus to and from Hartford since its inception. His stop in Hartford is two blocks from Superior Court. He uses bus travel extensively to go to New York. The bus line to Springfield takes him to the bus terminal three blocks from the Amtrak station where he can catch the North Shore Limited to Cleveland. He makes frequent trips via Amtrak through the Northeast Corridor to New York, Delaware and Pennsylvania. He serves as a Magistrate in a number of G.A. Courts and is a Special Public Defender and a Justice of the Peace. Morton has twice received the Secretary of the State's Award for Dedicated Public Service.

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.

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.

Ronald Kilcoyne

Ron is the chief executive officer of the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority. Ron serves in several capacities in the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) including as vice chairman of the Small Operators Steering Committee, as chairman of the Systems Planning and Operations Management Committee and as a member of the Legislative Committee, the Policy and Planning Committee and the Intergovernmental Issues Committee. Ron is also a member of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation executive committee and the Transit for Connecticut steering committee. Ron is also a member of Bridgeport's Downtown Task Force and is the chairman of the Mobility Subcommittee of the Task Force. Ron resigned from the Commission in June 2011 to take a position as general manager of the Lane Transit District in Eugene, Oregon.

Yvonne A. Loteczka - Mobility Impaired Transit User

Ms. Loteczka is chair of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Task Force. Yvonne was Co-chair of the Special Act 90-10 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Subcommittee. She also served on a subcommittee of the Wethersfield Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities that compiled and completed the first Directory of Services for the Disabled for the town of Wethersfield.

Kevin Maloney – Trucking Company Management

Kevin Maloney is the President/CEO of Northeast Express Transportation, Inc. which operates NEXTAir, NEXTCourier and NEXTDistribution. He presently serves on the Board of Directors of the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut and, 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.

Edward G. McAnaney

Mr. McAnaney was elected as First Selectman of Suffield in 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.

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. More recently, Mr. Rodman served on a roundtable created by the White House Office of Public Engagement and chaired by Federal Highway Administration Deputy Administrator Gary Nadeau.

Kiernan Ryan

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

John Zelinsky

Mr. Zelinsky is a member of the Stamford Board of Representatives, on which he has served for 30 years. He serves as chairman of the Operations Committee and is a member of the Legislative and Rules, Public Safety and Health, Transportation, and Steering Committees. Mr. Zelinsky is a past commissioner and chairman of the Stamford Human Rights Commission, and he serves on numerous local civic, political, and charitable organizations. He is an Independent Insurance Agent and a real estate broker.

Ex-Officio Members

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 Daniel Esty 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.

W. David LeVasseur

Mr. LeVasseur represents Secretary Benjamin Barnes of the Office of Policy and Management. Dave was appointed Acting Undersecretary of Intergovernmental Policy at OPM on January 5, 2011. In that capacity, he oversees the Office of Responsible Growth, which coordinates state agency actions by emphasizing comprehensive planning among several disciplines including: housing, economic development, transportation, brownfield redevelopment, and natural resource protection.

From March 26, 2010 to January 5, 2011, Dave served as the Director of Municipal Finance Services at the Office of Policy and Management. From September 6, 2001 to March 26, 2010, he served as Undersecretary of Intergovernmental Policy at OPM.

Prior to joining state service, Dave served three terms as first selectman of the town of Killingworth, Connecticut and was engaged in the private practice of law. He is a graduate of Western New England College/School of Law, admitted to practice before the Connecticut Bar and served in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps from 1979 – 1983.

Connie Mendolia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 13b-32

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