

**CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

DECEMBER 30, 2005

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## **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 11 gubernatorial and 8 legislative appointees, as well as ex-officio representatives of the Commissioners of the Department of Transportation and the Department of 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.

### **Dorothy F. Adamson – Senior Citizen Representative**

Before retirement, Dorothy was a professional librarian/ media specialist. Beginning at W.F. Kaynor Vo-Tech School in Waterbury, she subsequently held positions at the American Community School (Cobham, England), Robert College (Istanbul, Turkey) and the American School in Japan (Tokyo). In the course of traveling in Europe and Asia, she and her husband, Robert, experienced a variety of transportation modes, giving rise to her interest and, often, admiration for some of the systems they encountered. Dorothy and Robert reside in Bethlehem.

### **Linda M. Blair**

Originally from Upstate New York, Linda M. Blair moved to New Haven by way of Atlanta, Georgia in 1989. She quickly became involved as an advocate for users of the Greater New Haven Transit District's Transportation for Disabled Persons Program and the CT Transit bus system. In 1991, she was appointed to the City of New Haven Commission on Disabilities, becoming chair in 1993. In 1992, she was appointed to the Connecticut Citizens' Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC). Linda has also served as a board member and officer of several organizations including serving as president of the more than four thousand member Connecticut Union of Disability Action Groups for which public transportation is a primary issue. She has served on state and local legislative panels and was appointed to the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission in 1998.

### **Arroll Borden**

Mr. Borden is a project coordinator with the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council. He previously worked as a research associate with the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, where his work included developing transportation corridor plans and working on regional planning issues. Mr. Borden is a member of the American Planning Association, and holds a certificate in access management planning.

## **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 currently serves 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. Currently, he is working on Volume 3, which will cover Indiana, Ohio and the Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

## **Thomas Cheeseman - Transit District Representative**

Mr. Cheeseman is the 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 May of 2000, and currently serves as its chairman.

During 2005, Tom was appointed chairman of the Transportation Committee of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. He is serving as vice president of the Connecticut Association of Community Transportation, and has just been named as the Connecticut delegate to the Community Transportation Association of America.

## **N. Terry Hall**

Mr. Hall, a retired large scale systems programmer, is presently vice chairman of the Finance Committee for the Town of Goshen. Terry has served as a director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers since 1988. This is supported by a lifetime interest in rail

operations and in the intermodal aspect of transportation. He has extensive rail travel experience across the nation. Terry is currently the security coordinator for the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners.

### **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 and New Jersey and the bus line to Springfield takes him to the bus terminal three blocks from the Amtrak station where he catches the North Shore Limited to Cleveland. He makes frequent trips via Amtrak through the Northeast Corridor to New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. He also serves as a Magistrate in a number of G.A. Courts and is a Justice of the Peace. Morton has twice received the Secretary of the State's Award for Dedicated Public Service.

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

Mr. Kelaher is the Vice General Chairman for the Transportation Communication Union AFL-CIO. He represents the Railroad Clerks in New England, New York and New Jersey. He is also a former District Chairman of Lodge 227, New Haven, Connecticut that represents members of Amtrak and Metro-North in the states of Connecticut and New York. Bill resides in West Haven.

### **Yvonne A. Loteczka - Mobility Impaired Transit User**

Ms. Loteczka is chair of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Task Force and a member of the ADA Advisory Committee in Hartford. 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.

### **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 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 (HART) 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.

### **Ex-Officio Members**

#### **H. James Boice**

During 2005, H. James Boice represented Commissioner Stephen Korta. of the Department of Transportation. Mr. Boice serves as the acting Bureau Chief of the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Public Transportation. and well as being the Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Policy and Planning.

#### **Representative Antonio Guerrera**

Representative Guerrera represents the 29th House District, which encompasses Rocky Hill and portions of Newington and Wethersfield, and serves as co-chairman of the Transportation Committee.

#### **Senator Biagio Billy Ciotto**

Senator Biagio 'Billy' Ciotto of Wethersfield represents the 9th Senatorial District and is the Senate Co-chair of the Transportation Committee. Senator Ciotto's district covers Cromwell, Newington and Rocky Hill and parts of Wethersfield and Middletown.

**Philip Smith**

Mr. Smith represents Secretary Robert Genuario of the Office of Policy and Management.

**Frederick L. Riese**

Mr. Riese is the designee of Commissioner Gina McCarthy of the Department of 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, including 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.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION IN 2005

Tom Cheeseman served as Chairman of the Commission in 2005, his fourth year in that office. Morton Katz continued to serve as Vice Chairman, while Frederick Riese continued as Administrative Vice Chairman. David Reed and Dennis Brenner resigned from the Commission during 2005.

### Monthly Meetings

As set forth in Connecticut General Statutes section 13b-11a(j), the Commission met on the first Thursday of each month. Five of these meetings were held at Union Station in New Haven, four at the Connecticut Department of Transportation headquarters in Newington, two were at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, and the January meeting was cancelled due to severe winter weather. A wide range of speakers at the monthly meetings discussed many timely transportation issues and developments.

Richard Doyle, Regional Administration for the Federal Transit Administration, addressed the February Commission meeting concerning issues in the federal funding of transit projects and how projects are evaluated and ranked under the New Starts Program. Charles Barone, Acting Policy Administrator for ConnDOT's Bureau of Policy and Planning, spoke at the March meeting, discussing the recently released 2005 Master Transportation Plan and Governor Rell's \$1.25 billion Transportation Initiative. At the April meeting, Carmine Trotta of the ConnDOT Bureau of Policy and Planning updated the Commission on six major ongoing studies of the Department, and Peter Richter discussed the impact of recent floods on Amtrak rail service on the Springfield Line.

In May, Tom Moritz, Senior Director for Commuter Operations for Amtrak, explained that railroad's proposed access fee policy for commuter service use of Amtrak properties, and discussed Amtrak's *Strategic Reforms Initiatives* report. Louis Mangini, Staff Assistant to Representative Rosa DeLauro, provided a status report in June on the progress toward a new federal transportation bill and an assessment of how Connecticut would fare under various proposals being considered. In July, Frank Rogers, the Director of Marketing for the Providence and Worcester Railroad, provided an overview of the current business conditions affecting the railroad industry nationally, and then detailed the expansion in business currently underway for his railroad.

Mario Marrero, Senior Transportation Planner with the Capitol Region Council of Governments, provided an picture of the current Job Access transportation services in the region, and their funding status, at the August meeting. The September and October meetings featured reports on the procurement of the 342 new M-8 rail cars for the New Haven Line service and the development of a new rail maintenance facility at New Haven Yard. Peter Richter, Acting Assistant Administrator for Rails provided these reports. Carmine Trotta of



ConnDOT also discussed the Danbury Branch Electrification Study, the New Britain Busway project and the Downtown Waterbury Intermodal Center project in October. The November meeting featured Linda Mizzi, Assistant Program Director for the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, relating the obstacles that can be encountered by disabled travelers using transit services. Her findings are derived from an annual survey conducted by her agency. Lastly, the December meeting focused on protection from terrorism on transit services and vehicles, a topic address by James Cameron, vice president of the Metro-North Shore Line East Rail Commuter Council.

The Commission was fortunate to have such knowledgeable and interesting speakers during the year and is very appreciative of their presentations to us.

### **Public Hearings**

The Commission conducted eight public hearings during 2005 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 Willimantic, Wethersfield, and Greenwich. During the fall, hearing sites included New Haven, New Britain, Norwich, Winsted and Norwalk. 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.

Issues presented varied from hearing to hearing, though some topics were raised at multiple hearings. Funding to support existing services and for expansion of bus service was the most frequently raised issue. Calls for evening and weekend service, better intermodal connections, some new routes, and new vehicle storage and maintenance facilities were issues that were raised in several areas. Improved service on the Danbury Branch of Metro-North and the need for secure funding to support the Transportation Strategy Board Section 16 projects were also raised in multiple venues. Administrative issues raised included calls for more flexibility to move transit district operating funds from one service to another to meet the most pressing needs, and for flexibility in taxi regulations to allow an operator to provide requested trips in adjacent, unassigned towns to his franchise service area when no other travel options are available. These and other issues are discussed in more detail in the summaries of the eight public hearings found on pages 26-42 of this report.

### **East of the Hudson Rail Freight Task Force**

During 2005, the East of Hudson Rail Freight Task Force, on which Commission member Richard Carpenter participates, continued to meet regularly in the Board Room of the New York Law School in lower Manhattan. The Task Force was created in 1999 to monitor and plan for improved rail freight service east of the Hudson River. It was established as part

of the final decision of the U.S. Surface Transportation Board dividing Conrail between CSX and Norfolk Southern. Impetus for its creation came from a Congressional Intervention Petition supported by members of Congress from New York and Connecticut which sought to extend the shared access area operated by both acquiring railroads northeastward from northern New Jersey through New York City to New Haven.

Meetings of the Task Force occur about every six weeks. Members include the Norfolk Southern and CSX Railroads, Canadian Pacific Railway, Providence and Worcester Railroad, the New York and Atlantic Railroad, the New York Cross Harbor Railroad, Amtrak, Metro-North, the Long Island Railroad, New York State DOT, New York City DOT, the New York Economic Development Commission, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council and Environmental Defense.

Work of the Task Force this year included hearing regular progress reports from railroads and governmental officials on various infrastructure and service improvement programs. These programs include increasing freight car weight limits, finding land for rail intermodal facilities, track improvements to raise speed limits, and generally encouraging a shift from truck freight movement to rail where feasible.

The passage of the new Federal SAFETEA-LU surface transportation authorization act this year included \$100 million in continuing funding for the New York Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel. Predictions of a 79% increase in truck traffic on the region's roads in the next 20 years have resulted in strong support for this rail freight tunnel. More information on the proposed tunnel can be found at [www.moveny.org](http://www.moveny.org).

### **Other Activities and Events**

During the past year, many Commission members took part in transportation-related events or served in various capacities related to the Commission's goals.

Chairman Tom Cheeseman attended the Community Transportation Association of America convention in St. Louis, May 25-28 and the American Public Transportation Association convention in Dallas, Sept. 25-28. Tom has also now assumed the chairmanship of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce's Transportation Committee, and he serves as chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation and as the Connecticut delegate to the Community Transportation Association of America.

Russ St. John continued to serve as Connecticut's railroad representative on the Operation Lifesaver Committee, whose goal is to upgrade public awareness of, and safety at, rail at-grade crossings. Russ also serves on the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter

Rail Service study advisory committee.

Richard Schreiner currently serves on ConnDOT-sponsored advisory committees for the Danbury Branch Electrification Study and the Route 35 Corridor Study. He attended the New England Public Transportation Association bi-annual convention in Providence this year.

Linda Blair serves on the City of New Haven Bureau of Traffic and Parking's Ad Hoc Committee on Bus Stops, which is currently overseeing the restoration of bus stops on the New Haven Green. On the committee, she has submitted a proposal for a citizen-based enforcement policy of parking regulations at bus stops, handicapped parking spaces, and on sidewalks. Linda also attended the Institute on Planning for the Achievement of Transportation Coordination in Human Services, held at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford on November 30.

Terry Hall serves as one of New England's five directors on the National Association of Railroad Passengers and attended the Association's spring and fall board meetings in Washington and Minneapolis, respectively.

Yvonne Loteczka serves of the Capitol Region Council of Governments Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. Yvonne also attended the Institute on Planning for the Achievement of Transportation Coordination in Human Services, held at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford on November 30.

As mentioned earlier, Richard Carpenter continued his participation on the East of Hudson Rail Freight Task Force. The Task Force is chaired by New York Congressman Jerrold Nadler and is involved in securing better rail freight access across the Hudson River into New York City, and by extension, into Connecticut and southern New England. Mr. Carpenter also serves as a member of the Transportation Strategy Board's Interstate 95 Corridor Investment Area Board. Mr. Carpenter is working on Volume 3 of A Railroad Atlas of the United States in 1946, covering Ohio, Indiana and Lower Michigan. Volume 2, covering New England and New York state, was published by Johns Hopkins University Press in spring 2005. Volume 1, released in August 2003, covered the Mid-Atlantic states.

During 2005, Frederick Riese served on three ConnDOT-sponsored advisory committees as the representative of the Department of Environmental Protection. Current study efforts for which he participates on ConnDOT advisory committees include the I-84/Route 8 Waterbury Interchange Needs Study and the Rest Area and Service Plaza Statewide Study.

1. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT AN ADDITIONAL \$3.3 MILLION BE PROVIDED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION BEGINNING IN FY 2007 TO ALLOW FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF JOBS ACCESS TRANSIT SERVICES STATEWIDE. THE STATE IS FACING A REDUCTION IN FEDERAL JOBS ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE FUNDS THAT WILL IMPACT SERVICES BEGINNING IN THE FALL OF 2006.

The Job Access program has been a major success for Connecticut, with ConnDOT taking a leadership role and administering a program that has served as a national model. Five regional coalitions, each including social service agencies and public transit providers, have developed highly successful public transportation enhancements for low income workers. These enhancements include expanded transit and vanpool services, employer based transportation, car repair assistance and guaranteed ride home programs.

While the overall funding for transit has increased in the new federal transportation act, known as SAFETEA-LU, funding for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program will be negatively impacted in this state. Under the provisions of SAFETEA-LU the Jobs Access program is being formularized, and is anticipated to provide \$4.9 million to Connecticut over the next five years. In FY 2004, prior to reauthorization, Connecticut received \$3.1 million per year for this program. which was down from \$3.5 million in the first year of the program in FY 2000. Connecticut received \$2.5 million in FY 2005, and is apportioned only \$1.1 million in FY 2006.

Connecticut's Job Access transportation programs have also taken a financial hit from the loss of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) High Performance bonus funds during fiscal 2005. On an annualized basis, TANF funding was about \$800,000. Without additional State support, the Federal Transit Administration and TANF cuts jointly will decimate a program that has successfully transitioned thousands of Connecticut residents from public assistance to meaningful work, and has dramatically improved the quality of life for these residents and their families.

2. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE DEBATE OVER THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF AMTRAK, PARTICULARLY AS IT RELATES TO THE OWNERSHIP AND OPERATION OF THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR. FURTHERMORE, THE STATE SHOULD ACTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER NORTHEAST CORRIDOR STATES AND COORDINATE WITH THOSE STATES IN DEVELOPING A POLICY POSITION WHICH WILL BEST ENSURE THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR PASSENGER SERVICE.

The Board of Directors of Amtrak has recently announced its request to the management of Amtrak to study the feasibility of creating one or more separate subsidiaries to assume ownership of the Northeast Corridor property, infrastructure and operation. In the meantime, the Federal Department of Transportation has taken a more definitive position that the subsidiary must be formed. One vision is that federal budget should provide only capital for the maintenance and improvement of the Northeast Corridor and that the states should cover the operating deficit of the corridor.

Though the specifics of this restructuring are at present a moving target, Amtrak's substantial property ownership in Connecticut, its contributions toward upgrading the State-owned New Haven Line, and the high level of Northeast Corridor service here, requires that we take an active role in developing any administrative and financial plan for Northeast Corridor service. Any resulting structure could significantly impact the state's budget. Connecticut also needs to make sure that the operational side of the Northeast Corridor remains on a solid footing. If Corridor responsibilities are turned over to the states, this creates the risk that one or more states may not opt to participate to a commensurate degree with the other Corridor states, leaving the quality of the service, if not its existence, at risk. Like many observers, and Amtrak ex-president David Gunn, the Commission also sees considerable risk in separating the operating and maintenance responsibilities of the Northeast Corridor among different entities rather than running the Corridor as a vertically integrated railroad.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that the Governor along with the support of the ConnDOT advocate for Connecticut's interests in the dialogue about Amtrak's future structure. The Commission similarly recommends an active role by ConnDOT in the East of the Hudson Rail Freight Task Force and the Northeast Rail Operations Study which are two current planning efforts outside of Connecticut's borders which may have significant impacts on freight movements to and from our state.

3. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM TO INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY TRANSIT USAGE BY STATE EMPLOYEES. WHETHER THIS IS DONE THROUGH FREE TRANSIT PASSES AS MANY FEDERAL EMPLOYEES RECEIVE, A PRE-PAID FARE PROGRAM, A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE EXISTING \$3.00 PER MONTH DISCOUNT, OR SOME OTHER MECHANISM, THE STATE SHOULD MATCH THE EXAMPLE OF MANY PRIVATE CONNECTICUT EMPLOYERS WHO PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF SUPPORT TO PROMOTE TRANSIT USE BY THEIR EMPLOYEES.

Increased transit use by State employees would directly serve the State's goals to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and conserve energy. Since transit systems in Connecticut have excess capacity on most peak hour trips, increased ridership could be absorbed without incurring additional operating expense.

The current \$3.00 monthly subsidy for State employees was established during the Grasso era in the mid-1970s. At that time, \$3.00 represented a meaningful discount toward a \$25.00 monthly pass. Over the ensuing decades, as bus fares have increased, participation in the State discount program has waned. Currently, fewer than 50 employees participate each month in the State discount program.

The State has supported campaigns to encourage Connecticut commuters to use public transportation. The State should lead the way in implementing a transit support program for its employees. The Federal government, pursuant to Executive Order 13150, signed by President Clinton in 2000, issues vouchers redeemable for transit services to many Federal employees. This is one model the State of Connecticut could follow to encourage transit use by its employees. Another mechanism could be a pre-paid fare program such as UConn, Trinity College and Capital Community College offer to their students and the Town of Mansfield offers for its residents. Under such an arrangement, blocks of transit services are purchased in advance by colleges, municipalities, employers or agencies, and the designated user groups are then allowed to ride the bus free of charge during the duration of the agreement simply by showing proper identification. These pre-paid fare programs are very easy to administer. A third option for encouragement of increased transit use would be a very significant increase in the State discount program to provide a meaningful incentive to transit use.

Whichever mechanism is chosen, the salient consideration is that the State show the support for transit use that it encourages other employers to provide. Under current Federal tax law, a transit benefit of up to \$105 per month is non-taxable to the recipient.

4. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT ALL DIVISIONS OF CTTRANSIT ADOPT THE POLICY THAT IF THE CURB AT A DESIGNATED BUS STOP CANNOT BE ACCESSED DUE TO VEHICLES, SNOW, CONSTRUCTION, OR OTHER CONDITIONS, THE BUS WILL PROCEED TO THE NEAREST SAFE LOCATION TO DEPLOY ITS HANDICAP RAMP INSTEAD OF ATTEMPTING TO DEPLOY THE RAMP AT THE DESIGNATED STOP. THIS ALLOWS FOR A SAFER USE OF THE RAMP AND A LESS STEEP ANGLE FOR RAMP DEPLOYMENT.

THE COMMISSION FURTHER RECOMMENDS ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A STRINGENT POLICY AGAINST STOPPING A BUS OR PARATRANSIT VEHICLE IN SUCH A LOCATION THAT THE VEHICLE OBSTRUCTS OR OTHERWISE PROHIBITS ACCESS TO CURB RAMPS AND CURB CUTS FOR PERSONS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS.

Major problems occur in the deployment of ramps because of illegal parking in bus stops, lack of snow removal, construction activities, or other conditions. The bus stops in Connecticut are the province of the municipalities who frequently are not diligent about enforcing the parking and snow removal laws. There are also few, if any, construction permitting requirements relative to the provision of accessibility for persons with mobility impairments. If such requirements do exist, there certainly is no evidence of enforcement.

The siting, construction, and maintenance of bus stops are also the responsibilities of the municipalities. All too often sites are selected in locations that have poor or no sidewalks or curbs. Some have been encountered that are on a curbed area, but have no accessible route to them. While such conditions may be understandable for bus stops built prior to 1990, it is totally unacceptable for any built since then. And inaccessible bus stops continue to be built.

The New Haven Division of CTTRANSIT recently implemented a policy of allowing drivers, after consultation with the passengers, to select the nearest safe location for deployment of the ramp when curb access at the designated bus stop cannot be achieved. This flexibility policy has shown very positive results in terms of safety and customer satisfaction.

Until all bus stops are fully accessible and proper parking, snow removal, and construction permitting procedures are in place and properly enforced, it will be necessary for buses to find the nearest safe location rather than to force the deployment of the ramp at a designated bus stop.

Secondly, while it is sometimes unavoidable for a bus to block a curb cut or curb ramp, such as when said cut or ramp is an integral part of the bus stop, the blocking of a ramp or cut removes that facility from being used as needed. Buses may be stopped for many minutes at a time while waiting for the proper departure time. If a bus is blocking a curb cut

or curb ramp, a person using a wheelchair must wait those minutes, perhaps ten or more, before he or she can cross the road. One example of where this commonly occurs is on Church Street at Crown Street in New Haven. However, this is not the only location and New Haven is not the only place this problem occurs. Therefore, adoption of a statewide policy against such practices would be of great help in eliminating the problem.

A similar situation commonly occurs when paratransit vehicle drivers board or discharge their wheelchair-using passengers by deploying the vehicle's lifts or ramps directly into curb cuts. Not only does this practice remove the curb cut from availability to anyone who comes along while the unloading is in progress, thereby forcing those needing the curb cut to wait, but it also, in most cases, blocks the crosswalk.

This issue, which occurs statewide, is largely one of proper paratransit vehicle driver training. The false belief that curb cuts or curb ramps are for the loading or unloading of wheelchair using passengers can only be dispelled by adoption of a statewide policy against such practice.



5. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT SUPPORT EFFORTS BY THE WINDHAM REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT TO SECURE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A VEHICLE STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE FACILITY.

The Windham Regional Transit District (WRTD) currently stores its fleet of 24 vehicles at two separate outdoor lots. The fixed route buses are parked at the Windham Department of Public Works lot, while the Dial-a-Ride vehicles are parked at a private lot. Fleet storage at two geographically separate lots is not operationally efficient. Winter weather requires the vehicles to be cleared of snow and ice early each morning whenever inclement weather events occur. Regarding maintenance, since operation of the vehicles is contracted out to Arrow Bus Lines, whose maintenance facilities are in Waterford and East Hartford, vehicle repairs require either the dispatching of a mechanic from Waterford or East Hartford to Willimantic, or the towing of the vehicles to one of those sites, depending on the nature of the problem.

The WRTD commissioned Gannett Fleming to perform a feasibility study for a vehicle storage and maintenance facility. The study recommended a 26,000 square foot facility capable of housing 31 vehicles be constructed, and identified two potential locations for this facility, both utilizing ConnDOT land. If either of these sites were available and were used for such a facility, it could potentially serve as part or all of the State match for federal funds for the project. However, regardless of the site chosen, the Commission supports the finding of the need for a centralized storage and maintenance facility and recommends that ConnDOT support efforts by the District to secure the necessary federal funding to develop such a facility.

6. THE COMMISSION AGAIN RECOMMENDS THAT IDENTIFICATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASING THE CAPACITY FOR TRUCKS AT THE REST AREAS ALONG CONNECTICUT'S INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS SHOULD BE A MAJOR THRUST OF CONNDOT'S CURRENT STATEWIDE REST AREA AND SERVICE PLAZA STUDY.

ConnDOT has begun a yearlong Statewide Rest Area and Service Plaza Study during 2005 to prepare a master plan governing roadside rest areas and service plazas. The study will evaluate the existing network of roadside facilities and consider options to optimize these facilities. Such options will include reconfiguring, expanding, combining, relocating, adding or eliminating facilities. The impetus for this study is guidance the Department has received from the Federal Highway Administration that money to finance rest area and service plaza improvements is likely to be available in the new reauthorization act, and those states having a master plan in place to direct such improvements would be eligible for this funding.

The Commission commends ConnDOT for undertaking this effort and urges that a strong emphasis in this study effort be placed upon identifying opportunities to address the shortage of truck parking spaces in Connecticut. This deficit was estimated to be 1,200 spaces in the 2001 ConnDOT Truck Stop and Rest Area Parking Study, and was predicted to grow to 1,600 spaces by 2020. This situation can lead to several undesirable and unsafe consequences including having truck drivers continue to drive in a fatigued state, having trucks parking in undesignated or unsafe locations, or having existing rest areas and service plazas become overly congested to the point where emergency vehicles or other traffic cannot safely access those areas.

The 2001 ConnDOT study identified an additional 638 truck parking spaces that could be added at 14 existing public rest areas along Interstates 84, 91, 95 and 395. The new study would revisit these possible expansions. However, it should also look beyond these existing properties to identify other suitable sites for new facilities. With the projected increases in the volume of truck traffic, which the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has estimated to increase by 90% by the year 2020, the need for additional rest area capacity for trucks is only going to become more pressing. ConnDOT's efforts to address this issue are indeed timely, and are strongly encouraged by the Commission.

7. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT, AS A PART OF ITS TAXICAB LICENSING PROCEDURE, REQUIRE ALL COMPANIES, CURRENT AND FUTURE, OPERATING THREE OR MORE VEHICLES IN TAXICAB SERVICE, TO OPERATE AT LEAST ONE DUAL USE VEHICLE CAPABLE OF SERVING AMBULATORY CUSTOMERS AS WELL AS CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WHO USE WHEELCHAIRS.

For larger companies operating fleets of five or more vehicles in taxicab service, a ratio of 1-in-5 vehicles in their fleets must be dual use equipped so as to be able to serve customers with disabilities. The Commission recommends that existing companies be given a three year time frame to comply with this requirement, while any new companies licensed would need to comply from the initiation of business. There must also be no distinction between the fares assessed to ambulatory and disabled customers.

The intent of this recommendation is to ensure that adequate and accessible taxicab transportation is available to meet the current and growing needs of the disabled community.

8. THE COMMISSION AGAIN COMMENDS CONNDOT FOR UNDERTAKING THE NEW HAVEN–HARTFORD–SPRINGFIELD COMMUTER RAIL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AND ITS INTENT TO SEEK FUNDING FOR THE PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THIS PROJECT. THE COMMISSION ENDORSES THE DEPARTMENT’S SELECTION OF A REASONABLE, MID-RANGE OPTION AS THE PREFERRED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THIS SERVICE.

The Commission has long advocated the operation of commuter rail service between New Haven, Hartford and Springfield on Amtrak’s Springfield Line. In October 2002, the Transportation Strategy Board authorized \$2,000,000 in funding to undertake a study of the capital needs, ridership levels and operating costs involved in providing such service. ConnDOT now intends to seek funding to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) which will cover both the operation of the service and the construction of the necessary physical improvements to provide a meaningful level of service. If ConnDOT is successful in obtaining the needed funding, work on the EIS may begin in spring of 2006.

The recommended implementation option includes seven new ConnDOT-funded trains per day in each direction between New Haven and Springfield, which when combined with the existing eight Amtrak trains in each direction, will provide for service every 30 minutes during the peak morning and afternoon commuting hours. Service would be provided to the nine existing stations from New Haven to Springfield, including the State Street Station in New Haven at which Amtrak service does not currently stop. New stations would also be built at North Haven, Newington and Enfield. Double tracking will be added in 5 locations totaling 18 miles along the corridor to increase operating flexibility. For this recommended level of service, capital costs are estimated at \$263.3 million, while operating costs would be \$10.1 million annually, of which \$1.2 million would be recovered through fares. Estimated new ridership of 2,428 daily trips is anticipated in this scenario.

9. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT ADEQUATE BENCHES BE PROVIDED AT ALL NEW HAVEN LINE AND SHORE LINE EAST STATIONS TO PROVIDE COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE TO FARE PAYERS.

The lack of any benches or seats at the northbound side of South Norwalk station was brought to the Commission's attention at our Norwalk public hearing. Subsequently, the removal of most of the benches at Union Station in New Haven was called out and cited as an example of the trend at many New Haven Line stations.

Adequate seating is a basic level amenity that should be afforded to users at all stations. The Commission is aware that New Haven Line stations are under a variety of ownerships and responsibilities for management. However, regardless of ownership, all stations should provide benches, particularly for the needs of older and physically infirm riders, but also for those who must wait for less frequent trains or early morning or late evening trains. Benches are low cost, low maintenance features that are among the most easily provided of station amenities. Adequate benches should be provided quickly at State- and municipally-owned stations on the New Haven Line as well as at all stations of the Shore Line East commuter services.

10. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT CONNDOT COMPILE A MASTER LIST OF POTENTIAL 'NEW STARTS' OF FIXED ROUTE AND RURAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES. THIS LIST COULD BE DEVELOPED AS A PART OF THE STATEWIDE PLANNING EFFORT TO DETERMINE HOW BEST TO EMPLOY THE 23 NEW BUSES TO BE ACQUIRED NEXT YEAR AS AN ELEMENT OF THE GOVERNOR'S \$1.3 BILLION TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE. SUCH A LIST WOULD BE COMPILED FROM SUBMITTALS BY TRANSIT DISTRICTS, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS OR OTHER QUALIFIED ENTITIES WHO WOULD SUBMIT DOCUMENTED REQUESTS FOR NEW SERVICES. THESE SUBMITTALS WOULD THEN BE REVIEWED AND RANKED AND A PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY DEVELOPED USING A STATEWIDE OR REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE PROCESS FACILITATED BY CONNDOT. A MASTER LIST WOULD THEN BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE ADDITION OF ANY NEW FIXED ROUTE OR RURAL SERVICES USING THE PRIORITIES DEVELOPED BY THE COLLABORATION.

Each year as the Commission holds its public hearings around the state, it receives one or more pleas for some additional route, either to link up two existing transit systems or to provide service to a town or area not currently served by fixed route service. Valid reasons are cited in support of many of these requests, and some have become the subject of Commission recommendations in past Annual Reports.

These service requests, and the needs which spawn them, can be expected to continue on into future years. It therefore seems prudent to have a methodology to accept, review and rank such requests, and to specify the documentation that should accompany such requests. Governor Rell's transportation initiative provides an appropriate opportunity to undertake this evaluation. The Commission recommends that ConnDOT, as a part of its planning effort on the use of the new equipment, declare an 'open season' for transit districts, metropolitan planning organizations and other entities of standing to submit service requests, together with as much of the following data as can be prepared: the estimated cost and revenue of the proposed service, the vehicle and personnel needs, estimated ridership, and any studies upon which the ridership estimates are based. ConnDOT would then convene a statewide or regional collaborative to review and rank these proposals and produce a priority listing of the new service requests to be used to determine which services should be the highest rated candidates for implementation. Though compiled for use in connection with the receipt of the new buses, this master list could be updated periodically through the same procedure used to develop it.

11. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS THE NEW HAVEN DIVISION OF CONNECTICUT TRANSIT FOR THE DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM IT HAS INSTITUTED TO IMPROVE THE SENSITIVITY AND EQUIPMENT FAMILIARITY OF ITS DRIVERS IN PROVIDING SERVICE TO DISABLED TRANSIT USERS.

This program has retrained over 160 operators, a few at a time, focusing on boarding, securing equipment, and alighting passengers with disabilities. Each driver is given a copy of the policies and procedures entitled Bus Operators' Responsibilities to Customers with Disabilities. Then, through the processes of role playing and question and answer, the drivers and trainers explore some of the challenges in providing reasonable accommodation, including personal assistance when requested, with respect and dignity to the riders.

As one example, one participant will be the bus driver while another plays the role of a passenger in a manual wheelchair. Many trainees have underestimated how difficult it is to safely and effectively push up the ramp independently. Each would practice using the securement belts, discussing various options, and would consider the many types of wheelchairs and scooters and the varieties and combinations of disabilities.

An extended version of the program has been provided for all new operators, with a module of written materials and videos. Like the veteran drivers, they practice boarding, securement and alighting procedures. Then they receive hands-on experience including deploying the lift or unfolding the ramp, depending on the bus model.

Another element of the program is further retraining when a complaint has been filed or an operator has failed to announce all time points, major destinations, or stops requested by an individual with a disability. Whatever the issue or infraction, this provides another opportunity to correct bad habits and improve service.

The real heart of the program is the participation of passengers with disabilities and their advocates as trainers. Without this element, the program would not be nearly as effective as it has been. Trainers have included people who use power wheelchairs, and those who do mobility orientation with blind or visually impaired people. By involving local individuals and organizations, the enhanced communication increased the dignity, as well as the efficiency of service.

The Commission recommends that this successful training concept be employed at other CT Transit divisions and transit districts.

12. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROCEED TO INSTALL A CENTRALIZED TRAFFIC CONTROL (CTC) SYSTEM ON THE DANBURY BRANCH OF THE NEW HAVEN LINE WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING SERVICE LEVELS TO THE TRAVELING PUBLIC.

For many years, it has been recognized that a signal control system is the means by which additional train service can be provided on the Danbury Branch. Currently, trains operate only in one direction in the 25 mile distance between South Norwalk and Danbury. Passing sidings exist at the Wilton and Branchville stations.

Indeed, at Wilton, the high level platform is situated between the main track and the passing track. Were signals and power switches installed at both ends of the Wilton siding, trains operating in both directions could be scheduled to meet there, thus increasing service levels to the traveling public. The Danbury Branch has been under study for over decade. The implementation of any of the well thought out improvements in ConnDOT's ongoing electrification study would require the installation of a CTC switching system. Funding for this project has been programmed for many years, but it was never implemented. The time has long since come for implementation of the signaling project.



13. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR RESTORING FUNDS TO THE FORMER TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY BOARD TRANSIT ENHANCEMENTS AND ALLOWING THEM TO CONTINUE.

The initial budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2006 did not include adequate funding in the Department of Transportation's budget to continue the operation of the transit enhancements initiated by the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) in 2002.

These projects, including the Coastal Link enhancements, the Danbury-Norwalk Route 7-Link and ten other public transit services statewide would have ended in June 2005 without this action of the Legislature.

The recent run up in gas prices bumped up the ridership on the expansion services considerably, with some routes experiencing gains in the 30-40 percent range when compared to the same period last year.

Future ConnDOT budgets should continue the state investment in the former TSB service enhancements.

14. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR INCLUDING WITHIN PUBLIC ACT 05-4 FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,000,000 TO PROVIDE FOR STATE MATCHING GRANTS TO SUPPORT ELDERLY AND DISABLED DEMAND RESPONSE TRANSPORTATION, ALSO KNOWN AS DIAL-A-RIDE TRANSPORTATION, BY FUNDING THE PROGRAM ORIGINALLY SET FORTH IN CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES SECTION 13b-38bb. THIS FINANCIAL SUPPORT WILL ALLOW FOR A SIGNIFICANT ENHANCEMENT OF DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICES AND WILL GREATLY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THESE TRANSIT DEPENDENT CITIZENS.

## **Other Timely Issues**

Two other issues arose during 2005 which merit mention, but for which the Commission has no specific recommendations to offer.

### **Taxicab Service in Rural Areas**

At the Commission's public hearing in Winsted, the issue was raised that taxi operators cannot provide requested trips that do not originate or terminate in their franchise areas, even if the trip does not fall within the franchise area of any other taxi licensee. In rural areas, chiefly in northwestern and eastern Connecticut, travelers may not be left with any other options to complete a trip. The operator who spoke in Winsted requested that Section 13b-96-16 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies be amended to allow an operator to accept such trip requests which do not infringe on another licensee's franchised territory, but to allow the requested trip to be provided at the operator's discretion, rather than as a requirement. This stipulation was made because the non-revenue portion of the operator's trip to service that out-of-area customer might negate the fare made on the revenue portion of the trip. The operator would be able to accommodate a larger portion of such requests if allowed to add a tariff for the mileage to the trip origin or destination in addition to the standard metered fare.

The Commission recognizes that an unmet need for taxicab services does exist in these rural areas of Connecticut. However, the Commission is also aware that permitting the incorporation of a tariff into the taxi operator's fare structure would cross the regulatory threshold into livery service. Removing the service prohibition in cases where an operator could profitably provide a requested out-of-area trip without a tariff would meet a portion of the need. The Commission does not offer any wider solution to adjust fare structures but does recognize the cited need as a *bona fide* one.

### **Transit System Fuel Costs**

Transit systems statewide are experiencing a second year of double-digit increases in fuel costs. Some providers are able to find some relief through annual fuel contracts, but these have become increasingly difficult to obtain. ConnDOT has offered some relief to providers through funding adjustments in years of fuel cost spikes, but has not always been able to provide them. In FY 2005, for example, in spite of dramatic fuel increases, the state was not able to make any adjustment to subsidies for transit operators.

With the likelihood that jumps in fuel costs will continue, the state should continue its exploration of hybrid vehicle technology, and develop other ways to manage this long term problem.

## **2005 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 2005.

<b><u>TOWN</u></b>	<b><u>MODERATOR</u></b>	<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>LOCATION</u></b>
Willimantic	Thomas Cheeseman	May 9	Council of Governments office
Wethersfield	Yvonne Loteczka	May 16	Town Hall
Greenwich	Richard Carpenter	June 13	Greenwich Library
New Haven	Linda Blair	September 12	City Hall
New Britain	Morton Katz	September 19	City Hall
Norwich	Frederick Riese	September 27	City Hall
Winsted	Frederick Riese	October 18	City Hall
Norwalk	Richard Carpenter	October 26	Police Department

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

Public Hearing

Conference Room – WINCOG Offices

968 Main Street

Willimantic, Connecticut

Monday, May 9, 2005 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Linda Blair  
Thomas Cheeseman  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Russell St. John

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Cindy Gollareny

The hearing convened at 7:37 P.M.

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator, Thomas Cheeseman, opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

**DAGMAR NOLL** presented testimony of behalf of the Windham Region Transit District (WRTD) and asked that the Commission support its efforts to secure funding for a transit facility for the Windham region. A draft report of a feasibility study for a comprehensive transit facility recommends that WRTD procure a central transit facility for the purpose of managing transit operations, maintaining and storing its transit fleet at a single facility.

WRTD also requests the Commission to recommend additional funding to increase service to Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU) and increase the hours of Saturday service on the City Bus to accommodate common work schedules. Currently, ECSU receives service only four times each weekday and only twice on Saturdays. In addition, Saturday service is limited to six hours, making it inadequate for individuals who depend on public transportation to get to and from work.

Additionally, WRTD requests that the Commission recommend increased funding to offer the community the full Storrs/Willimantic Bus schedule year-round. This service currently runs on a north – south route with four, three, and two-hour gaps in service during UCONN vacation periods. Requests have been made to operate the same schedule year-round to accommodate employees, as well as students who take summer courses.

Finally, WRTD is asking the Commission to support the prepaid fares program and encourage UCONN's continued participation in the program by designating a long-term funding source.

The program was suspended for more than four months in late 2004 and early 2005 due to UCONN's lack of financial support. UCONN's participation resumed in late January, which has resulted in a significant increase in ridership.

Ms. Noll thanked the Commission for the opportunity to comment at the hearing.

**DENNISON NASH**, Transportation Advisory Committee, Town of Mansfield, also spoke to the need for increased transportation to and from UCONN and the importance and success of the prepaid fares program.

**BARBARA BUDDINGTON**, Executive Director of the Windham Region Council of Governments (WRCC), thanked the Commission for including the provision of \$5 million for the Dial-A-Ride matching grant program in the 2004 Annual Report and Recommendations and requested the Commission to continue to do so in the event the current legislation to accomplish this is not successful.

Ms. Buddington spoke to the importance and need of a vehicle storage/maintenance facility, increased funding for rural transit services to allow continuation of the current level of services in the face of increasing costs, and a stable funding source to continue Jobs Access transportation.

Improved connections among small urban areas in the state are also needed. WRTD received requests for service between Willimantic and Danielson; currently no service connects these two cities. Improved services are also needed between Willimantic and Norwich, Willimantic and Hartford and UCONN and Hartford. In addition, there is a demand for better transit linkages for UCONN, between the campus and points outside the region.

Ms. Buddington urges the development at the state level of "smart cards" for transit use, along with accompanying software for better tracking and analysis of ridership.

Additional needed service improvements include: the Storrs-Willimantic bus route offering service earlier on Saturdays (currently begins after 10:30 A.M.); adding a second City Bus and fund its operation for at least part of the day to improve headways; expansion of Dial-A-Ride to include evenings, weekends and additional holidays; and the need for available funding for out-of-region medical transportation.

Ms. Buddington thanked the Commission for providing the opportunity to speak and to highlight some of the public transportation needs in the region.

**THOMAS MCNALLY**, Vice Chair, WRTD, expressed his concern with transportation to the courthouse, which is in Danielson. The only means of public transportation from Willimantic to Danielson is the Bonanza bus. However, the bus does not begin service until after 12:00 P.M. and the courthouse opens at 10:00 A.M.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:43 P.M.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**  
Public Hearing  
Conference Room – Wethersfield Town Hall  
505 Silas Deane Highway  
Wethersfield, Connecticut  
Monday, May 16, 2005 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Linda Blair  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Russell St. John  
Philip Smith  
Richard Sunderhauf

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Cindy Gollareny

The hearing convened at 7:40 P.M.

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator, Yvonne Loteczka, opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

**PAT SMITH**, a CTTransit, Hartford Division training supervisor speaking as a private citizen, expressed several concerns as follows:

The Bradley Flyer currently leaves from the Old State House and Mr. Smith recommended it would more effective and time efficient leaving from Union Station. He also suggested that the Bradley Flyer should use the State Street exit from Interstate 91 rather than the Capitol Area exit, as it currently does. This would cut time and mileage from the route.

Mr. Smith also inquired why the new fleet of buses to the Hartford area did not consist of more hybrid buses. He is very pleased with the two that are currently running.

Another area of concern is the bike/bus lanes. Mr. Smith expressed his concern that vehicles are often illegally parked causing the bus drivers to block the road when picking up and/or dropping off passengers. Mr. Smith recommended increased police presence.

Mr. Smith also expressed the need for more bus shelters especially at major transfer points. There is also a problem with graffiti at the existing shelters.

**MARIO MARRERO**, Jobs Access Project Manager, North Central Region, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), spoke to some of Mr. Smith's concerns.

In response to the Bradley Flyer, Mr. Marrero explained that at one time the option of leaving from Union Station was explored. However, the service is a Jobs Access funded route which began as a van pool and broadening the service by leaving from Union Station could endanger the funding source. Also, there was an issue with the buses and taxicabs competing at Union Station. Mr. Marrero did state he would revisit the option to extend the service to Union Station.

In regard to the hybrid buses, Mr. Marrero stated that the minimum number of hybrid buses is due to their expense of approximately \$500,000 each. Funding options are currently being explored to purchase trap filters for all diesel buses.

In response to bus shelters, Mr. Marrero explained that the shelters in the Hartford area are city owned and they are currently exploring someone to take them over.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:36 P.M.



**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**  
Public Hearing  
Meeting Room – Greenwich Library  
101 West Putnam Avenue  
Greenwich, Connecticut  
Monday, June 13, 2005 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Linda Blair  
Richard Carpenter  
Thomas Cheeseman  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Russell St. John

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Cindy Gollareny

The hearing convened at 7:42 P.M.

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator, Richard Carpenter, opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

RICHARD CARPENTER read into the record the following written correspondence:

Email from **FRANKLIN BLOOMER:**

As I'm sure you have learned, the CPTC hearing in Greenwich conflicts with a meeting of the Town's legislative body, the Representative Town Meeting. I am a member of the RTM and chairman of its Land Use Committee. I am also co-chair of the Coastal Corridor Transportation Investment Area. The most urgent need in southwestern Connecticut is to provide persons and goods with alternative modes of transportation -- alternatives to use of the roads which are seriously congested. Southwestern Connecticut is fortunate to have an underutilized railroad, Metro-North, and the most important step Connecticut could take to improve mobility in our region is to improve service on Metro-North. This means doing more than simply replacing Metro-North's aging fleet. It means more frequent service, particularly east of Stamford and on the branch lines, and the elimination of the need to change in Stamford to travel between Greenwich and destinations east of Stamford. Long Island Sound can be viewed as another underutilized resource, but investment in ferries that parallel Metro-North would be a mis-application of the limited funding available for public transport. Bus transit is another promising mode, particularly as a means of accessing Metro-North or between destinations distant from the railroad, but again it would be a mis-application of public transport funds to invest in service that parallels the rail line (including the branch lines).

Email from **JENNIFER DAYTON**:

I am a representative from Riverside to the Greenwich RTM. I am writing to urge you to put plans in place to provide more bus lines and light rail. For example, many people would prefer to take a bus from Greenwich to the Stamford Financial Center rather than drive I-95. We need more than just bus transit on the Post Road and on Metro North's existing lines. Thank you for considering our needs.

Email from **FREDERICK L. BAKER, III**, RTM District 5, Greenwich:

I want to voice my interest that the CPTC work to avoid in the future the conflict such as occurs with our RTM meeting next Monday. I would like to attend the CPTC meeting but am precluded by the RTM meeting. I also want to express my dissatisfaction with I-95 / Merritt / I-84 overcrowding. To my knowledge there is no plan to truly address this issue. While there are tiny changes being discussed - such as opening the breakdown lane in the Stamford area - even in aggregate these are woefully insufficient. I am distressed that our state (and NY State as well) cannot rally to develop a comprehensive solution. With no plan in place, the situation will deteriorate for many years into the future, affecting not only our quality of life but the commercial and tourist attractiveness of Connecticut. Frankly, I view this as a failure of our elected officials - local, state and federal. We deserve better.... much better. Please get going! What can I do to assist the process?

Correspondence from **DIANE G. FARRELL**, Chairwomen, South Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, First Selectwoman, Town of Westport.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:21 P.M.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**  
Public Hearing  
Meeting Room 2 – City Hall  
165 Church Street  
New Haven, Connecticut  
Monday, September 12, 2005 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Linda Blair  
Russell St. John  
Thomas Cheeseman

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Michael Guerrero

The hearing convened at 7:35 P.M.

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator, Linda Blair, opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

**ELAINE KOLB**, who lives in West Haven, expressed several concerns regarding wheelchair accessibility/securement issues. She first noted that ramps have largely replaced lifts on buses. Ramps are more reliable but they don't work well where there is no curb or the curb cannot be accessed.

She stated that a lack of communication currently exists between public transit operators throughout the state in regard to disability awareness training being offered to bus drivers. Ms. Kolb mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a uniform policy concerning this type of training because it would provide a sense of security and better understanding amongst the many bus drivers and riders who interact on a daily basis.

Ms. Kolb commended Vic Marques and Ralph Cannici of CTTRANSIT (New Haven Division) for providing disability awareness re-training of over 160 CTTRANSIT bus drivers. She also informed the Commission that she is very willing to assist in any way possible in seeing this type of training being provided in the future.

Ms. Kolb said that the New Haven Division has adopted a policy to allow bus drivers to go to the nearest safe location to deploy a ramp if the curb is inaccessible at the designated stop. She recommended that this policy be adopted statewide. She also mentioned that the prohibition on bus drivers handling money or fare cards is a problem for disabled riders who have problems paying the fare themselves due to the location of the farebox or to the nature of their disabilities.

**DONALD DEMMITT**, a resident of New Haven, expressed his concerns over a certain crosswalk in New Haven located at the corner of Crown Street and Church Street. As part of his testimony, he submitted photos of the aforementioned crosswalk to moderator Ms. Blair prior to the start of the hearing.

Mr. Demmitt stated that at certain times of the day, buses block this crosswalk, making it difficult for a wheelchair bound individual to use the curb cuts located there or to see the crosswalk signal lights. This creates a dangerous situation at this crosswalk. He suggested that the buses need to pull forward to clear the curb cut so that this crosswalk is accessible. The nearest alternative crosswalk is at Rite-Aid and is a dangerous location due to high traffic flows and poor visibility.

Also, Mr. Demmitt mentioned that he would like to see an ID number patch on the shirts of CTRANSIT drivers for better identification should an issue arise. They formerly had such a patch on their uniforms.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:34 P.M.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**  
Public Hearing  
City Hall  
27 West Main Street  
New Britain, Connecticut  
Monday, September 19, 2005 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Morton Katz  
Dick Carpenter  
Russell St. John  
Thomas Cheeseman  
Linda Blair  
Terry Hall

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Anthony Arcari

The hearing convened at 7:30 P.M.

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator, Morton Katz, opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

**Sharon Neupaver**, representing the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA), expressed that the Towns of Southington and Plymouth currently are not served by public bus transportation and that there is a need for bus service in these areas. She commented that elderly and disabled persons in the area require public transportation to get to medical appointments, shopping and employment. She also noted that bus service in Southington, specifically on Queen Street, would likely increase ridership on connecting New Britain, Bristol and Plainville routes.

Ms. Neupaver was encouraged to contact local representatives to inquire if the Towns would be willing to share a portion of the cost for service and it was mentioned that many municipalities that receive service do contribute a local match. Also, the Legislature passed a bill providing funds for “Dial-a-Ride” services to municipalities, however, there is a local match requirement.

It was also suggested that a study that could be presented to the State should be done in order to substantiate the rationale for why service should be implemented in the area, including suggested routes that would best meet user’s needs.

**George Sanchez**, a member of the Commission for Disabilities, concurred with Ms. Neupauer's comments and added that it costs approximately \$20 to take a taxi from the area to a bus line. He also commented that it is very dangerous to walk down Queen St. and recommended that a bus route operate on Route 10 and loop to Bradley Hospital.

The public hearing was adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

Public Hearing

City Hall

100 Broadway

Norwich, Connecticut

Tuesday, September 27, 2005 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Linda Blair  
Russell St. John  
Yvonne Lotezka

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Anthony Arcari

The hearing convened at 7:36 P.M.

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

**Bob Zarnetski** of the Norwich City Manager’s Office commented that Southeastern Connecticut is expanding dramatically in population and employment. The casinos (Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun) have replaced the defense industry as the largest employers in the region. Many people moving into the region come from urban areas and are used to relying on public transportation to get to employment centers. Zarnetski said Norwich is the largest residential center in the region. It was noted that SEAT does provide service to the casinos and that the casinos do provide employee shuttles. However, it has been expressed that later service by SEAT is needed.

Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun are the two largest casinos in the world. With them, the region can complete with Las Vegas for tourist dollars if we have an adequate public transportation system. The two casinos contribute \$400,000,000 per year to State coffers. Most of that revenue is generated by people who are within driving distance of the casinos, i.e., from New York, Springfield, Hartford, Boston, etc. However, the region can potentially compete with Las Vegas and Orlando as a national tourist destination.

Mr. Zarnetski stated that in order to build a regional tourist economy and become a major tourist destination, there needs to be a commitment to move people efficiently. Government should invest in the infrastructure to promote tourism in the region. It was pointed out that public transportation is less taxing on the highway infrastructure than relying solely on automobiles, but also that the two are complementary to one another.

Mr. Zarnetski informed the Commission that Congress has earmarked \$2.2 million for advanced technology Bus Rapid Transit for the region. The State or SEAT will be the grant recipient and the parties involved will be meeting with Department of Transportation officials on Thursday to discuss the earmark. It is envisioned that the BRT would connect Bradley Airport, the convention center (Hartford), Mystic and the casinos. He noted that Route 2 and the HOV lanes are very conducive to the operation of a BRT system and some of the advanced technology aspects of the project might entail signal prioritization, bus terminal information systems, and hybrid engines/ alternative fuel technologies. Ultimately, the envisioned BRT system will carry a price tag of \$28-48 million.

There was discussion regarding whether T. F. Greene Airport would be included in the proposed BRT system, since it is closer to the region than Bradley Field. Mr. Zarnetski said that it was important to focus on improving Connecticut's economy first by servicing Bradley airport, then possibly including Greene at a later date.

Mr. Zarnetski felt that the region needs an improved multimodal system, including Amtrak and MTA, with better connectivity with bus systems to build a transportation system to support a diversified tourist economy. Better marketing is needed to inform the public that they can get to the area by rail and bus service. Finally, the system needs to be made more user friendly.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.



**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

Public Hearing

City Hall

338 Main Street

Winsted, Connecticut

Tuesday, October 18, 2005 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Russell St. John  
Linda M. Blair  
Yvonne A. Loteczka

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Anthony Arcari

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator Frederick Riese opened the hearing with a brief description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

**Mr. Mark J. Myers**, Director of Collegiate Education for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, spoke on the behalf of the President of the Northwestern Connecticut Community College (NCCC). He stated that students have limited access to public transportation during days and there is none in the evenings. This lack of public transportation to and from Winsted limits opportunities for students that wish to attend NCCC. The college also offers the Collegiate Education for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program (CEDHH) which is the only program of its kind in the state. Currently, 35 students are enrolled in this program, some of whom drive from as far away as Wallingford. The lack of transportation to the area also limits opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing students from the Greater Hartford and Bridgeport areas who wish to attend the school. A letter from the President of NCCC, Barbara Douglass, is attached. When asked if students live on campus he stated some students do live in off-campus housing.

**Carol Deane** of the North Western Connecticut Transit District commented that, other than Peter Pan, there is no public transportation in the evenings and that there is nothing out of the area on the weekends. This is due to funding. Ms. Deane mentioned that all 16 member towns make a contribution to the Transit District. The Area Agency on Aging, which is one of their funding sources, conducted a public survey in the past as to what NWCTD should do if it had additional funding. The response is typically provide weekend and evening service.

Ms. Deane described the services that NWCTD provides such as the deviated fixed-route service (Candystriper) and paratransit service that goes to the UCONN Health Center in Farmington on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. She also noted that a study should be finished in January regarding building a transit facility. Phase 1 will be an initial environmental and site analysis.

She also noted that the Tuesday shopping run from Canaan, Salisbury and Cornwall to Great Barrington is no longer operated due to objections from Great Barrington.

**Mark Leathers**, owner and operator of Torrington City Cab presented letters he had written to the Department of Transportation and the State Legislature regarding amending Sec 13b-96-16.

Mr. Leathers noted that under current regulations he can only provide trips that originate in or end in Torrington. He said there is a need for service in adjoining towns, however in order to add the adjoining towns to his service area, he would have to base a full time cab in those towns.

He stated these towns can not support a full time cab but he would be able to provide service with just one cab based in Torrington. There was discussion regarding how many hours he is allowed to operate in a shift.

Mr. Leathers also noted that CTTransit could possibly connect with NWCTD, perhaps at the junction of US Routes 44 and 202 in Canton, in order to connect the Hartford and Winsted/ Torrington areas.

**John Nason** of Kelley Transit informed the Commission that Kelley Transit provides Commuter Express service, under contract with the Department of Transportation, to Hartford. He added there should be a connection between the Commuter Express service, possibly the bus returning from Hartford in the morning and NWCTD. He also pointed out that there is a demand for public transportation from the area to Waterbury. When asked what advertising Kelley does for the commuter Express service, he noted that Kelley relies on the Department to do most of the marketing of the service.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:41 PM.

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

Public Hearing

Police Department – Community Room

One Monroe St.

Norwalk, Connecticut

Tuesday, October 26, 2005 – 7:30 P.M.

CPTC VOTING MEMBERS

Thomas Cheeseman  
Russel St. John  
Linda M. Blair  
Richard Carpenter  
William Kelaher  
Yvonne A. Loteczka

CPTC EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Anthony Arcari

INTRODUCTION:

Hearing moderator, Richard Carpenter, opened the hearing with a description of the CPTC and its mandate and noted the attendance of the CPTC members and staff.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

**Mr. Louis Shulman**, spoke on the behalf of the Norwalk Transit District (NTD) and provided a copy of his testimony. Mr. Schulman noted the Transit District provides fixed route service in Norwalk and Westport and ADA service in the seven communities from Greenwich through Westport. NTD also coordinates with other Transit Districts to operate the Coastal Link service to Milford and Route7 Link service from Norwalk to Danbury, as well as shuttle services from the South Norwalk, Saugatuck, Greens Farms and Greenwich rail stations to employment sites.

Mr. Shulman noted that this year NTD will receive an 8% increase in fixed route funding and 10% increase in ADA services funding, the first increases in 10 years. Coastal Link and Route 7 link funds will not increase. He stated the funding is segregated for the various services and can not be shifted between services. He stressed the need for State funding that is adequate to meet existing needs and the flexibility to move funds between accounts to the services where they are most needed. He also mentioned that NTD will lose Federal assistance for ADA service next year. When asked why, he informed the Commission this was due to regions over 200,000 population not qualifying for FTA operating funds.

**Mr. Gordon Tully** spoke on behalf of the Eastern Norwalk Neighborhood Association and provided a copy of the topics presented. These included continuing sound barriers along I-95 near exit 16, increasing the frequency of train service at the East Norwalk Station, keeping Route 1 narrow approaching Main Street, make roundabouts a priority in State roadway planning, involve local citizens and taxpayers in the design process, adopt roadway designs that discourage speeding, and

stop the use of Route 136 as a truck route bypass around Exit 16. There were questions and discussion regarding the difference between roundabouts and rotaries. Mr. Tully stated that roundabouts are smaller than rotaries partly so vehicles can not travel at a higher speed around them. He noted that the use of roundabouts substantially lowers fatalities at intersections, increases the level of service, and that roundabouts are less expensive in the long run than intersections. Also, New York has recently adopted a policy of considering roundabouts as the first option for any new signalized intersection. There has to be a reason for not putting in a roundabout before a signalized intersection can be installed. He encouraged the State to be proactive in this regard. It was mentioned to Mr. Tully, as far as Exit 16, that trucks may be exiting there for local destinations and not as a bypass.

**Ms. Sue Prosi** spoke on behalf of the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA). She presented a letter regarding the lack of benches at the South Norwalk rail station and commented on the importance of amenities as part of a transportation system. Ms. Prosi stated in regard to the \$250,000 South Norwalk intermodal facility study that the first phase will be a feasibility study on how to function better as an intermodal facility and encourage transit-oriented development. The South Norwalk Station currently supports airport limos, six NTD shuttles, four separate bus routes, and “kiss and ride” drop-offs, in addition to Metro-North service. The second phase will develop specifications or an RFP for design.

Other topics discussed by Ms. Prosi were an operational analysis on what can be done now to improve the Danbury Branch schedule and service to support increased intrastate and reverse commuter work trips, programs to encourage use of fixed-route systems, timed pedestrian crossings, a more comprehensive program for the funding and enforcement of truck safety laws and regulations, energy efficiency in regard to public transportation infrastructure, the Nu Ride incentive-based ridesharing program, and carsharing options.

Specific to the Danbury Branch, Prosi noted that we are now in the fourth year of the Danbury Branch Electrification Study looking at options for service improvements and even extension of the service to New Milford. Improved service on the Branch is needed to serve Wilton, Ridgefield, and the Merritt 7 complex and also to get commuters to Stamford and Greenwich. She noted that Merritt 7 is the largest Class A office development in New England and has led to much growth in Norwalk. Improved schedules to serve intrastate needs are more important than centralized traffic control or double tracking the branch. With 15 years of Route 7 projects about to begin, upgrades to the Branch service are more important than ever to avoid the traffic impacts of construction on Route 7.

When asked if the new pedestrian crossing signals had auditory cues as well, she informed the Commission they do in Norwalk and Greenwich. When asked about Dial-a-Ride in the area besides ADA service, it was noted that it depended on the community. It is operated in Norwalk by the Senior Center and Stamford contracts with NTD. It was also stated that signage should be improved in the area.

The hearing was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

**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 co-chairpersons 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 and the Governor (1) a list of public transportation projects, which, if undertaken by the state, would further the policy set forth in section 13b-32, including projects specifically for elderly and disabled users; (2) recommendations for improvements to existing public

transportation service and projects, incorporating transportation service and projects relative to the needs of elderly and disabled persons and including proposals for legislation and regulations; (3) recommendations for disincentives to free parking, including urban and suburban employment centers; (4) off-peak transit services; and (5) the establishment of urban center loop shuttles. The commissioner shall notify members of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to transportation, on or before January first, annually, and all members of the General Assembly on or before February 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.”