

5. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, ACTING THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OR OTHER APPROPRIATE AGENCIES, ENCOURAGE THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS TO RETURN THE DOWNTOWN BUS STOPS TO THEIR PRE-JUNE 28, 1998 LOCATIONS.

On June 28, 1998, the City of New Haven moved most of the Connecticut Transit bus stops that were located on and around the New Haven Green. The move was a condition of a development agreement between the City and developer David Cordish. The relocation of the bus stops was extremely unpopular with Connecticut Transit riders and was not supported by Connecticut Transit.

The bus stops on the New Haven Green serve not only as trip origins and destinations, but serve the important function as transfer points to other routes on New Haven's pulse system. Indeed, as many as 50% of all the riders using stops at the Green are making transfers there. Since the bus stops have been moved, many riders have reported having a much more difficult time finding and getting to their buses. Not only do they have to walk farther to reach their buses, but for many transfers, they now have less time to do it in. As a result, some riders are missing their respective connecting buses. This new configuration is particularly hard on senior citizens and people with disabilities, many of whom have reported being late for, and even foregoing, medical attention because of the new bus stop configuration. The winter problems of snow, cold and ice certainly exacerbate these problems. Also, bus drivers are more stressed because of complaints from riders disgruntled over the bus stop movement and the scheduling problems attendant to the new configuration.

The Commission has heard from many New Haven area transit riders on this issue at our public hearings in both 1998 and 1999, and at several of our monthly meetings. There was much concern about, and opposition to, the relocation of the bus stops even before they were actually moved. Many of the early concerns expressed have proven accurate and many are finding the new configuration very difficult, or in some cases impossible, to accommodate their trip needs.

As the State has considerable financial leverage in the operating of the New Haven Division bus service, the Commission urges that this influence be brought to bear to restore the bus stops to their former locations. Given the substantial investment the State makes in supporting the Connecticut Transit New Haven Division service, any changes which so clearly and negatively affect efficiency of the operation and its utility to its users should not be accepted.