

10. THE COMMISSION SUPPORTS THE REPROGRAMMING OF \$1,000,000 OF FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION FUNDS FOR AN UPDATE OF THE ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS DONE ON THE GRIFFIN LINE TO NOW EVALUATE A DEDICATED BUSWAY ON THIS CORRIDOR BETWEEN HARTFORD AND BLOOMFIELD, WITH EVENTUAL EXTENSION TO BRADLEY FIELD. THIS FUNDING HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN PROGRAMMED FOR PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING WORK ON THE PREVIOUSLY-PROPOSED LIGHT RAIL LINE. THE COMMISSION COMMENDS CONNDOT FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THIS EFFORT BY PROVIDING THE LOCAL MATCHING FUNDS.

The Commission has long been supportive of the concept of a dedicated fixed guideway transit system in the Griffin corridor and supported the concept of a light rail system between Hartford and Bradley Field in its Annual Reports from 1988 to 1997. Due to ridership and cost concerns, that proposal did not materialize. The Commission is pleased to note continued support for a fixed guideway transit system in this corridor as evidenced by the current busway proposal initiated by the Capitol Region Council of Governments. We strongly support CRCOG's initiative and look forward to completion of the study and to public review of its findings.

The recent restoration of rail service by the Central New England Railroad over the most of this line may impact the feasibility of a busway in some areas where available State-owned right-of-way width is constrained, especially toward the southern end in Hartford. This is one issue which will be considered in the alternatives analysis update. The Commission recommends that self-propelled rail cars or rail buses, as commonly used in Great Britain, be evaluated as one potential solution should the corridor be unable to support both a busway and active rail line. These self-propelled cars would not require electrification and would thus represent a considerable cost savings over previously evaluated light rail options. The very limited freight usage on the line provides for a wide range of scheduling options which can accommodate both the passenger and freight services. We believe this option should be evaluated in the alternatives analysis to see if it offers any benefits relative to other options.