

8. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS AN EXPANDED MARKETING EFFORT TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE STATE-CONTRACTED DATTCO COMMUTER BUS SERVICE BETWEEN HARTFORD AND NEW HAVEN. FEW PEOPLE, EVEN WITHIN THE TRANSIT USING COMMUNITY, ARE AWARE OF THIS SERVICE, ESPECIALLY IN THE NEW HAVEN AREA. RIDEWORKS AND RIDESHARE WOULD BE APPROPRIATE PARTNERS IN PUBLICIZING THE AVAILABILITY OF THIS VALUABLE SERVICE.

For more than two years, ConnDOT has provided a commuter bus service between New Haven and Hartford. While this service provides a sorely needed connection between two of Connecticut's largest cities, it is drastically under-utilized. It also appears that the large majority of the ridership is coming from or returning to Hartford, with relatively little ridership originating in the New Haven area. This seems to indicate that most promotion of this service to date has occurred on the Hartford end. Very few New Haven area residents are aware of the service, and even in the Hartford area, this service is far from common knowledge. Therefore, an increased amount of publicity about this service needs to be undertaken. An opportunity is being missed when such a needed service is being provided and so few of the potential beneficiaries are aware of its existence.

Also, while this bus service is designed primarily to be a commuter service and most of its ridership use is for this purpose, others use it for transportation to and from medical appointments, meetings, shopping and other general types of usage. This component of the usage could be enhanced if there were a later morning run from New Haven to Hartford, perhaps leaving New Haven around 9:00 AM. This would also provide a link between this bus service and Metro-North rail service. Such connection does not now exist since the first train coming into New Haven arrives at 7:48 AM, well after the northbound bus departs at 7:20 AM.