

## **AGENDA**

### CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

**November 1, 2007 - 1:30 PM**

ConnDOT Headquarters, Conference Room A  
Berlin Turnpike, Newington

1. Approval of the October 4, 2007 meeting minutes
2. Featured speaker: Karen Burneska, Transit Coordinator, Transit for Connecticut Coalition
3. Comments from the public
4. Comments from operating entities
5. Chairman's report
6. Old business
7. New business

**Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**  
Minutes of October 4, 2007

Fourth Floor Conference Room  
Union Station, New Haven

**Attendance: Members:** Tom Cheeseman, Russ St. John, Linda Blair, Terry Hall, Rich Sunderhauf, Rick Schreiner, Dorothy Adamson, Bill Kelaher, Yvonne Loteczka, Chris Adams, John Zelinsky. **Ex-officio members:** Susan Simmat, Fred Riese. **ConnDOT staff:** Dennis King. **Guests:** Gloria Mills, Brooke Hoberman, Alan Sylvestre.

Chairman Cheeseman opened the meeting at 1:31 PM. The minutes of the meeting of September 6 were approved as written.

**Featured Speaker**

Gloria Mills, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT), said that, for many years, available funding was barely enough to keep the existing transit services running, let alone address the public's demand for evening service, weekend service, new routes or other service expansions. Now we have finally started to turn the corner. In 2006, CACT did a survey asking transit providers what they would do if they had funding to get beyond meeting the basic needs. The results of this survey were used, among other purposes, to educate public officials running for office in 2006.

The 2006 survey ultimately led to the formation of the Transit for Connecticut Coalition, a group of thirty organizations with a common interest in transit. Mills said that the formation of the Coalition is based on the understanding that "your friends will help you work on common agenda items." The Transit for Connecticut Coalition decided to undertake a more complete analysis of statewide transit needs, which has produced an investment program calling for an additional \$63,600,000 annually in transit operating funds and a one-time capital investment of \$215,400,000 in statewide transit needs. The Coalition is currently conducting a series of five public forays to gather input on bus transit needs and to build support for the Coalition's funding proposal. The first forum was held in New Haven on October 2 and drew over 100 people. Mills felt that this hearing produced many good ideas from speakers about where improved bus service could take their communities. Additional public forays will be held in Hartford (October 23), Bridgeport (November 2), Waterbury (November 13), and Norwich (November 15).

Mills said the FY 2008 budget provides \$110,000,000 for bus operations, \$20,500,000 for ADA transit, and \$570,000 for non-ADA Dial-a-Ride. For FY 2009, the figures are \$116,800,000 for bus operations, \$22,700,000 for ADA transit, and \$570,000 for non-ADA Dial-a-Ride. In addition, the 2009 budget contains \$3,900,000 for the State Matching Grant Program for paratransit to complete the State commitment of \$5,000,000 per year.

Governor Rell had vetoed the proposed bonding package approved by the General Assembly. That package contains \$20,000,000 in FY'08 for Section 18 funding, \$14,000,000 for the Windham and Torrington bus facilities, \$5,000,000 for the Clean Diesel retrofit program, and up to \$1,000,000 to municipalities for new buses for elderly and disabled transportation for towns participating in the State Matching Grant Program.

Mills said Connecticut is behind other states in the use of information technology in transit, in the provision and condition of ancillary facilities, and in the use of newer technology and cleaner vehicles. She also mentioned a 2005 study by the Texas Transportation Institute that found Connecticut loses \$550,000,000 annually in time and productivity due to congestion. She said the figure would rise by \$20,800,000 if there were no transit services in the state.

### **Comments from the Public**

Brooke Hoberman, the Employment Coordinator at Rideworks, mentioned that ConnDOT wants to expand the free trial ride program for buses to the New Haven and Stamford Divisions of Connecticut Transit. Under this program, which has already been implemented in the Hartford Division of Connecticut Transit, potential new riders can receive free 10-ride bus passes for use on their work commute trips. Rick Schreiner of Housatonic Area Regional Transit was interested if this plan might also be rolled out to the transit districts.

### **Reports from Operating Entities**

Rich Sunderhauf reported that Congress has passed and President Bush has signed into law a broad bill on bus security which will provide capital and operating funding for security enhancements and driver training.

Rick Schreiner distributed the new schedules for the Metro-North Harlem Line shuttles. This marks the first time Metro-North has printed the schedules for the HART-run shuttles.

Fred Riese reported that ConnDOT would be holding two scoping meetings on its plans to expand Interstate 95 from Old Lyme to the Thames River from two lanes to three lanes in each direction. An interagency scoping meeting will be held October 11 and a public scoping meeting at the Waterford Town Hall will be held October 18.

Bill Kelaher anticipates that a new contract with Metro-North will be ratified by the union. That contract will run through 2010. However, union workers on Amtrak have been without a contract for 8 years now. They have applied to the Federal Mediation Board to be released from mediation so they can start the timetable toward a strike.

### **Chairman's Report**

Tom Cheeseman will attend the Federal Transit Administration seminar in Boston October 15 and 16 on strategies to improve transit ridership. He expects to hear many new ideas out of this seminar.

Tom released the 2008 Commission meeting schedule. He also reported that the Bristol public hearing went well with some excellent testimony presented.

### **Old Business**

Terry Hall gave an update on the Amtrak Thames River Bridge replacement project. Beginning April 22, 2008, the navigation channel will be closed for 10 days to put the new moveable span in place. The new east tower for the lift span is in place now. The steel for the new west tower is on site.

### **New Business**

Linda Blair is relocating to Boston at the end of this month. [Note: Linda has served on the Commission since 1998.]

Fred Riese reminded Commission members of the upcoming public hearings in Bridgeport and Torrington on October 10 and 25, respectively, and the annual work session on November 15 at New Haven Union Station at 5:00 PM.

Brooke Hoberman distributed the new Shore Line East schedules, noting new reverse commute train service with stops in Guilford. A late afternoon train departing New Haven at 5:37 pm has also been added to the schedule. Brooke also mentioned that the Elm City Cycling Club was sponsoring a Bike to Work Day on Friday, October 12. Lastly, she handed out brochures for NuRide, a program which provides merchandise incentives to promote ridesharing. Commission member Susan Simmat reported that she participates in the NuRide program.

Al Sylvestre from the Department of Labor introduced himself. He has worked with the Capitol Region Jobs Access Task Force and the Board of Education and Services for the Blind. He also attended the New Haven Transit for Connecticut Coalition Forum. He finds this to be an exciting time for transit and is interested in finding out about the work of the Commission.

Linda Blair also attended the Transit for Connecticut Coalition Forum and gave a brief report on it. As in the past, she found the New Haven Hall of Records to have horrible acoustics which made it difficult to hear the speakers. Lou Schulman of the Norwalk Transit District opened the forum. Among the comments, the City of New Haven wants to see service improvements including shorter headways, new routes, and better transit marketing. Other speakers called for expanded service on Sundays, better relations between drivers and passengers, and major improvements to the bus stops, many of which are not useable for many bus riders. There is a need to look at traffic and parking patterns at the hubs, including the problem of illegal parking. Speakers called for better security at bus stops and on the buses. The bus systems should employ GIS accessible via the Internet so users can see where their bus is or if it has already gone by. There is also a need for a uniform system of bus stop markings and for sensitivity training for bus drivers. Lastly, there is a need for wheelchair accessible taxicabs.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 2:55 PM.