

AGENDA

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, October 7, 2004 - 1:30 PM

Union Station, Conference Room A

New Haven, Connecticut

1. Approval of the September 2, 2004 meeting minutes
2. Featured speaker: Harry P. Harris, Bureau Chief, Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT)
3. Comments from the public
4. Report from operating entities
5. Chairman's report
6. Old business
7. New business

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CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE

THURSDAY, September 2, 2004

Legislative Office Building, Hearing Room 1B

Hartford, Connecticut

VOTING MEMBERS

Dorothy Adamson
Linda Blair
Tom Cheeseman
N. Terry Hall
Yvonne Loteczka
Richard Schreiner
Russell St. John
Richard Sunderhauf

GUESTS

Stephen Troster
Anthony Savino
Brooke Hoberman

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Cindy Gollareny
H. James Boice
J. Mark Foran
Peter Richter

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Minutes

September 2, 2004

(Meeting convened at 1:31 p.m.)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 5, 2004

Accepted as written.

FEATURED SPEAKER – KEY POINTS

H. JAMES BOICE, Bureau Chief, Office of Policy and Planning, Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) provided an update on the following eleven (11) initiatives the Department is currently involved with:

1. Danbury Branch Electrification Feasibility Study

- Purpose and Needs Report, Existing Conditions Report completed.
- The Draft Task 2 Engineering Alternatives and Task 4 Evaluate the Impacts of Electrification reports are under review.
- CDOT is working on Ridership Forecasting for Engineering Alternatives.
- Next elements will be the Final Phase 1 Report with public outreach meetings this fall.
- Phase 2 comparison of Alternatives proceeding in spring 2005.
- Current content available at <http://www.danburybranchstudy.com>

2. Connecticut Rail Station Governance Study Draft

- Phase 1 Review of Engineering, Evaluation of Governance Methods is complete.
- The Draft Phase 2 Report, which explores a range of options available from a practices & standards review and develops alternative governance methods is being reviewed by CDOT. Final Report will be prepared and presented at public informational meetings this fall.
- Findings have identified inconsistencies in administration of station and parking facilities, inconsistencies in responsibilities
- Current content available at <<http://www.ctrailgovernance.com>>.

3. Griffin Busway Feasibility Study

- Study completed. Waiting for final report to be delivered.
- Study recommended construction of a busway from Union Station to the Griffin office center. Because the busway would not meet FTA cost-effectiveness it has been decided to defer further action.

- CRCOG is interested in moving ahead on short-term transit improvements, schedules, shelter, routes, and will monitor NB-H busway to see if the ridership performance would indicate the need to re-address a Griffin Busway.
- Executive Summary of Final Report is available on the CRCOG web site <<http://www.crcog.org/transportation2.htm#Rapid%20Transit%20Planning>>.

4. New Haven, Hartford, Springfield Commuter Rail Implementation Plan

- The Alternatives Technical Memorandum has been completed - it contains the draft recommended action for initial commuter rail service.
- The report has been posted on study web site <<http://www.nhhsrail.com>>.
- The Draft Final Report will be developed prior to holding public information meetings along the study corridor.
- This will be followed by the development of the Final Recommendation Plan and Implementation Strategy and the publication of the Final Report by early 2005.

5. Intermodal Connections Study Southeast

- This study is being administered by Southeast Connecticut COG.
- Draft Task 2, Existing Transportation services and Task 3, Visitor Market Analysis reports have been prepared.
- Work continues on Task 6, Cost and Financing; Task 7, Impact Assessment and Task 8, Recommended Alternative and Implementation Phasing.
- Steering Committee meeting anticipated in September.
- Study is to be completed by the end of this year.
- *No web site.*

6. Hartford East Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study

- This feasibility study is in draft final report form and available on the web at <www.ctbusway.com>.
- The study considered building on the existing HOV lane network along I-84 and I-384 to phase in Bus Rapid Transit service, beginning with bi-direction access/egress and high-visibility stations at Hartford Turnpike and Buckland.
- From that initial \$60 million phase, access and stations can be expanded further, including future expansion onto adjacent rail corridors.
- The report also includes analysis of direct HOV lane access at the planned Simmons Road BRT station in the vicinity of Rentschler Field.
- The Steering Committee is scheduled to meet on the draft final report on September 7th.
- Plan to bring this to Public Meeting by November 2004.

7. New Haven Line Fleet Replacement Strategy

- \$1.02 billion initiative which includes 342 new EMU rail cars and new maintenance facilities in New Haven yard.
- A fleet replacement plan has been submitted to the Governor for consideration.
- A financing plan is being developed for consideration by the State Legislature in next year's session.

8. South Central Regional Transit Development Strategy

- Study being managed by SCRCOG within their UPWP for spring 2005 completion. Consultant has conducted existing condition assessment in evaluating transit in the region.
- Draft of options for potential services in the region (Task 2.1) is currently being developed.

9. Stratford Rail Station Parking Garage

- Department is now issuing an RFP for consultant design and environmental study for the 609-space parking structure over the existing surface lot at the Stratford rail station on the New Haven Line.
- Planned to net out 450 additional spaces, with retail, and is projected to cost approximately \$12m, from a combination of \$9.0m TSB Bond and the balance in CMAQ funds.

10. Darien/Norwalk Parking Study

- The Draft Alternatives and Improvements Technical Memorandum was due in August 2004.
- Advisory Committee to meet to discuss the Draft Alternatives and Improvements Technical Memorandum.

11. West Haven / Orange

- Environmental documentation is being prepared on site investigations for the SCRCOG-endorsed West Haven site, and the alternate Orange site for a train station with parking for 1000 cars.
- Environmental process and approvals completion expected late 2005; construction 2007-2009, at an estimated cost of \$35.0 million.

Mr. Boice also distributed the final Long-Range Transportation Plan for the State of Connecticut 2004-2030 (2004 LRP). The plan is available at www.ct.gov/dot

Mr. Boice also reported that twenty (20) 10-year-old rail commuter cars are being purchased from Virginia Rail Express with \$35 million in funding from the TSB and \$25 million in state bonding. The purchase agreement is close to final signing. Initially, these cars will be put into service on Shore Line East, and the Shore Line East Bombardier coaches will be shifted to New Haven Line service. Eventually, these new coaches will be used with dual-power locomotives on the New Haven Line.

In response to other questions, Mr. Boice mentioned that design work on the New Britain Busway is now at the 30% stage. He is still hopeful that this project will receive 50% funding from FTA. He also reported that the city of New Haven will build and operate the new parking garage to be built at Union Station.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Brooke Hoberman of Rideworks distributed a brochure outlining the I-95 New Haven Harbor Crossing Corridor Improvement Program. The program overview is available at www.i95newhaven.com or call 860-659-0444 ext. 23.

REPORT FROM OPERATING ENTITIES

Richard Sunderhauf reported that the negotiations with CTTranist and the Amalgamated Transit Union locals in Hartford, New Haven and Stamford are ongoing. They will continue to work under the provisions of the recently expired contract until at least September 30, 2004. A negotiation session is scheduled for September 28, 2004.

Fred Riese reported that the environmental impact statement has been released for the state portion of the new Black Rock railroad station in Fairfield.

Richard Schreiner distributed a new schedule for HART 7 – New Milford and HART 4 – Brookfield, effective September 2004. Mr. Schreiner also reported that HART had a record year of almost 900,000 trips, an increase of 3.6% from the prior year. Ridership on the Route 7 Link is up 7% to 39,000. Ridership on fixed route services, Job Access program services, Paratransit, and the Harlem Line shuttles were all up.

Linda Blair reported that five (5) parking meters have been removed at the bus stop area on Chapel Street in New Haven.

Russell St. John reported that the track upgrades on the Providence and Worcester tracks in Middletown are complete, and the fender replacement work on the Connecticut River Swing Bridge is progressing.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Cheeseman reported that the Job Access program ridership between Middletown and Meriden experienced a growth rate of 29% for the month of June and 32% for the month of July. An additional trip may be added each day to meet the demand. Closure of the Meriden DSS office, necessitating clients traveling to Middletown, has been one factor driving the increase.

Mr. Cheeseman referenced an article based on comments from R. Nelson Griebel, Chairman, Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) pertaining to congestion mitigation. Mr. Griebel recommends increasing the gasoline tax by 3 cents a gallon, per year, for 5 years to generate approximately \$2 billion in 10 years, as well as the reinstatement of tolls.

A second article was referenced by Mr. Cheeseman, in which Governor Rell has asked the TSB to conduct a survey to determine what CT residents would be willing to pay to reduce gridlock.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Fred Riese announced that the four fall public hearings have been scheduled as follows: Tuesday, September 14, in North Canaan, Fred Riese moderator; Tuesday, September 21, in Old Saybrook, Russell St. John moderator; Tuesday, September 28, in Middletown, Tom Cheeseman moderator; and Wednesday, October 20, in Waterbury, Fred Riese moderator. The hearings will begin at 7:30 p.m.

(Meeting adjourned at 2:45 P.M.)