

Date: 12/6/06

Connecticut Association for Community Transportation

# Transportation in Connecticut: Don't Miss the Bus



Connecticut Investment In Public Transportation Is Inadequate

Public transportation is an essential part of Connecticut’s economic strength and quality of life providing residents and visitors with affordable mobility to work, education, health care, marketplaces, entertainment, recreation, social and civic gatherings, and an array of community services. It is critical to the successful implementation of Connecticut policies governing economic and community development, land use, environmental protection, housing, services for persons with disabilities and senior citizens, and access to jobs, health care and education.

Connecticut residents and visitors used bus transit for over 35 million trips in SFY 2005, thereby reducing congestion, stress, and delay suffered by other road travelers. In that same year, the Urban Mobility Report of the Texas Transportation Institute found that public transportation in three Connecticut urban areas saved 1.6 million hours of delay for other road travelers in 2003, at a cost savings to them of \$ 26.8 million.

Despite the benefits of Connecticut’s public transportation, the state investment in bus operations and capital remains insufficient to maintain current services, much less to make service improvements, or add service capacity to better serve customers or attract new ones. Connecticut needs an additional investment of \$120.6 million in one-time capital spending, and about \$30 million additional in the annual operating budget for its public bus systems. See table below.

INVESTMENT	OPERATIONS	CAPITAL
Current Bus Services -Unmet Needs	\$10, 319, 885	\$74, 895, 250
Expanded Bus Services	\$9, 591, 516	\$29, 793, 000
New Interregional-Commuter Express Services	\$10, 046, 085	\$15, 900, 000
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$29, 957, 486	\$120, 588, 250

Per Capita Transit Service Is Lagging In Connecticut Urban Areas

According to figures developed by Urbitran Associates, the consulting firm that performed the 2000 Connecticut DOT Statewide Bus System Study, the overall average hours of service of 11 Connecticut urban bus systems’ fixed routes is less than half the hours of service needed to maximize bus ridership. Increasing transit ridership should be a top priority in Connecticut.

Moving more people by public transportation to more destinations affordably, safely, and effectively has great savings and dividends for the State of Connecticut and its residents in economic growth, health, land use, congestion mitigation, and quality of life. The key to increasing transit ridership is adequate state investment that maintains current services, and expands and improves bus service statewide.

What Additional Investments In Bus Transit Are Needed?

**Current Bus Services - Unmet Needs**

This year, almost \$ 1.6 million in federal funds that three bus systems are eligible to receive for capital costs cannot be accessed because of the lack of state funds for the required 20% match. Because the state investment has failed to keep pace with service costs, there are many unmet service needs. Current service needs include:

- restoring service to existing routes where inadequate funding necessitated cuts in service;

- adding service on some routes to alleviate bus overcrowding and improve on-time performance;
- expanding the frequency and hours of service to better serve current riders and make transit attractive and convenient to potential riders; and,
- capital investments required to replace aged vehicles, upgrade communications and fare collection equipment, acquire facilities and provide minimal passenger amenities such as bike racks on buses and shelters at bus stops.

***Investment needed today: \$ 10.3 million in operations and \$74.9 million in capital***

### **Expanded Bus Services**

The 2000 Connecticut DOT Statewide Bus System Study recommended investing in new and improved service to close gaps in the statewide bus system and extend some existing routes to meet growing demand. That investment has never been made.

Some examples of expanded bus service to be funded include:

- new cross-town routes in Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven;
- expanded hours of service on the Coastal Link in Fairfield County;
- new express routes connecting Metro North with major employment centers in Trumbull, Shelton and Monroe; and,
- increase service frequency on the #7 route in Norwich to meet growth demand.

***Investment needed today: \$ 9.6 million in operations and \$29.8 million in capital***

### **Commuter Express/Interregional Bus**

Interregional bus service and the State network of commuter express service need to be expanded to address commuter needs and remove more cars from Connecticut's highways, contribute to the local economy and reduce the number of parking spaces needed at travelers destinations. The successful inter-regional Coastal Link service operating between Milford and Norwalk needs to be replicated in other high-density corridors where inter-regional service will make public transportation more convenient and attractive to customers.

Examples of new commuter express and inter-regional bus service needed include:

- express buses along Route 1 coastal corridor;
- extended Coastal Link service to New Haven and Stamford;
- new service between Bridgeport and Danbury;
- New Haven-Orange-Derby Express;
- Willimantic to Danielson service; and,
- express bus from Plainfield area to Norwich.

***Investment needed today: \$10.05 million in operations and \$ 15.9 million in capital***

### **The Time To Act Is Now**

Public transportation is an essential part of Connecticut's economic strength and the state cannot afford to allow the continued decline of its bus systems. Connecticut leadership must make a significant investment in public transportation to improve, expand and continue vital bus services to increase ridership, support transit oriented development, and provide affordable, attractive and convenient alternatives to the single occupant vehicle. The time to act is now! Leaders in our neighboring states have already increased transit funding to improve and continue vital bus services in their states.

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