



Connecting People and Communities Through Transportation

Prepared by the
Connecticut Association
For Community
Transportation (CACT)
February 20, 2013



“Investing in transit—the infrastructure that we depend on to go to work, school, the grocery store, and the doctor’s office—is a win-win situation for everyone.”

Ray LaHood, Department of Transportation Secretary

Connecticut faces many challenges, but one of the most urgent is the need for increased and sustainable transportation funding. Buses, railroads, bridges and roads are the lifeblood of our economy, and failure to adequately maintain the infrastructure and operations will have significant consequences in the future.

Public transportation is critical to Connecticut’s economic growth and betterment. Public transportation provides vital means of job access which helps to support Connecticut’s businesses and taxpayers while simultaneously helping to mitigate the time, dollar and environmental costs of congestion and fuel. Surveys show that 60% of transit trips are for getting to and from work, with school and shopping trips the second and third most common reasons. Forty percent of riders transfer one or more times per trip. Additionally, nearly 60% of transit trips are “started when passengers reach their transit vehicle by walking to a station or street stop...and most transit riders walk to their destination after leaving a transit vehicle.”(APTA).

“Ridership is up in transit systems of all sizes and modes, and in all parts of North America. Over the past seven years public transportation ridership has increased significantly faster than population growth and high vehicle-miles-traveled as better choices have become available, as population grows in areas where transit options are more available, and as general popularity for transit strengthens.”¹

Connecticut residents count on the state’s bus services for a variety of reasons. For the past ten months, Kathryn S. from Canterbury has been riding the Route 14 Colchester/Hartford Express to commute to and from work in Hartford. She’s delighted that it “prevents her from having to drive in Hartford traffic” and provides her time to do work while she’s commuting. Lynn S. from Storrs, a 20-year bus rider, also uses the Coventry/Hartford and West Farms/New Britain lines to commute to work. She likes the service because the hub and spokes framework means she can use public transportation to “commute to different places on different routes.” David F. from Farmington has used the Unionville Express for “decades” to commute to work. David prefers using the bus service because it means he uses less gas, his car isn’t subject to the wear and tear of rush hour traffic, and he likes the benefit to the environment. Like a number of riders, Rick A. from Norwich doesn’t use Connecticut’s bus service just for work, he also uses the bus to get to medical appointments and to travel to entertainment events. Similarly, Janet W. from Hartford has relied on the ADA paratransit service for as long as it has been in operation. She uses the service

“Like the old saying about the postman - but unlike almost any other mode of transportation - CT buses and trains in Stamford were nearly flawlessly on time. Come rain, sleet, snow or even summer sun, I could set my clock to - and trust the written schedule of - the promptness of Stamford’s public transportation. They always offered a clean, comfortable, economical ride, and the drivers and conductors knew their passengers' schedules so well that we were on a first name basis. Truly excellent service. My only question is: why don't more people use this great service? “

Sarah T.
Stamford bus and Metro
North railroad passenger

“When we put federal dollars toward our infrastructure, we create jobs today and strengthen our economic competitiveness for the long-term.”

Ray LaHood
*Department of
Transportation
Secretary*

for a number of health reasons such as for transportation to her doctor appointments, but importantly, she also uses the service to participate in her community (such as to get to religious services) and to maintain her quality of life.

In addition, it is expected that the growing aging population in the state will increase their reliance on public transportation in order to get to their jobs, medical appointments and to continue to be able to live independent lives. “By 2015, more than 15.5 million Americans 65 and older will live in communities where public transportation service is poor or non-existent... That number is expected to continue to grow rapidly as the baby boom generation “ages in place” in suburbs and exurbs with few mobility options for those who do not drive.”² Of the more than 3,574,097 Connecticut residents, 506,559 are 65 or older based on 2010 US census bureau statistics. There will be a 64% increase between 2006 and 2030 of residents 65 and older, while the working residents will increase by only 5%. Recently, Connecticut General Assembly Special Act 12-6 established a task force to study how the state can encourage “aging in place”.³ Their January 1, 2013 recommendations included the expansion and coordination of public and private transportation programs and to incentivize coordination and regionalization of the DOT matching grant program.

Despite the ready demand for public transportation services and the economic and environmental benefits of increased ridership on public transportation, 70 Connecticut towns still have either limited or no public bus transportation. The state’s investment in transportation continues to fall short of the funds needed to expand and meet the growing demands, although according to Michael Sanders, CONNDOT Transit and Ridesharing Administrator, “we continue to have pretty consistent support to maintain current levels of service.” The state’s investment is insufficient to close the 1.9 million hour gap in the amount of bus service provided per year compared to the need identified in the October 2012 revision to the 2007 Bus Transit Needs Analysis conducted by Urbitran Associates for Transit for Connecticut. The study recommended increasing the amount of bus service statewide by 64% to meet the needs of residents, employees, and employers. As Lyle Wray, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) notes, “It is essential that we provide sufficient fiscal capacity to support both a program of system preservation that maintains a state of good repair and a program of system enhancement that allows us to address strategic needs.”⁴

Indeed, the federal government believes public transportation is critical to the nation. After Hurricane Sandy’s profound and immediate effect on the transportation systems of the tri-state area, President Obama signed into law the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 which allocated \$10.9 billion dollars to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FTA Administrator Peter M. Rogoff said, “We are pledged to distribute the emergency relief funding responsibly and as quickly as possible to ensure that transit riders have the reliable service they need and deserve—and lay a strong foundation to mitigate the impact of such disasters in the future.”

To increase bus service statewide by 64%, Connecticut needs to invest an additional

\$77.7 million annually in operating expenses (assuming a farebox recovery of 20%) and make a total capital investment of \$234.7 million to purchase new equipment to operate new services and to purchase new and replacement equipment necessary to provide needed amenities and technology in the coming years.

Another Argument for Public Transportation: The Cost of Congestion

The Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University has been studying traffic congestion trends for years, and their data provides valuable statistics and insight that make a compelling case for public transportation.

Bill Eisele, a TTI researcher and report co-author says that the “unreliable travel” of traffic jams is costly for commuters and truck drivers moving goods.⁵ The report notes that in order to accurately calculate the cost of congestion, it is important to add a value for time and fuel costs (as exhibited in the chart below), and the report takes into account different fuel costs throughout the country by calculating an urban area’s actual average costs.

2012 Urban Mobility Report			
Urban Area	Hours of Delay	Excess Fuel Consumed (gallons)	Congestion Cost
Bridgeport-Stamford	26,503,000	12,226,000	\$566,000,000
Hartford	22,995,000	11,299,000	\$479,000,000
New Haven	14,560,000	6,966,000	\$304,000,000
TOTAL	64,058,000	30,491,000	\$1,349,000,000
Cost Components			
Value of Time \$/hr.	Commercial Cost \$/hr.	Gasoline \$/gal.	Diesel \$/gal.
16.79	86.81	3.59	3.90

(Why are some of the measure values different in this 2012 Urban Mobility Report compared to last year’s report? The calculation procedures used for the 2012 report are different than in the 2011 report. The new procedures were used to re-calculate all of the historical values such that the delay and fuel amount and cost trend information is correct. -Texas A&M Transportation Institute)

According to the Commuter Savings Calculator on the website of the American Public Transportation Association a commuter driving a medium car getting 20 miles/gallon on a 50 mile round trip, with gas at \$3.70/gallon and parking at \$10/day would spend \$5,265.60 to commute by car, and produce 2,425 pounds of CO₂ emissions per week, but would only spend \$648 commuting by public bus transportation (using a calculation of \$2.70 round trip) for a total savings of \$4,617.60. If the household used one less vehicle, you’d save \$10,193.60.⁶

Financing Connecticut’s Transportation

On January 29, 2013 the Office of Fiscal Analysis released their State Budget Projections General Fund Report for FY 2014-FY 2016 which states “we are currently projecting a \$138.6 million deficit for FY 13. In addition, we are projecting deficits of \$1.2 billion FY 14; \$1.1 billion in FY 15; and \$1.4 billion in FY 16.”



The revenue generated from the Motor Fuel Tax was budgeted at \$507,300,000 for FY 2012 but the realized revenue was \$492,794,802 or a decrease of \$14,505,198. (Office of State Comptroller, Schedule C-2, Fiscal Year Ended June 31, 2012)

The FY 2012 estimated expenditure for the Special Transportation Fund was \$1,262,500,000 and the realized revenue was \$1,232,920,590. Debt service is projected to be 37.4% of the expenditures, while public transportation (bus and rail operations) expenditures are projected at 22.9%. For FY 2013-14, the Special Transportation Fund revenues will come from: Federal Grants 1.0%, Licenses, Permits, Fees 10.4%, 36.9%; Motor Fuel Tax, Interest Income 0.3%, Motor Vehicle Receipts 17.5%, Oil Companies Tax 28.1%, and Sales Tax-DMV 5.8%.⁷

The 18.4 cent federal gasoline tax, which is mostly used to fund the Highway Trust Fund, has not seen an increase since 1993. Energy efficient cars and reduced gas receipts, have further suppressed the purchasing power of the federal gas tax.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation increased bus fares (CTTRANSIT buses, ADA paratransit services) in January 2012, and fares on the Shore Line East and New Haven Line rail services beginning January 1, 2012 were programmed to go up by approximately 4 percent a year for the next three years with an additional 1.25% surcharge for the next seven years.

Bus Operations in Connecticut

The Bus Operations line item in the Department of Transportation (CDOT) budget funds the CDOT share of the operating deficit for urban fixed route services, demand-respond services (non-ADA), rural transit services, commuter express and shuttle bus services. In FY 2012, the public chose these bus services for 41,316,643 trips, an increase of 2.8 million more trips than fiscal 2011.

Urban Public Bus Services provided 40,430,409 trips in FY 2012, an increase of 2,800,995 trips in FY 2012. The cost for these rides:

- Operating deficit was \$120,021,869
- CDOT share was \$120,021,859
- Local funding was \$3,515,957
- There was no Federal subsidy

Rural Transit Services provided 434,752 in FY 2012, an increase of 32,318 more trips than in FY 2011 through:

- Estuary Transit District
- Middletown Area Transit District
- Northeastern CT Transit District
- Northwestern CT Transit District
- Windham Region Transit District

The cost for the Rural Transit Service rides in FY 2012 was:

- Operating deficit was \$3,310,851
- CDOT share was \$1,119,002
- Local funding was \$723,151
- Federal subsidy was \$1,468,699

Transportation Employment Independence Program

The Transportation Employment Independence Program (TEIP) of the Department of Social Services (DSS) provides funding for a variety of programs and services managed by the five regional job access partnerships in the state. The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT) manages a portion of Connecticut's Job Access Program. This bus service connects people to job centers. In FY 2012 funding was:

- CDOT bus operations \$3,813,560
- FTA grants \$903,176
- TEIP (through DSS) \$3,255,147

Utilizing a variety of transit options, workers and job seekers were able to reach workplaces and daycare that was previously inaccessible due to limited service hours of pre-existing public transportation or geographical limitations. However, the TEIP funding for fiscal 2014 and beyond has been removed from the proposed budget. This reduction in TEIP funding can affect the public by the loss of evening service, Sunday morning or evening services and weekend service which impacts jobs and the economy.

ADA Para-Transit Program



The ADA mandates paratransit services be available to qualified persons on a reservation basis, during the same hours of operation and serving the same geographical area (within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile) of a fixed bus route service. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal civil rights law prohibits discrimination and therefore Connecticut residents who have a disability that impairs their ability to use the accessible and affordable fixed route public bus service for their mobility needs rely on the paratransit

services. The first appropriation to the Dial-A-Ride (DAR) line item was made in FY 1999 to offset the loss of federal operating funds (Sec. 5307) used by five public transit operators for demand responsive transportation services (ADA and Non-ADA) in the urban areas of Bridgeport, Milford, Greater New Haven, Middletown and Greater Hartford. In 2006, the General Assembly eliminated the DAR line item and created the ADA Para Transit Program and the Non-ADA Dial-Ride Program as two separate budget line items.⁸

The State appropriation to the ADA Para-Transit Program provides the majority of funding for the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandated services. In FY 2012, Connecticut residents used ADA Para-Transit services for 862,245 trips, a 5% increase from 2011.

- Operating deficit was \$30,480,077
- CDOT share was \$28,374,122
- Local funding was \$175,459
- There was no federal subsidy

“...Connecticut will need billions of dollars to complete maintenance and expansion of its highway and transit network....At the same time that Connecticut is facing massive demands for transportation dollars, the federal transportation spending environment is shifting dramatically...”

Transportation Funding in Connecticut: Where are We Now and What Is Next.
CFE, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, CT Construction Industries Association, RPA, CGCOG
December, 2012

CDOT funds 100% of the operational deficit of the public transit operators and private carriers who provide ADA mandated services to the fixed route services of state-owned CTTRANSIT. The operation deficit for ADA mandated services to transit district-owned fixed route service is not fully funded by CDOT. In FY 2012 three public transit operators utilized local subsidies for a total of \$175,459 in local funds to offset their deficit.

- Norwalk Transit District \$153,464 (FY 2011 \$212,946)
- Windham Transit District \$17,895 (FY 2011 \$16,534)
- Southeast Area Transit \$4,100 (FY 2011 \$8,854)

Non-ADA-Dial-A-Ride

This service provides demand responsive services to the elderly and persons with disabilities. In 2012, the Connecticut General Assembly appropriated \$576,361 to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT) Non-ADA-Dial-A-Ride budget line to fund CTDOT's share to Greater Hartford Transit District, Greater New Haven Transit District, Middletown Transit District, and Milford Transit District.

Within CTDOT's Urban transit budget line item \$1,344,732 funds Valley Transit District (\$663,031) and North East Transportation Co. (\$681,701) and along with a local subsidy of \$12,770.

State Matching Grants for Demand Responsive Transportation (CGS 13b-38bb)

In FY 2012, the state matching grant program to municipalities (*CSG 13b-38bb. Fund allocation is based on a formula in state statutes. 50% based on elderly population/50% on town square mileage*) continued to provide demand responsive transportation services for the elderly and people with disabilities in 136 Connecticut towns. Historically the allocation was \$5 million, in FY 2012 applicants requested \$4.2 million, and a total of \$3,157,825 in grants were funded. The state matching grants have allowed family members to keep their jobs with the knowledge that their loved ones are safely transported to their destinations. This has also provided access to needed medical care which keeps people healthier and living independently at a greater cost savings to the state. The transportation allows seniors and people with disabilities to shop and spend their money on goods and services, thereby helping the economy. And finally, this transportation provides a quality of life for seniors and people with disabilities, which otherwise wouldn't be possible.

There was a 25% reduction in funds for July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013 from the previous Biennium. Below are some examples of how service was affected:

- North East Transportation Co. Inc. had to cut 32 hours per week of service and could no longer offer any service on Monday or Saturday.
- Norwalk Transit District distributes the funds to three social service agencies that provided trips to the West Haven Veteran's Hospital and Care Giver's Nights Out forcing the agencies to reduce the amount of service they provide
- Transportation Association of Greenwich had extended service to clients in Stamford, but that service was cut. "We were only able to maintain our existing level of service without raising fares thanks to a grant from the local United Way," said Jim Boutelle, Executive Director.
- Estuary Transit District eliminated Saturday Dial-A-Ride services, Saturday dispatching was eliminated and Monday Dial-A-Ride was cut.
- The Town of Manchester received \$1,325 less in 2012 according to Ed Paquette, Supervisor: Senior, Adult & Family Services but "was a small enough cut that the Town was able to absorb it without additional service reductions" although the town is still operating at 1 hour less per week than they were in 2010."



Expansion of Service in 2012

While funding sources continue to fluctuate, some examples of upgrades & service changes:

Shore Line East Rail Service began using Twitter allowing travelers to receive updates and alerts about service delays and changes. www.shorelineeast.com



Greater Bridgeport Transit introduced their new bus designs on four buses in September. www.gogbt.com.

CTTransit purchased a PureCell® stationary fuel cell system for their headquarters on Leibert Road in Hartford which will provide 400 kilowatts of clean and reliable power to the 330,000 square foot facility. <http://www.cttransit.com/>

CTfastrak held a ceremonial groundbreaking in May 2012. This is Connecticut's first rapid transit system which will run from New Britain to Hartford with 11 stations. www.ctfastrak.com



CTTransit introduced a new, greener, articulated bus to operate in Hartford (similar buses already operate in New Haven and Stamford). CTTransit now operates 50 diesel-electric buses and five hydrogen fuel cell powered buses. <http://www.cttransit.com/>



Enfield Transit Office began operations of their town-wide Magic Carpet fixed route bus service in January 2013 by utilizing a New Freedom grant. <http://www.enfield-ct.gov>

Connecticut Department of Transportation received \$120.9 million from the FRA for New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) rail program. http://www.nhhsrail.com/info_center/

CT rides introduced a new Guaranteed Ride program for commuter shuttle riders in Norwalk, Westport and Greenwich. www.ridetag.org

CONNDOT introduced mobile apps for public transit and traffic information and updates. www.ct.gov/dot

2013 Proposed Budget Impact

Governor Malloy's Annual Budget on February 5, 2013 outlined a number of reductions in transportation funding:

- The elimination of DSS/TEIP funding. The consequences of this reduction are significant. For example, it would mean the elimination of funding for these following routes or from other routes in the transit system to offset the DSS cuts: CTTransit Hartford Routes: 54 Blue Hills Ave, 45 Berlin Turnpike Flyer, Sunday Morning Service, Saturday Night Service; CTTransit New Britain: Routes Stanley St (M-S Evenings), Corbin Ave/Plainville (M-S Evenings) to name a few.
- The Non ADA-Dial-A-Ride Program funding is eliminated (-\$576,361)
- Operating Capital Support for Rail operations is reduced by \$2 million each year
- ADA Paratransit fares on DOT operated routes will increase on Jan. 2014 thereby reducing the growth in the subsidy for ADA Paratransit in FY 2014 (-\$30,771) FY 2015 (-\$61,541)
- Bus fares will increase to \$1.50 in Jan. 2014, reducing the growth in the bus subsidy in FY 2014 (-\$4,059,280) and FY 2015 (-\$8,118,555)

The Future

A forum sponsored by various organizations, *“Transportation Funding in Connecticut: Where Are We Now and What Is Next”* was held on December 10, 2012 at the State Capitol and featured Jack Basso, Director of Program Finance and Management for AASHTO and DOT Commissioner Jim Redeker. Governor Malloy gave opening remarks and noted his commitment to transportation; that for too long Connecticut has ignored major issues in perhaps one of the worst economic times and “we went to sleep on transportation.” “We are at a crossroad in this nation relative to our transportation underinvestment. At the national level we face a major reduction in the highway and transit programs if new revenue is not provided,” said Jack. The Highway Trust Fund (funded through the gas tax) has effectively been bankrupt since 2008 and the federal government has had to use General Fund dollars at \$50 billion over that time to maintain the fund. Federal funding makes up the majority of transportation funding in Connecticut. “I have never seen so much uncertainty in my 40 years of working on transportation,” said Jack. Panelist Emil Frankel summed up the challenge by stating, “Federal funding for transportation is stagnating, if not declining, and states and localities are going to have to carry a heavier share of the investment burden in order to keep transportation facilities in a state of good repair and operating efficiently.”

The Partnership for Strong Communities hosted the *“Developing Connecticut’s Transit Future: Strategic Placemaking & Economic Opportunity”* on June 15, 2012. Keynote speaker Stanton Eckstut, FAIA Principal, EE&K, A Perkins Eastman Company, spoke about the need to integrate transit and housing. Ben Barnes, Secretary, CT OPM, spoke about the need to strengthen existing transit and how transit development is important because it encourages economic development and jobs.

We must work together to ensure our transportation system provides our state the level of connectivity, access, investment and safety to keep Connecticut strong. We can’t continue to take monies from transportation and put it into the Connecticut General Fund. We need to provide affordable transportation to work, educational institutions, health care, marketplaces, and the other places life takes us. Public transportation connects people and communities and we need to develop creative and innovative approaches to funding both operational and capital investments so Connecticut can be a vibrant and successful place for residents, workers and tourists.

Endnotes:

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3. Connecticut General Assembly: *Report of the Task Force to Study Aging in Place, Special Act 12-6*, Hartford, CT, January 1, 2013.
4. CFE, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, CT Construction Industries Association, RPA, CGCOG : *A White Paper: Transportation Funding In Connecticut, Where are We Now and What Is Next?*, December, 2012.
5. Texas A&M Transportation Institute: *Texas A&M Urban Mobility Report Press Release*, College Station, Texas, February 5, 2013.
6. American Public Transportation Association: *2012 Public Transportation Fact Book*, Washington, D.C., September, 2012.
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8. Connecticut Association For Community Transportation: *Connecticut Public Bus Services: Mobility for the 21st Century*, February 28, 2008

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Federal Highway Administration. www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/

“There is literally nothing more effective in getting our economy moving than mass transit.”

Larry Hanley, International President of the Amalgamated Transit Union