

# TRANSIT FOR CONNECTICUT A BETTER CONNECTICUT THROUGH IMPROVED BUS TRANSIT



*The mission of Transit for Connecticut, a coalition of business, human service, regional planning, and environmental interests from around the State, is to visualize, advocate for, and see the implementation of a cost-effective comprehensive strategic investment in bus transit that will create opportunities, address unmet needs, and provide access and mobility that will benefit every community of Connecticut.*

Transit for Connecticut is pleased to present a balanced and diverse package of enhancements to statewide bus services that will benefit all Connecticut residents, employers, and employees. The program benefits Connecticut by helping:

- **GROW CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMY** by linking more of our workforce with employers and creating access to better jobs, and improving mobility by managing traffic congestion.
- **CREATE HEALTHIER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR CONNECTICUT** by building a strong and connected intermodal statewide bus-rail system, creating transit nodes for future responsible growth, and creating more transportation choices for everyone, from youths to access education, jobs and training to seniors who can remain in their homes because of better access to health services and other essential needs.
- **CLEAN THE AIR IN CONNECTICUT** by enhancing bus service that will reduce automobile travel and implementing improvements to bus emissions, thereby drastically reducing toxic diesel pollution, smog-forming pollution and global warming pollution.

Connecticut invests less in transit per capita when compared to several other selected peer states in the Northeast with similar operating environments. The chart describes the relationship between investment in transit (measured as hours of service provided) and the level of ridership achieved through this investment.



As can be seen by following the arrows in the chart, Connecticut would be able to dramatically increase bus transit ridership by investing more in public transportation through increasing service hours. Connecticut needs more comprehensive coverage of the hours people travel and enhancements to the service area to serve those destinations they desire to access.

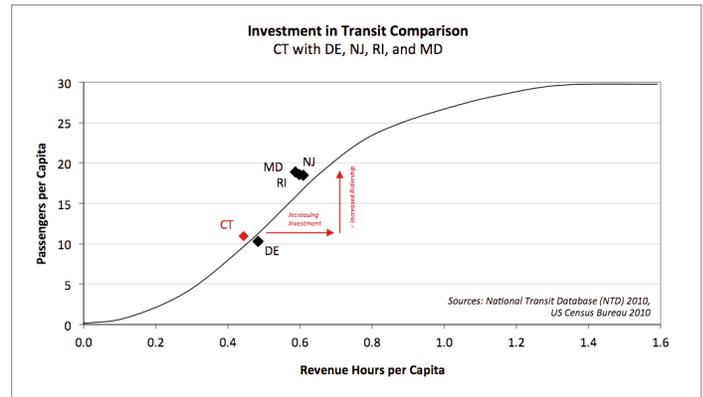
Connecticut needs more comprehensive coverage of the hours people travel and enhancements to the service area to serve those destinations they desire to access.

The program intends to bridge this gap by providing an additional 1.9 million hours of service annually after 5 years of phased implementation and has the potential to **increase bus ridership by 64%** over the 5-year period.

## HOW DO WE IMPROVE BUS TRANSIT IN CONNECTICUT?

Connecticut can best achieve improved access and mobility through the following actions:

- Increase hours of service and frequency of service on heavily used and overcrowded routes.
- Provide more weekend service.



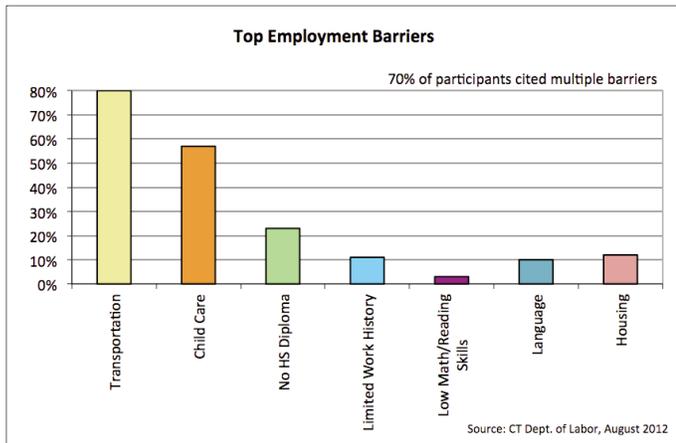
- Implement Dial-A-Ride options for communities without public transportation and expand service where there is still unmet need.
- Increase "Commuter Connection" bus services to rail stations in order to complement and enhance the State's investment in rail service.
- Expand express services to major employment centers.
- Implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along major corridors.
- Increase key interregional bus services, such as the Coastal Link, M-Link, 7-Link and the I-Bus, that will improve connections between towns and improve access to jobs and services.

## WHY INVEST IN IMPROVED BUS TRANSIT FOR CONNECTICUT?

Enhanced public bus transportation throughout Connecticut can lead to a number of economic, social, and environmental benefits that are complementary and interrelated. Public transportation provides an alternative to single-occupant automobile travel which is increasingly causing congestion on the roadway network. Bus transit can offer viable options for improved access to jobs and benefits to the environment and the economy. Importantly, enhancements to bus transit are most often possible with significantly shorter implementation timeframes than capital-intensive transportation investments and can provide more flexibility to adapt to changing demand.

*"Improved bus service linked to investments in rail will enhance the economic outlook for Connecticut by reducing congestion on our highways and encouraging employers to grow jobs in Connecticut."*

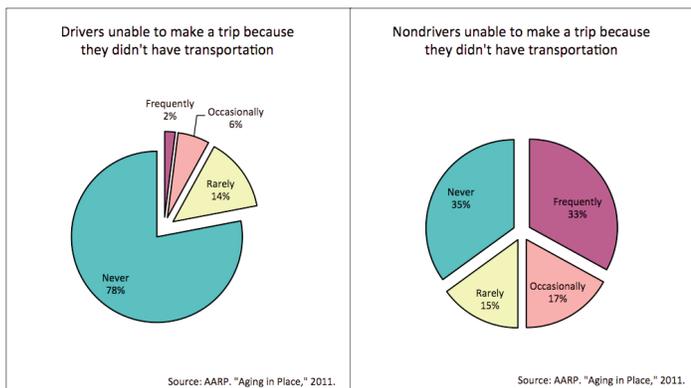
- JOSEPH MCGEE, VICE PRESIDENT  
PUBLIC POLICIES AND PROGRAMS,  
THE BUSINESS COUNCIL OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY



### Employees and Employers Benefit

Public transit provides economic benefits both to individual users and to the economy as a whole. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has demonstrated that households that are likely to use public transportation on a given day save over \$9,800 every year when compared to households with no access to transit (August 2012).

- Increased transit service provides workers with more transportation choices and allows access to a greater variety of employment opportunities by expanding hours of service and geographic coverage.
- Employers benefit from the availability of a larger labor pool when transportation choices exist and more people are able to access transit.
- Transit enhances mobility both for its users as well as other users of the transportation system who benefit from the overall increase in system carrying capacity.
- When households are able to reduce transportation expenses, these savings are typically spent on goods and services, generating additional tax revenue and contributing to the local economy.
- Studies show that every \$1 invested in transit can yield up to \$4 in economic benefit.



### Better Job Access, Healthcare, and Personal Mobility

The mobility afforded by public transportation provides a number of direct benefits from a social perspective. Studies by the Connecticut Department of Labor indicate that 80% of Jobs First Employment Services participants cite transportation as the most significant barrier to employment. Access to transportation is also a barrier for certain segments of the population such as the elderly, disabled, and low-income households. Furthermore, increased use of transit can play a beneficial role in promoting public health and safety.

- Public transportation provides increased opportunity for employment and community access, supporting job access initiatives.
- Increased access to the community removes barriers that lead to social isolation among transportation-disadvantaged populations (elderly, low-income, people with disabilities).
- Lack of sufficient transportation is a frequently cited barrier to recovery or aging in place for many special needs populations, as well as a barrier for people coming out of incarceration or seeking to come off of public assistance.

*"Public transportation is an essential part of Connecticut's economic strength and quality of life, connecting thousands of people in Southwestern Connecticut to work and the community. Without these vital services, those who rely upon public transportation could lose their jobs or be unable to access employment opportunities."*

- JOSEPH M. CARBONE, PRESIDENT & CEO  
THE WORKPLACE, INC., SOUTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT'S  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

### Better for Our Environment

Multimodal connections such as those between rail and bus enhance the use of transportation modes other than the private automobile. Public transit can enhance the efficiency of the transportation network as more individual person trips are combined in fewer vehicles. This increased efficiency and connectivity can help manage overall traffic congestion and by extension lessen environmental impacts.

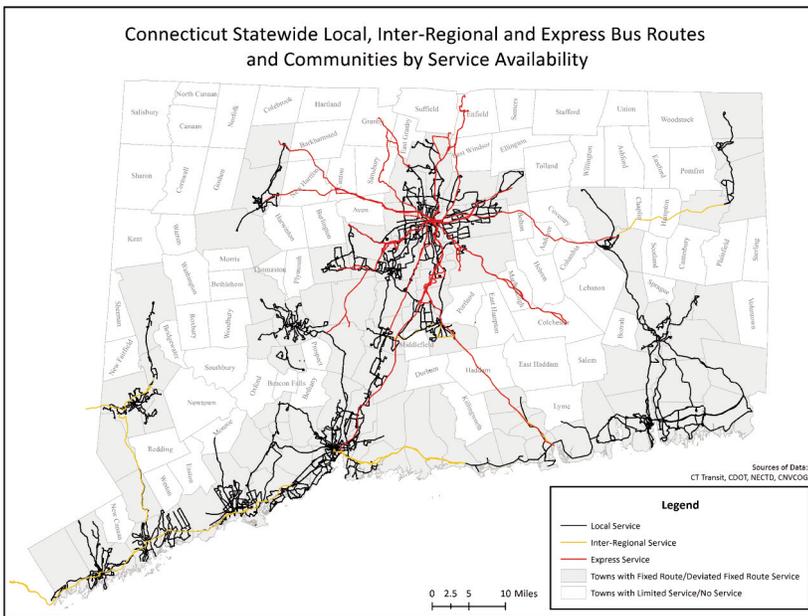
- Reduced traffic congestion and fewer vehicle trips reduce pollution. Similarly, clean vehicle technology will further reduce particulate and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Transit supports Responsible Growth and Transit Oriented Development initiatives designed to reduce sprawl.
- The efficiency of high-occupancy public transit relative to single occupant auto use leads to broad savings in energy consumption, particularly the demand for gasoline.
- Increased provision of transit service supports the goals of the Connecticut Climate Change Action Plan, including the goal of doubling ridership levels statewide by 2020 and a corresponding reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) below the 2020 baseline.

## INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Transportation provides the vital link between individuals and the places and services to which they want to go. Bus transit is an important element of a comprehensive transportation system. It provides mobility for those who do not have a car or access to a car, to those with limited incomes who may have a car but find it expensive to use and maintain, and to those who choose to use the bus in lieu of their car to save money or reduce the stress of driving, to avoid contributing to congestion, or to reduce energy consumption and environmental pollution.

Bus transit services in Connecticut, as presently configured and funded, do not meet all of the needs identified in local planning processes. An examination of information supplied from the CDOT Statewide Bus Study (2000), local transit studies, and surveys of Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT) members identify a range of service needs that cannot be met within existing budgets.

### Existing Bus Network and Service Coverage



One goal of this project was to quantify the extent of the unmet needs for bus transit service in the State and to translate these needs into estimates of operating and capital expenditures required to address them efficiently. By plotting the relationship between supply (service hours per capita) and usage (trips per capita) for each group of systems (major urban, large urban, small urban, rural), the methodology defined the total need for bus services in each area of the state. By subtracting the trips currently being taken from the total calculated need using the methodology, an estimate of unmet need for each area was calculated.

The gap in amount of service currently provided compared to the amount of need identified through the analysis is 1.9 million hours of

*"A major investment in fixed route and Dial-A-Ride bus services is critical to helping people live full, independent lives."*

**- JOHN ERLINGHEUSER, ADVOCACY DIRECTOR,  
AARP CONNECTICUT**

service per year. Thus, in order to meet the bus transit needs of Connecticut residents, employees, and employers, transit providers would need to increase the hours of service statewide by 77%. Unmet needs include the following:

- More frequent service so that bus service is more convenient for commuters, reduces overcrowding during peak periods, and reduces waiting time for all riders, including seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Later evening hours, which open up a new pool of jobs for employees and a new labor pool for employers.
- Weekend services that allow patrons to make social visits, and go shopping, while allowing employees to find jobs that require weekend work hours.
- Service in towns where little or no service is currently provided, which provides mobility options for seniors and people with disabilities, and provides links to inter-regional and express services for all residents, including commuters.
- New/expanded services to provide access to decentralized job locations, retail establishments, and other popular destinations.
- More frequent services and longer span of operating hours on express services to give commuters more flexibility
- New express bus routes to serve additional markets, and provide job access for an expanded labor pool.
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along major corridors to improve the speed of bus services, provide more attractive mobility options for commuters and reduce congestion and pollution caused by single occupancy vehicles.
- New Commuter Connection options to enhance the investment in rail service and provide options for commuters between their residence and the rail station and between the rail station and their place of employment.
- Increased inter-regional services, both in geographic coverage and in frequency of service, to provide more mobility options for Connecticut residents and greater access to jobs and services.

These enhanced bus transit services are proposed to be phased in over 5 years and have the potential to dramatically increase bus ridership by the end of the implementation period. These services are presented in detail in the following section along with the associated costs of implementation.



## PROPOSED INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The funding needed for implementation of the program falls into two categories: operating and capital. Operating funds are used to operate the service and include the cost of drivers, fuel, dispatching, administration, maintenance, etc. Capital funds are used to purchase equipment such as vehicles, facilities, shelters, communications equipment, etc.

In order to fund the Transit for Connecticut program, the State would need to invest an additional \$15.5 million annually for 5 years, building to a total of \$77.7 million in subsidy per year above the current 2011 operating budget. Over the 5-year period, the State would need to spend a total of \$234.7 million in capital expenses in order to purchase the necessary equipment to operate the new services and to purchase new and replacement equipment necessary to provide the amenities and technology needed to support the safety, security, and customer needs of a twenty-first century bus system.

*"Doubling bus transit use in a cost effective manner is one of the goals of our State Climate Action Plan and will result in a significant reduction in our state greenhouse gas emissions each year."*

**- ROGER REYNOLDS, SENIOR ATTORNEY  
CONNECTICUT FUND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

These service proposals and costs build upon the existing level of service as of fiscal year 2011.

## Service Plan

Types of Services	Additional Annual Hours of Service	Additional Annual Operational Expenses	# Additional Vehicles	Additional Capital Expenses
<b>Existing fixed route operations - total projected</b>	<b>1,200,000</b>	<b>\$63.0</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>\$105.9</b>
\$ in millions				
Weekday peak period service frequency	120,000	\$6.0	40	\$16.0
Weekday off-peak period service frequency	233,000	\$11.6	0	\$0.0
Saturday service frequency	61,000	\$3.5	20	\$8.2
Sunday service frequency	34,000	\$2.2	0	\$0.0
Weekday hours of service	82,000	\$4.2	0	\$0.0
Saturday hours of service	13,000	\$0.7	0	\$0.0
Sunday hours of service	7,000	\$0.4	0	\$0.0
Expansion/improvements				
New routes				
BRT operating hours and expenses	650,000	\$34.4	204	\$81.7
Commuter connections				
Other				
<b>ADA services</b>	<b>93,500</b>	<b>\$5.2</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>\$2.3</b>
<b>New services to unserved communities</b>	<b>478,000</b>	<b>\$25.0</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>\$11.9</b>
<b>Express services</b>	<b>93,000</b>	<b>\$3.9</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>\$12.4</b>
<b>Parking expansion for express services</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$5.6</b>
<b>BRT- non vehicle related capital expenses</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$11.3</b>
<b>Rolling stock</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$6.6</b>
<b>Infrastructure: Facilities, shelters, signs</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$42.9</b>
<b>Infrastructure: Communications, fareboxes, etc.</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$35.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,860,000</b>	<b>\$97.1</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>\$234.7</b>
Total after 20% farebox return	1,860,000	\$77.7	485	\$234.7

## Service Plan and Staging

Suggested Annual Staging to Meet Total Unmet Need					
Expenses	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
\$ in millions					
<b>Operating Expenses</b>					
Existing transit operators	\$12.6	\$25.2	\$37.8	\$50.4	\$63.0
ADA services	\$1.0	\$2.1	\$3.1	\$4.2	\$5.2
Express services	\$0.8	\$1.6	\$2.3	\$3.1	\$3.9
New services to unserved communities	\$5.0	\$10.0	\$15.0	\$20.0	\$25.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19.4</b>	<b>\$38.8</b>	<b>\$58.3</b>	<b>\$77.7</b>	<b>\$97.1</b>
<b>Anticipated Operating Revenues*</b>	<b>\$3.9</b>	<b>\$7.8</b>	<b>\$11.7</b>	<b>\$15.5</b>	<b>\$19.4</b>
<b>Anticipated Operating Subsidy Requirement</b>	<b>\$15.5</b>	<b>\$31.1</b>	<b>\$46.6</b>	<b>\$62.1</b>	<b>\$77.7</b>
\$ in millions					
<b>Capital Expenses</b>					
Existing transit operators	\$38.2	\$38.2	\$38.2	\$38.2	\$38.2
ADA services	\$0.5	\$0.5	\$0.5	\$0.5	\$0.5
Express services	\$5.9	\$5.9	\$5.9	\$5.9	\$5.9
New services to unserved communities	\$2.4	\$2.4	\$2.4	\$2.4	\$2.4
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>\$46.9</b>	<b>\$46.9</b>	<b>\$46.9</b>	<b>\$46.9</b>	<b>\$46.9</b>
<b>Total Capital Requirements</b>	<b>\$234.7</b>				

\*Assumes 20% farebox recovery on operating cost

*Transit for Connecticut gratefully acknowledges the support of the One Region Funders' Group and its Connecticut partners, the Fairfield County Community Foundation and the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation. Urbtran Associates completed the original 2007 study for Transit for Connecticut. The original study was initiated by the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT), Connecticut Fund for the Environment (CFE), The Business Council of Fairfield County, The Workplace, Inc., and Regional Plan Association. Questions may be directed to: Transit for Connecticut, c/o Connecticut Fund for the Environment, 142 Temple Street, Suite 305, New Haven, CT 06510 or through the website at <http://www.ctenvironment.org>.*