



getting
where
you want

to go

Connecting and Preserving
Our Communities
With Better Transportation



**CONNECTICUT LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS**
EDUCATION FUND

CTLCV EDUCATION FUND AT A GLANCE

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Who We Are

Formed in 2000, the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters Education Fund is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that strives to strengthen Connecticut's environmental movement.

We provide information on issues and organize networks of environmental groups to access political power in furtherance of protecting Connecticut's natural resources. In 2009, CTLCV Education Fund embarked on a new initiative to promote a balanced and sustainable transportation system. We picked transportation because of its broad impact on energy, the economy, climate change, water and air quality, and land use.

What We Do

The CTLCV Education Fund works to educate citizens and public officials on key environmental issues, involve citizens in building sound environmental policies and organize networks of conservation-minded leaders likely to influence decision making in state or local government. By doing this we believe we will build a stronger environmental presence in the State Legislature and empower Connecticut residents to protect the environment.

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GETTING WHERE YOU WANT TO GO



Connecting and Preserving Our Communities With Better Transportation

If there is one thing that is clear to us as a state-wide environmental organization, it's that people in Connecticut care deeply about their communities and the state in which they live. People care about living in a compact state with access to the rich diversity and vibrancy of city life, the historic, charming New England small towns, the sandy beaches and rocky coastline, the cool beauty of the mountains, the blue and healthy lakes and rivers, and the rolling farmland and open meadows. In order to preserve these qualities that provide us with that unique sense of place, we need to be mindful of how we use our land, protect our natural resources, capitalize on our infrastructure and respect our historic and cultural treasures.

The question is how do we do that and still manage to get to where we want to go in a timely, convenient and safe way with an old highway system that is in disrepair and overcrowded, with limited public transit options and with many streets unsafe for walking or bike riding? How do we do that without just building more roads to fill with more cars? How do we do that with enormous budget needs to repair our aging roads and bridges with dwindling funding sources? How do we do that while revitalizing our cities and maintaining the open space of our natural areas?

The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters Education Fund is working to promote an improved transportation system, a system that moves people safely and efficiently while considering the long term impact on our environment. We believe there is a way to effectively balance the needs of growing our economy without jeopardizing our quality of life, to bring Connecticut's transportation system in to the 21st Century while preserving the communities that have developed during the last four centuries. With that in mind, we have developed this transportation guide, written in an easy to read format that we hope will serve as a useful tool for citizens and policy makers. The following pages will attempt to provide the reader with a lay of the land, identify the problems and propose some actions that may help us achieve the goal of an improved transportation system for Connecticut.

Thomas E. Swarr, *Chair*
CTLCV Education Fund

WITH THANKS TO OUR COLLEAGUES FOR THEIR INPUT TO THIS GUIDE:

-  *1000 Friends of Connecticut*
-  *Bike Walk Connecticut*
-  *Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality*
-  *Connecticut Fund for the Environment*
-  *Connecticut Main Street Partnership*
-  *Regional Plan Association*
-  *Rivers Alliance*
-  *Transit for Connecticut*
-  *Tri-State Transportation Campaign*



WHY SHOULD YOU

Care?

COMMUNITY MATTERS



Connecticut has much to offer; beautiful rolling hills and scenic shorelines, accessible and walkable cities, cultural and historic attractions, charming small town centers, acres of preserved forests, trails and open space, farmland and clean rivers and lakes. These are some of the characteristics that give Connecticut a unique identity, a sense of community, a sense of place. These are things we cherish and want to preserve and to do so we must look closely at the impact of transportation and land use decisions on our communities and our quality of life.

America stands at a crossroads. Our nation has begun to understand the consequences of the choices we have made that negatively affect the places we live, work and play. In fact, many American communities are at a tipping point with a prosperous and healthy future in the balance. If we are to be responsible stewards of the land and a sustainable community life, we must now pause, assess our course, and where needed, change direction to achieve our goals.

The evidence of our past choices and actions surrounds us. Heart disease, obesity and diabetes are epidemic due to an increased indoor, sedentary lifestyle. Reckless environmental practices place enormous burdens on our children to adapt to a changing global climate. Sprawl has depleted our open spaces necessitating more energy consumption measured in fuel and pavement to simply connect to each other.



Multi-use trails throughout Connecticut provide travel options, encourage healthy lifestyles and add to our quality of life.

COURTESY OF CONNECTICUT DOT

These actions have consequences. Do we continue trends to exploit rich resources leading ultimately to an unsustainable future? Or, do we change direction to create walkable, transit-served communities with high-performance infrastructure? Do we continue to develop unplanned and in isolation with little consideration to the impact on our citizens' health and the environment? Or, do we promote growth that fosters healthy lifestyles and offers mobility choices for all of our citizens while protecting our valuable natural resources?

This guidebook is an urgent call to action. If informed, voters will make better choices about how to shape the world our children will inherit including having the same life-sustaining options we have today. We already have the knowledge from years of studies and planning to make better choices but time is of the essence.

It all begins with the land. How we plan our communities, linking land-use and infrastructure, is at the heart of a comprehensive reform.



FACT

*The Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality reports that in 2011, Connecticut preserved **1,975 ACRES OF FARMLAND**—the best year for preservation since 1993.*

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?



THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

Some experts have noted that the United States now has one of the worst transportation systems in the developed world, while other countries are investing heavily in transit infrastructure. China recently completed a new \$33 billion high speed rail line between Beijing and Shanghai reducing travel time to under five hours to go 820 miles and is expected to carry 80 million passengers a year.

No doubt about it, transportation costs are huge. From the \$2 billion price tag to rebuild the "Q" Bridge in New Haven, to the price at the pump for gas, to fare hikes for public buses or trains, we are all feeling the pain. But what about all the many other associated costs of transportation? The costs of congestion on businesses and on our health and the environment, and the hidden costs of gasoline that are not reflected in the day to day cost of filling the tank. And what about the cost of doing nothing - the cost of not investing in a 21st Century transportation infrastructure?

It is a long held belief that American's love their cars, however that love affair comes at a price. In 2011, the American Automobile Association reported the yearly cost to own and operate a sedan in the U.S. has risen to \$8,776 per year, based upon 15,000 miles of annual driving and for an SUV to \$11,239 yearly. Those numbers are based on a cost of \$2.88 per gallon of gasoline. Yet there are many hidden costs in the price of oil that are not reflected in the price you pay at the pump. These hidden costs impact our transportation budget, our economy and your own wallet. One obvious hidden cost is the money dedicated to defending those countries that provide us with oil; but other factors such as loss of investment in U.S. alternative energy businesses and loss of associated tax revenue add to the impact.



\$2 billion Pearl Harbor Memorial 'Q' Bridge project under construction

COURTESY OF CONNECTICUT DOT

The cost of congestion on our highways has a very real financial impact on businesses, consumers and commuters due to the cost of travel delay and the extra gas used while sitting in traffic. These costs of congestion add to our high cost of living in Connecticut. And here's another way to think of it; if you are stuck in traffic for just thirty minutes of your total daily commute, and you work an average full time job of 260 days per year, then each year you will have spent ten days sitting in traffic. Work with the same commute for twenty years and you will have lost over 200 days of your life sitting in a car.

Beyond the impact on our wallets, congestion costs us all in terms of public health and medical care. Research has shown the link between asthma and air pollution. Connecticut has one of the highest asthma rates in the country. Cars and trucks idling in traffic on our roads and highways are the major source of air pollution in Connecticut and contribute to the high asthma rate. Congestion is costing all of us in one way or another.

We must also consider the cost of highway crashes, both in the number of deaths and injuries as well as the associated economic costs. Despite safety improvements, the number of deaths on our roads nationally was still over 32,000 in 2011. While the death toll is sobering and represents a terrible personal loss, the extreme financial burden on our nation is also staggering.

DID YOU KNOW?



In 2009, Connecticut spent over

\$112 MILLION

for acute care of asthma patients.

Source: Connecticut Department of Public Health



THE 2011 URBAN MOBILITY REPORT FINDS ANNUAL CONGESTIONS COSTS FOR:

<i>Bridgeport-Stamford area</i>	\$441 MILLION
<i>New Haven area</i>	\$235 MILLION
<i>Hartford area</i>	\$295 MILLION

Source: Texas Transportation Institute

FACT

The Federal Highway Administration states that our nation expends \$230 BILLION a year on crash related costs.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?



Shore Line East arriving in Guilford train station

COURTESY OF CONNECTICUT DOT

DID YOU KNOW?



A family could save

\$9,743

per year if it had access to public transportation so that it could get by with one less car.

Source: American Public Transportation Association

Some experts predict that over the next decade, there will be a shortage of affordable housing in our cities and a surplus of single family houses in the suburbs as aging baby boomers move out and the millenials (those born between 1980 and 2001) either don't want or can't afford the big house in the suburbs. As these two significant demographics, empty nesters and millenials, continue to move to the cities there will be an increased demand for alternatives to owning a car such as walking, riding a bike, or public transit, or a combination of those.

Clearly trends are changing and the Census data reinforces the need to address those changing preferences and expectations. No question, the car will continue to play the major role in our transportation system, but to move forward, we will have to restore the balance in our transportation system. Connecticut needs to expand public transit, make our streets more pedestrian and bike friendly, and focus and incentivize development in areas where public transit is readily available in order to attract and keep young people and aging baby boomers to our state. We can no longer "do nothing," it just costs too much.

“Investments in public transportation create almost twice the jobs that highways do, help others get to their jobs, and attract private sector investment, creating still more jobs.”

Source: Connecticut Smart Transportation: Save Money and Grow the Economy, January, 2011 by Smart Growth America.



INVESTING FOR JOBS AND THE ECONOMY



Investment in public transportation is a critical first step to decreasing the costs of congestion while creating jobs and spurring economic development. Research has shown that more jobs are created from investing in public transit than from putting the same dollars in to expanding roads and bridges. Providing more choices for people to get around also means there will be fewer drivers, slowing the deterioration of our roads. And as a matter of transportation equity, public transit is frequently the only alternative for non-drivers or for those who may be unable to afford the expense of owning a car, to access jobs, education, health care or shopping. Research continues to prove that investment in public transit is good for the economy and good for the environment.



Planning for new development or re-development around public transit stations will give us the biggest bang for our buck. Focusing growth in areas where public transit is currently available or where there is potential for public transit in the near future, has shown to be a proven winner for local communities. Developments that offer residential, retail, office, entertainment within walking distance of bus or rail service are in demand and generating much needed tax revenue without creating the need to expand roads. If people can work, shop and play within a half mile of where they live and if the community ensures the streets are safe and accessible, more people will walk to where they need to go more frequently.

Making our streets safer and friendlier for pedestrians and bicyclists has also proven to be economic stimulators through increased tourism and more people buying local. Encouraging those who are inclined to walk or bike also means less wear and tear on the roads and makes it less congested for those who prefer to drive.

DID YOU KNOW?



Investing \$1 billion in high speed rail infrastructure creates or supports

24,000 JOBS.

Source: American Public Transportation Association

FACT

In Connecticut there are approximately 190 bicycle retail stores, 860 related jobs, generating over \$80 MILLION in annual gross revenue, according to the America Bikes coalition.



Bike lane on Route 34 in downtown New Haven, CT

COURTESY OF THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN

A BETTER **Vision**

DID YOU KNOW?



The Connecticut DOT, local activists and city officials collaborated to redesign Route 34 in downtown New Haven, lowering the highway to street level and adding pedestrian crossings and bike lanes.

GETTING IT RIGHT IN CONNECTICUT

To be economically competitive while protecting the environment, Connecticut needs to develop a 21st Century transportation system that provides consumers with transportation choices, reduces congestion and greenhouse gasses, and at the same time spurs development in the right places for better land use. The transportation system needs to provide easy and equitable access to jobs, education, health care, recreation and tourism for all users, and address the specific needs of the fastest growing segment of Connecticut's population - our senior citizens - as well as our lower income residents. We need to invest in more public transit, such as rail, bus and trolley systems, especially in high density areas that will connect our major transportation corridors, airports, stations and we need to make the streets in our cities and towns safe and easily accessible for all users, including pedestrians and cyclists.



Blue Back Square, West Hartford, CT

We have started to make some progress and begun to make better choices in some of our communities.

Blue Back Square in West Hartford is a good example of a new development featuring a mix of amenities including retail, office, entertainment, and civic buildings as well as housing, in a walkable neighborhood that has bus service. Imagine if it had been built within walking distance of a train station, the area could allow for more commuting to jobs and a lifestyle of convenience marked by freedom from dependence on an automobile.

360 State Street, New Haven, is one of the best examples of a transit-oriented development in the state. The building has 500 apartment units on top of ground floor retail with on-site bike parking for 200 bikes. Notably, 30-40% of the residents do not own a car. This was possible because the building is directly across the street from New Haven's State Street train station and it provides access to nine different bus routes. 360 State Street uses land efficiently and also provides a mix of uses by being within walkable distance to downtown and Yale, and its proximity to jobs, schools, restaurants, and entertainment. It is also a certified LEED platinum building incorporating state of the art, energy and water efficiency measures.



360 State Street with New Haven train station in foreground.

COURTESY OF BRUCE REDMAN BECKER

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

- 1 **Focuses development within ½ mile of transit service.**
- 2 **Allows more building in less space, creating more tax revenue.**
- 3 **Uses existing infrastructure such as sewer and water lines, saving money and resources.**
- 4 **Puts more housing, jobs and services closer to transit, reducing car trips and greenhouse gas emissions.**



COURTESY OF BRUCE REDMAN BECKER

Scene in front of 360 State Street, New Haven, CT

FACT

A Brookings Institution report shows that **MORE WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS PERFORM BETTER ECONOMICALLY** with higher real estate values in a recent study of the Metro Washington D.C. area.

A BETTER VISION



COURTESY OF MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC.

DID YOU KNOW?

COURTESY OF REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION



Char-rette (shuh-ret) n.
is an intensive planning session where citizens, design experts and other stakeholders collaborate on a vision for development

Even our state's more rural settings are looking for a better way to grow. The Town of Mansfield, home of the University of Connecticut, did a comprehensive community planning process that resulted in the Storrs Center Plan. The plan outlines a vision for a new downtown area for shopping, businesses, and housing that encourages students, residents, and visitors to walk, bike or use the bus. Development for the project is well under way. A new state-of-the-art intermodal transportation center and attached parking garage is near completion and will serve bicycles, buses, cars, and pedestrians. There will be spaces for a shared vehicle program and charging stations for electric vehicles. More than that, however, the center will serve as a hub for UConn buses, regional buses, and intercity and interstate buses that will form a network of public transportation services and link to pedestrian and bicycle routes.

The success of projects such as these largely depends on being sensitive to the unique character of our 169 cities and towns. All stakeholders from the community need to be involved in the early stages of the planning to have a hand in preparing workable, modern blueprints for their communities.

The town of Fairfield recently accomplished this when planning for the new Metro-North train station. The town rezoned the neighborhood around the train station following a year-long study that culminated in a community design plan. The outcomes of this visioning process were zoning improvements that will enable future retail, office and housing development within walking distance of this major transit stop.

Connecticut still has a lot of work ahead to ensure that our residents who choose a \$30 pair of shoes as their primary means of transportation are put on equal footing as those driving a \$30,000 car. Fortunately, Connecticut is well-situated with strong executive leadership in place to move in the right direction on to a long-term path of sustainability.



COURTESY OF BILLINGS FORGE COMMUNITY WORKS

CONNECTING THE DOTS

The good news is that we already have some of the pieces of the puzzle needed to form a great transportation system. Now we must connect the dots. To do that, we need to consider first and foremost what we want to preserve and then where and how we want to grow. Preserving and enhancing the unique character of our 169 individual communities must come first. From there we should decide what we need to invest in and how to prioritize the limited available funds to complete our transportation system. We need to connect the dots so that our major travel corridors link roads, transit, multi-use trails, sidewalks, bike lanes and airports with our communities so people can have more choices in how they get to where they want to go.

One big piece of the transportation puzzle is developing a system that conveniently connects trains, buses, bike paths and sidewalks with neighborhoods and transit stations. Investments in this area are slowly being realized in Connecticut.

The first Bus Rapid Transit line between New Britain and Hartford, now called *CTfastrak*, is expected to open in 2014. It will have a dedicated bus-only lane and preferred signaling. Pre-paid boarding options will quickly move 16,000 riders a day bypassing one of the most congested highways in Connecticut. It will include a multi-use trail and allow people to walk or bike to a local station, jump on a bus and get to a job, a major health center, a state university, a shopping mall or the Capital city in record time in a comfortable, secure and efficient way.

DID YOU KNOW?



The Connecticut transportation system provides over

**38.4
MILLION**

trips per year on buses and over

**38.3
MILLION**

trips per year on rail lines running throughout the state.

Source: Connecticut DOT



COURTESY OF CONNECTICUT DOT

FACT

With SEVEN ZERO EMISSION FUEL CELL BUSES, Connecticut is a national leader in moving to a clean air fleet of public transit buses.



DID YOU KNOW?



CT Transit-Hartford has mounted bicycle racks on the front of all buses.

There is no additional fee for this service and it is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Investments in high speed rail between New Haven, Hartford and Springfield are also evolving. The goal is to reinstall double tracks along the rail line and make station improvements that will attract 5,000 new riders



daily. This rail corridor will be used for both passenger and freight service over a 62 mile route. Improvements to this rail line will increase Connecticut's regional economic competitiveness and allow for more travel options. Upgrading the rail line between New Haven, Hartford and Springfield is one of the critical connections between Boston and Washington D.C. for a fully functioning Northeast rail corridor. Investing in this rail corridor continues to have bi-partisan support at the federal, regional and state level.

The East Coast Greenway, a multi-use trail that will eventually run 3000 miles from Canada to Florida, has been compared to the Appalachian Trail, both in terms of its forward thinking vision and its connectivity between the eastern states. In Connecticut, the East Coast Greenway will eventually include 198 miles of trails and travel through some of the state's most scenic areas, major cities and small towns. Steady progress on the trail in Connecticut has occurred in recent years. According to the East Coast Greenway Alliance, completing the segments that run parallel to the Merritt Parkway and closing the gaps in the Farmington Canal Greenway will help bring the trail to fruition.

While the East Coast Greenway is impressive, its purpose is primarily recreational. In order to make biking and walking really viable as functional modes of transportation, Connecticut must invest in making our roads safer and more accessible for bicycling and walking. For every future transportation project, pedestrian and bicyclists should be given the same consideration as drivers. Recently, after a great deal of citizen advocacy, the Connecticut DOT agreed to add a sidewalk to the Putnam Bridge rehabilitation project to allow non-drivers to cross the Connecticut River between Glastonbury and Wethersfield. The DOT is to be congratulated on changing the project to add the sidewalk. In the future we hope DOT will include sidewalks and bike lanes in the planning and design phase of every road, bridge and transit station project to encourage more people to walk or bike to where they want to go.



Rosslyn, Arlington, VA

COURTESY OF ARLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OTHER SUCCESS STORIES

As we plan for a better transportation system we can learn from other states. Virginia, North Carolina, and Massachusetts have implemented some very progressive transportation initiatives with great results.

In Arlington, Virginia the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor has five Metro stations with over 21 million square feet of office and retail space and over 22,000 residential units creating vibrant urban villages where people live, shop, work and play using transit, pedestrian walkways, bicycles or cars. Planned, focused growth within an easy walking distance of the stations preserves established neighborhoods and natural areas. Arlington's urban villages emphasize pedestrian access and safety, and incorporate public art, "pocket" parks, wide sidewalks with restaurant seating, bike lanes, street trees, traffic calming, and street-level retail. This area has produced great results by doubling transit ridership in ten years and preserving open space by building more densely in compact walkable areas.

FACT

In the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor the assessed value of land around transit stations increased 81% in 10 years. 50% OF RESIDENTS TAKE TRANSIT to work and 73% WALK TO STATIONS minimizing traffic impact.

A BETTER VISION



COURTESY OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

DID YOU KNOW?

COURTESY OF VISIT CHARLOTTE



Prior to opening it was predicted that after a year of operation, the Lynx in Charlotte, NC would have

9,100

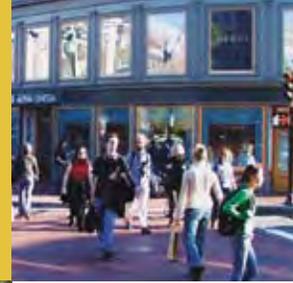
daily riders.

After the first seven days of service, daily ridership was already at

12,300.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, a combination of light rail and streetcars has transformed the city's transit system. The Lynx—an electric light rail system powered by overhead electric lines—runs 9.6 miles from the southern edge of the city into uptown Charlotte and is complemented with a streetcar project that connects local neighborhoods with the downtown business center. The neighborhoods saw increased property values along the line, while the streetcar drove economic development along the rail corridor by laying tracks in anticipation of extending the line. The city's approach to transportation played a significant role in transforming one of the most dangerous areas in Charlotte to one of the most desirable to live and to work. The Lynx and the Charlotte Streetcar Project serve as exemplary models for a 21st century transportation system by integrating the larger, regional transportation system and most productive bus routes.

Cambridge, Massachusetts places a strong emphasis on types of transportation beyond the single occupant car. The city has policies and ordinances that focus on transit, bicycling and walking. These include charging higher fees for parking permits while offering incentives to residents who travel from place to place by transit, bike or foot. Cambridge requires all new developments to include alternative transportation options such as employee shuttles, carpool and vanpool parking, subsidies and tax deductions for transit fares, bicycle parking, shower and locker facilities for bicyclists and walkers, flexible or alternative work hours, and a work-from-home program. Because of these policies, the city has experienced a significant decrease in automobile use over the past four decades, as well as new high density development that makes it easy to live, work, and play without a car. This approach to parking in Cambridge could help guide future land-use and transportation decisions here in Connecticut as we begin to develop around our transit stations.



THE Benefits

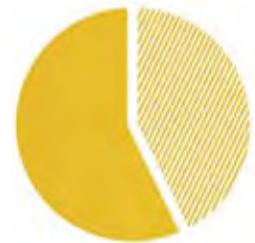
BETTER HEALTH

Traffic-related air pollution aggravates asthma and other respiratory illnesses and can triple the number of hospital visits for respiratory issues. This impact is especially severe for children and the elderly. Connecticut cities have among the highest rates of childhood asthma in the nation and an aging population that is particularly susceptible to respiratory illness. Decreasing congestion on our roads will lead to cleaner air and a step towards better health for many.

Encouraging alternative modes of transportation that include walking or biking on a daily basis helps in the battle against our nation's obesity epidemic. A troubling 12.5% of Connecticut children age 10 to 17 are considered obese. Streets need to accommodate more than just cars and trucks. We need to make our streets safer and more accessible—especially for children and seniors who are most at risk of being injured—as a means of encouraging an active lifestyle and help in the fight against obesity.

Connecticut's reliance on the single-passenger automobile, with more vehicles driving more miles on increasingly congested roads, no longer makes sense in terms of lifestyle or economics. Decisions about transportation can play a big role in improving the health of our citizens. It is time to travel smarter.

DID YOU KNOW?



Transportation sources contribute 43% of the air pollutants in Connecticut, with single-passenger car and SUV (Sport Utility Vehicle) trips producing the largest share.

Source: 2009 Connecticut Greenhouse Gas Inventory Update

FACT

In 2011, Connecticut residents across the state breathed "UNHEALTHY" AIR ON 31 DAYS. Approximately 248,000 ADULTS and 86,000 CHILDREN in Connecticut are reported to have asthma.

THE BENEFITS



Blue Back Square, West Hartford, CT

COURTESY OF LORI BROWN

DID YOU KNOW?



**Connecticut DOT
needs**

**\$279
MILLION**

**per year to maintain
3,733 miles of roads
and 3,701 bridges in
a state of good repair**

RESPONSIBLE LAND USE

Transportation and land use are inextricably linked. Transportation itself uses land, from superhighways to rail lines to bike paths. Decisions about transportation also profoundly effect land use far from the transportation itself and vice versa. If we keep sprawling outward from the core cities, we will need to build more highways to move people around. If we build subdivisions far from services, we must build roads to service them and we sacrifice green space and farmland in the process. If we build compact, walkable community centers, we save open space and energy. If we plan our new development to coordinate with mass transit, we save infrastructure costs, keep our air cleaner, reduce the miles that must be traveled by car, and create community rather than sprawl. The symptoms of poorly planned development and transportation are not hard to find.

Due to an over reliance on municipal property taxes, Connecticut's 169 cities and towns are locked into competition for development projects, which may be undesirable apart from their contributions to the tax rolls. These projects frequently end up on farmland or undeveloped land because it is the type of land on which development is easiest and least expensive. How we link land use and transportation is the key to reversing this trend.

Billings Forge Farmer's Market, Hartford, CT



COURTESY OF BILLINGS FORGE COMMUNITY WORKS

Many Connecticut families own several cars because there is little public transportation, especially in the suburbs, to take them to a job, grocery store, doctor's office or neighborhood park. The vast majority of workers (about 70%) in Connecticut commute to their jobs in single-passenger vehicles, which is the most expensive and environmentally harmful mode of travel.

We need to rethink our patterns of development in Connecticut and grow smarter. Smart growth will encourage development in areas with existing roads, sewers, and water systems and discourage development in pristine areas, farmland, and historic places. Smart growth policies can revitalize cities and provide greater choice in transit, housing, and jobs.

Proponents of smart growth policies advocate land conservation, transportation and environmental planning, infrastructure redevelopment, community investment and historic preservation. Opponents argue that these policies limit economic development and potential tax revenue. But smart growth does not mean no growth. Smart growth guides responsible development in the right places, so that cities become robust, communities remain livable, and open space is preserved.



COURTESY OF BILLINGS FORGE COMMUNITY WORKS

Brownfields are sites that have contaminated, abandoned and frequently neglected buildings, and are often located in central urban areas where public transit is available. Creative reuse of these sites leads to multiple benefits by creating jobs and housing in areas accessible by public transit, putting unused and often blighted properties back on the tax rolls and preserving the historic character of our towns and cities.

An outstanding example of brownfield redevelopment is Billings Forge Community Works in Hartford, where housing, jobs and entertainment are located in refurbished factory buildings served by two public bus lines. This project is bringing back jobs, life and economic vitality to the Frog Hollow neighborhood of Hartford.

DID YOU KNOW?



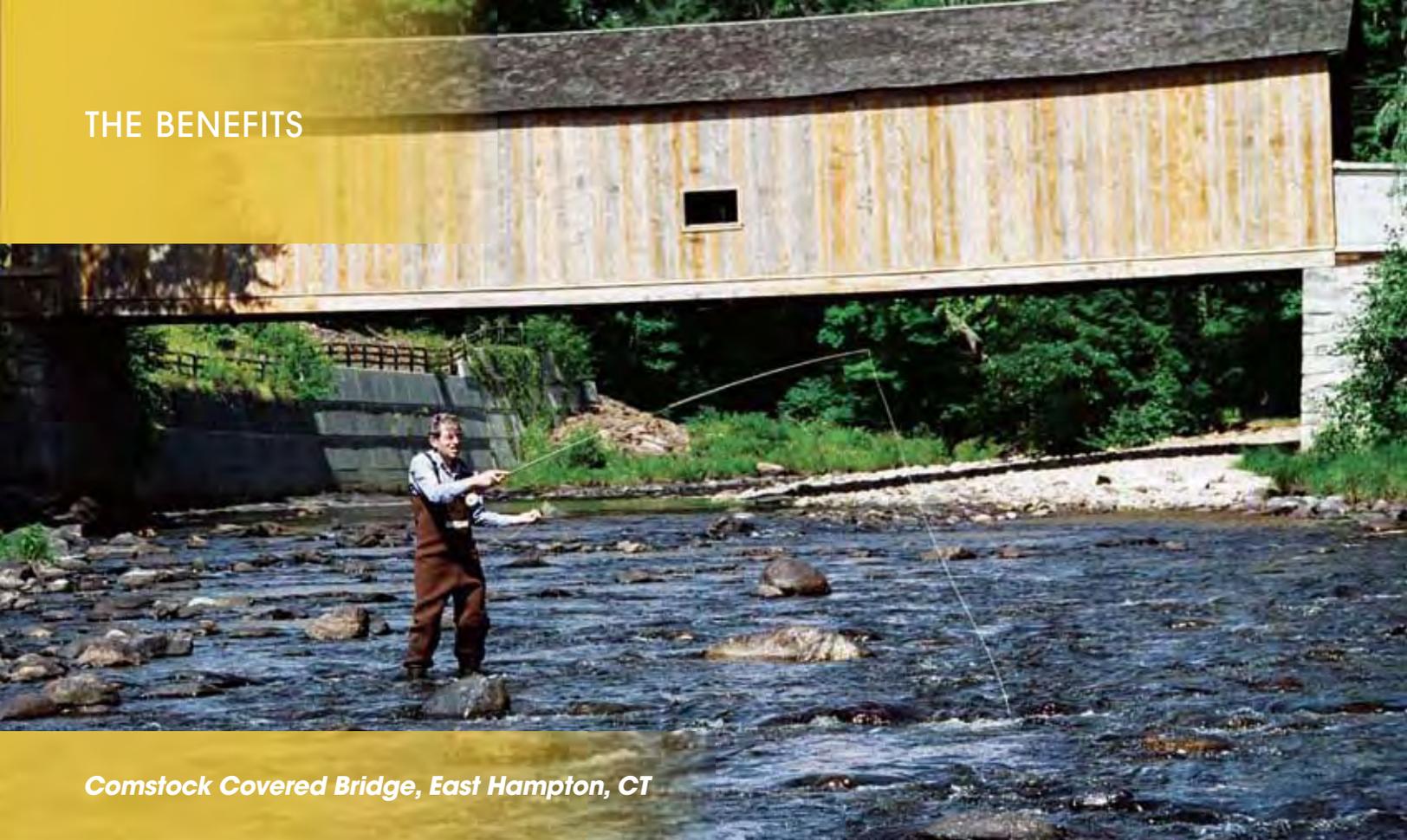
Connecticut has
4,916
FARMS
with **321,393**
acres of cropland,
pasture and woodland.
85% of our farmland
remains unprotected.

Source: Working Lands Alliance,
March 2010

FACT

28% OF ALL TRIPS in America are one mile or less with the majority taken by car, according to the organization, America Walks.

THE BENEFITS



Comstock Covered Bridge, East Hampton, CT

COURTESY OF CONNECTICUT DOT

DID YOU KNOW?



*One inch of rain,
falling on one mile
of a two lane
paved road, dumps*

**52,000
GALLONS**

*of polluted water into
the environment.*

CLEAN WATER

Connecticut is covered by a dense system of water resources and a vast system of waterways. We are blessed with 450,000 acres of wetlands, 6,000 miles of streams and rivers, over 2,000 square miles of lakes and reservoirs and 600 square miles of estuarine water in Long Island Sound. Maintaining healthy streams and rivers protects drinking water, recreational opportunities, property values and the ecosystems of fish and wildlife.

The large amount of pavement for roads and parking lots in Connecticut is created by our over reliance on car travel. This impervious coverage pollutes our water and increases erosion while decreasing the amount of rainwater allowed to seep underground to refill our water supplies.

Rain that falls onto paved surfaces collects pollutants, including gasoline, oil drippings, salt and de-icing chemicals, and flushes them into lakes, streams, rivers and Long Island Sound. This pollutes the water and hurts aquatic plants and animals. Water quality suffers when snow contaminated with road chemicals is dumped directly into water bodies.



Increased pavement cover also threatens drinking water supplies. Both public drinking water aquifers and private wells in Connecticut rely on underground water sources. More pavement means less rainwater is available to sink into the ground to replenish our underground sources of water. As our state develops, and new roads and parking lots are planned, we need to protect our water from deterioration caused by pavement runoff. The most efficient time to address this is during the planning process.

Recent extreme weather events, such as the 2011 Storm Irene, and rising sea level, flooding, and disruption of food and water supplies, reinforce the need to make dramatic changes in how Connecticut plans for transportation and land use. Rising sea-level will especially impact coastal states such as Connecticut, where housing and parts of our infrastructure may need to be moved or rebuilt. It is crucial as we do infrastructure planning, to move roads and bridges back from the areas which will be impacted by higher sea level and river levels that are expected in the coming decades.

DID YOU KNOW?



By the 2020's, projected sea level rise in Connecticut could permanently flood

13,000 ACRES

and portions of 6 airports, 94 miles of roads and 20 miles of train tracks.

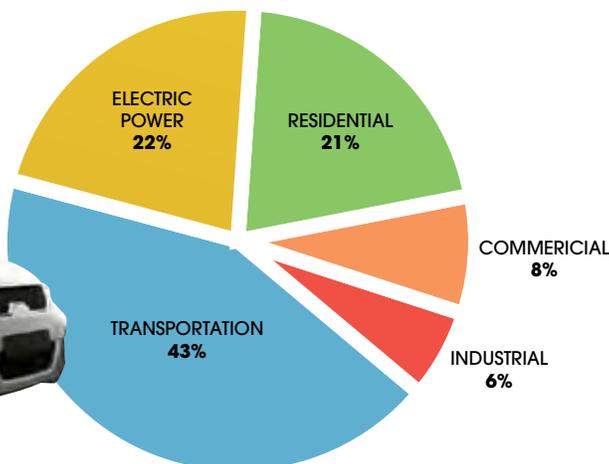
Source: The Nature Conservancy, www.coastalresilience.org, January 2012.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Transportation is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change. In Connecticut, transportation produces more greenhouse gas emissions than any other sector. Because of high levels of single-occupant vehicle travel, transportation causes 43% of total greenhouse gas emissions in our state (compared to the nationwide average of 29%).

MORE THAN HALF (59%) OF CONNECTICUT'S TRANSPORTATION SECTOR EMISSIONS COMES FROM CARS, SUVs, PICKUPS AND MINIVANS. This statistic is getting worse despite improvements in automotive technology. We will only significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by changing our approach to transportation. Connecticut has set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by the year 2020.

GREENHOUSE GAS SOURCES IN CONNECTICUT (2007)



FACT

About **80 MILES OF RIVERS** in Connecticut received overflows of raw sewage during storms in 2011 as reported by the Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality

Access to public transportation helps seniors and other non-drivers avoid social isolation



COURTESY OF NORTHWESTERN CT TRANSIT DISTRICT

DID YOU KNOW?



Largely because of limited transportation options, more than half of all non-drivers age

65 and over stay at home on a typical day.

PROVIDE EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION FOR ALL USERS

By 2025, one in five persons will be over age 65, and the baby boomers will have entered their golden years. As the population of Connecticut ages, we need to provide ways for seniors and disabled persons to maintain their independence and “age in place,” including options for getting around without driving.

With the cost of car ownership rising, many citizens opt not to own a car or cannot afford to own a car. Non-drivers make 59% fewer trips to shopping and restaurants, and 65% fewer trips for family, social and religious activities. In addition to marginalizing non-car owners, their absence from stores and restaurants hurts our economy.

Access to public transportation helps seniors and other non-drivers avoid social isolation. Going forward, creating transportation options for non-drivers will be a critical component to an independent and satisfactory quality of life for more and more of the population.

In Connecticut, van service or para-transit such as Dial-A-Ride, for people who cannot ride the regular transit bus due to age or disability, covers some areas but not others. This service is offered only in areas where local fixed bus routes exist, and is divided by districts.



COURTESY OF NORTHWESTERN CT TRANSIT DISTRICT



Representative Vickie Nardello and Jessie Stratton speaking at the CTLCV Annual Environmental Summit

COURTESY OF THOMAS M. ARMSTRONG

TAKE Action

LEARN MORE

Although it may seem daunting to an individual trying to make a difference in the state transportation system, your voice does count. CTLCV is pleased to act as a resource to provide you with more information and guide you through the process. Whether you want expanded bus routes, dedicated bike lanes, or a more walkable neighborhood, CTLCV will try to answer your questions or send you to the appropriate person or agency. We can be reached by phone at 860.236.5442 or email us at ctlcvc@ctlcvc.org.

Our website www.conservationeducation.org has lots more information on transportation and you can sign up for our free E-Newsletter, *CONNECTIONS: Linking Transportation and the Environment in Connecticut* on our website to keep up to date on current issues and legislation.

FACT

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can CHANGE THE WORLD; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does." - Margaret Mead



Community planning charrette for the new Fairfield train station

COURTESY OF REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION

Another good step is to learn about what your town is doing. Your chief elected official, whether he/she is a Mayor, First Selectman or Town Manager is there to answer your questions and is accountable to you as their constituent. You should feel free to call and make an appointment to talk about issues that concern you, to let them know where you stand on an issue.

Every municipality also has a town planner responsible for coordinating land use and transportation with town staff, elected officials and the public. Your town planner will have the most up to date information about the local issues. Additionally, he/she will be able to provide you with contact information for the Metropolitan Planning Organization that weighs in on transportation planning, prioritizing and funding for your municipality. The MPO is another great source of information for local or regional questions.

One question you may want to ask your town officials or planning department is the status of the town Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). By law, every town has a POCD and is required to update it every ten years. This plan serves as the guiding document of how your town wants to grow and what it wants to preserve. During the updating process there are frequent opportunities for you to weigh in on the vision you have for your town.



Senator John McKinney (upper right) and **Senator Donald E. Williams** (lower left) speaking at the **CTLCV Annual Environmental Summit**

COURTESY THOMAS M. ARMSTRONG



Once you have some information on the issues you should take your concerns and ideas to the state legislators. You do not need to be an expert for your state legislator to listen to you—you just need to let them know you care and where you stand on a particular issue. As a constituent, your state legislator wants to know what issues matter to you. Often hearing from just eight to ten constituents on

one issue may cause them to consider a particular position or vote. A simple email of a few lines in your own words can make an impact.

In Connecticut, we have fourteen Regional Planning Organizations (RPO). Each one has its own particular name and might be formed as a regional planning agency, a council of governments, or a council of elected officials. Regardless of its name, its Board of Governance consists of a representative from each of the member municipalities. RPOs carry out a variety of regional planning and other activities on behalf of their member municipalities. Ten of the states RPOs are also designated as Metropolitan Planning Organizations or MPOs. MPOs are mandated to prepare regional transportation plans and they must approve the expenditure of all federal highway and federal transit funds within their regions. Each RPO maintains a website that provides valuable information to citizens on planning issues for the region and posts public meeting agendas and minutes. Your RPO is a great resource to find out what is happening in your city or town.

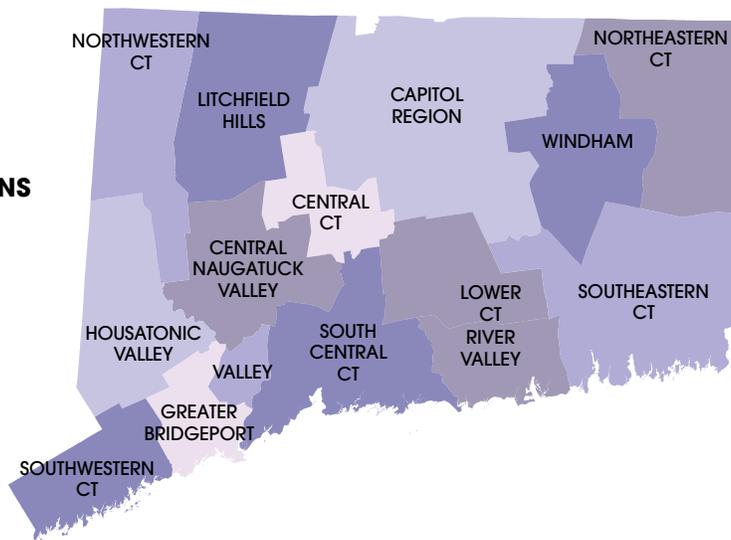
DID YOU KNOW?

The 1973 Federal-Aid Highway Act required that each State designate a Metropolitan Planning Organization or

MPO

to be responsible, together with the State, for carrying out the responsibilities of the transportation planning process for regions across the state.

PLANNING REGIONS IN CONNECTICUT



FACT

Go to www.cga.ct.gov to **FIND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE STATE LEGISLATORS** for your district.



DID YOU KNOW?



IN 1969,
15%
of school children ages 6-12 were driven to school in a private vehicle.

IN 2001,
50%
of school children ages 6-12 were driven to school in a private vehicle.

Source: Safe Routes to School National Partnership

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO



Become familiar with your city or town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

The local POCD is the blueprint for future development and transportation goals and is updated every ten years. Some questions to ask as you review the POCD: Does it focus growth in areas where public transit is available? Does it encourage children to walk or bike to school? Does it encourage people to park in one area and walk between places or activities? Does it make your town center or residential neighborhood streets friendlier and safer?

Participate in town meetings with the transportation decision makers that occur during development of major projects. "A Guide to Transportation Decision Making" by the U.S. DOT describes the process and gives strategic advice on how to be effective in presenting your opinions. The report is on our website www.conservationeducation.org.

Work with local volunteers and town officials to encourage sidewalks, bike paths, bike lanes. The Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, a statewide advisory board, holds monthly public meetings to discuss ways in which the state can promote bike and walk policies. Their website is ctbikepedboard.org. BikeWalk Connecticut is a great resource for state and local bike and pedestrian advocacy. Their website is wecyclect.org.

Encourage young people to walk or bike to school by asking your town to participate in the state Safe Routes to School program. Like all trip-making, travel to school has changed dramatically over the last 40 years. The biggest change is the increased number of children being driven to school. Safe Routes to School, sponsored by the Connecticut DOT, provides grants and technical advice to local communities to encourage children to safely walk or bike to school.

Request traffic signal adjustments and traffic calming techniques in your neighborhood or your town. Sometimes something as simple as a longer walk time for pedestrian crossings or lowering the speed limits will help make streets safer for all users, especially senior citizens and children. But these adjustments may not happen until local residents request the changes or until a tragedy occurs.



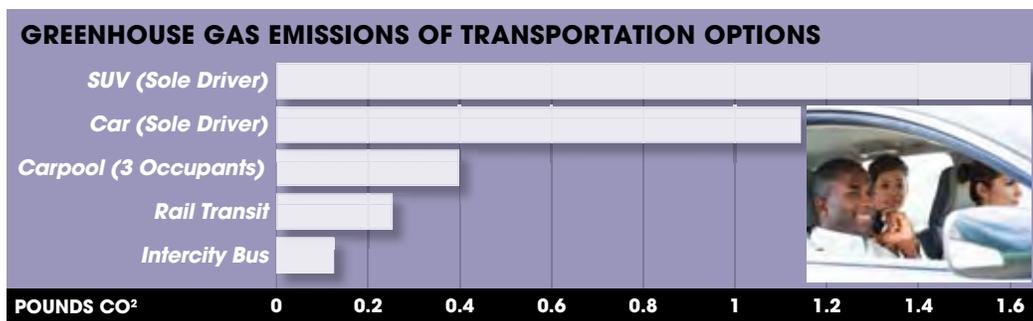
Electric vehicle public charging station, West Hartford, CT

COURTESY OF CONNECTICUT LIGHT & POWER

Reconsider your travel options and reduce your carbon footprint.

There are many ways that each of us as individuals can minimize our impact on transportation. Here are just a few suggestions:

- ❑ Consider carpooling, public transit or work from home one day a week. If you want to commute to work by transit or vanpool, start with Connecticut Commuter Services online at ctrides.com or by phone at 1-877-CT-RIDES. This site presents rides by region, then by town, including links to providers and locations of park-and-ride lots.
- ❑ Turn off the car instead of idling whenever possible.
- ❑ Plan before you drive to organize your errands in sequence to reduce mileage.
- ❑ Be sure to keep your car tires properly inflated, your engine serviced regularly, use regular gas instead of premium and reduce your travel speed to save significantly on the amount of gas you use.
- ❑ When purchasing a car consider a more fuel efficient car such as a hybrid or electric vehicle.



FACT Parents driving children to school comprise **20-30% OF MORNING TRAFFIC CONGESTION** in urban areas according to AmericaWalks.org

READY FOR MORE? TEN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONNECTICUT

Here are our top ten state policy recommendations that will get us on track for a better transportation system for Connecticut.

1. Develop a coordinated plan for a balanced, inter-modal transportation system.

As gas prices continue to rise, consumers are looking for other, cheaper ways to get around. Research shows that the millennial and baby boomer generations are moving away from car ownership and want to live near transit or walkable communities. It is time for Connecticut to invest in an inter-modal transportation system to provide more transportation options at a lower cost for people and the environment.

Connecting bus routes to train stations, airports and employment hubs is an efficient way to move people to and from less densely populated areas. And connecting neighborhoods to transit stations and bus stops through safe sidewalks and bike lanes allows those who want to leave the car at home to do so. Connecticut should:

- Develop a comprehensive state wide approach to prioritize projects that connect bus, rail, airports, and biking and walking within regional corridors.
- Invest in public transit and bike-pedestrian capital projects.
- Develop an access strategy for transit stations that accommodates pedestrians, bicycle riders and drivers.
- Develop a way to measure the DOT's performance and use of sustainable forms of transportation, including how street design and operations affect different groups of users modeled after New York City's Sustainable Street Index

2. Adopt policies to shift trips from single-occupancy vehicles to alternative modes.

Multiple departments within the state influence how developers and property owners manage access to their properties and the

resulting impact on the state's transportation system. The Office of the State Traffic Administration has the responsibility to review the traffic impacts of developments abutting state roads. The review process is an opportunity for the state to promote innovative ways for businesses to reduce single passenger car trips while improving access for pedestrians and transit riders. The Department of Economic and Community Development provides grants and loans to businesses and development proposals in areas with transit access near existing jobs and residents. Management of state owned properties should encourage access by transit such as providing subsidized transit passes. Connecticut should:

- Reform the Office of the State Traffic Administration's review of traffic impacts of developments abutting state roads. Require transportation demand management tools to reduce vehicle trips generated by new development while improving access for pedestrians and transit riders.
- Implement policies for all state agencies that include incentives for transit-use, carpooling, and biking and walking to work while limiting or eliminating free employee parking.

3. Support transit-oriented development.

If Connecticut focuses future development, especially housing, jobs and services within one-half mile of existing public transit, we can increase livability and affordability for all residents, including young professionals, senior citizens, and low income earners. This will also reduce the negative environmental impacts of current development approaches and maximize use of the current transportation infrastructure. Doing this will help reduce the sprawl consuming our remaining open space. New Jersey's Transit Village program is a successful model of how to incentivize development near transportation.

Connecticut should:

- Develop a state-wide Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plan and policy with interagency collaboration between the Department of Transportation, Department of Economic and Community Development, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and Office of Policy and Management, to prioritize TOD projects and direct state resources toward such projects in a systematic, coordinated and effective manner.

- Provide technical assistance to facilitate TOD to municipalities that meet certain defined criteria for equitable TOD projects. Such assistance should include educating the citizens, town planners and the elected officials, and providing local land use commissions the tools and expertise they need to adjust their zoning codes and finance appropriate development.
- Provide dedicated funding through the Bonding Commission for transit-oriented development projects on a predictable basis rather than on a project-by-project basis.
- Designate priority funding areas under the State Plan of Conservation and Development based substantially upon areas most suited for transit oriented development.

4. Implement green infrastructure best practices.

Cost effective techniques to reduce impervious coverage, better manage stormwater runoff, reduce the amount of surface parking, and modify street widths, are having success in Connecticut, but need to be applied more widely. In the long term these techniques have a significant net economic and environmental benefit. Along appropriate roads, we can install swales and basins with plantings to naturally filter rainwater and let it soak back into the ground. This saves resources by reducing the amount of concrete drainage piping we need to build and by reducing the amount of water that goes through water treatment plants and can help to reduce flooding of rivers. Establishing non-buildable buffer areas between paved areas and nearby water resources preserves water quality. Natural buffers filter out pollutants, reduce erosion and provide healthy habitat. Massachusetts requires a 200 foot buffer, and some states protect even more. Connecticut should:

- Develop a Green Infrastructure set of procedures to be used by DOT during the planning, design and construction of all transportation projects.
- Adopt a statewide minimum 100 foot buffer along streams, rivers and wetlands.
- Set a statewide impervious coverage standard to be applied on a watershed-wide basis in the State Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Assess the impacts of developments abutting state roadways on the surrounding watershed area as part of the traffic study submitted to the Office of the State Traffic Administration.

5. Fix-it-First.

The cost of maintaining Connecticut's roads and bridges requires hundreds of millions of dollars annually to get them to a state of good repair. Building new roads is costly, time and land-consuming and often does not solve congestion problems. Repairing existing roads and bridges instead of building new roads is more economical and improves our safety when using them. Connecticut should:

- Direct existing highway funds to repair and maintain our roads and bridges as a first priority over road or bridge expansion.
- New highway projects should only be considered if they are accompanied by new funding sources such as tolls that encourage alternative transportation such as buses, and reduce traffic through congestion pricing.

6. Develop stable sources of funding for transportation.

Transportation costs for the state are unsustainable through current funding methods. Connecticut is getting less money from the federal government and yet we need to make investments in order to stay competitive and to preserve our quality of life. The state needs to identify new sources of revenue that once collected will be dedicated to funding the state's transportation system. Market incentives to reduce automobile usage, such as insurance pricing based on miles driven and congestion pricing need to be seriously considered. Public-private partnerships for improving our transportation system should be explored. And how we leverage and prioritize those funds needs to be reviewed within the context of fix-it-first, and investing in public transit and bike and pedestrian improvements.

Connecticut should:

- Maintain current percentage of state transportation budget for public transit.
- Maintain current percentage of state transportation budget for bike and pedestrian projects.
- Keep transit fares affordable.
- Identify new sources of revenue to dedicate to the Special Transportation Fund i.e. congestion pricing, increase gas tax, or transfer car sales tax from the General Fund to the Special Transportation Fund.

7. Make walking and biking easier and safer with low-cost and small-scale improvements.

In 2009, Connecticut enacted the Complete Streets law that requires the state and municipalities to dedicate 1% of new transportation projects funded by the state to go to bike and pedestrian improvements. Unfortunately the actual implementation of this law is inconsistent and funding is frequently dropped from projects due to budgetary concerns. Enhancements for walking, biking and wheelchair use should be an immediate priority. Bike lanes, pedestrian crossings and multiuse trails are less expensive, quicker to build and healthier than new roads. Biking initiatives have made Portland (OR), Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh more vibrant and livable.

Connecticut should:

- Ensure all municipalities abide by the Complete Streets law so that at least 1% of DOT funding for new or retrofit projects is directed to bike and pedestrian improvements. Additional bike and pedestrian protections, such as the adoption of a Vulnerable User law, that would penalize reckless drivers who seriously injure people who are using the roads responsibly for biking or walking, would be another step towards a better and balanced transportation system.
- Dedicate an equitable and predictable funding stream for bike and pedestrian programs in the state's transportation budget.
- Invest in multi-use trails that connect our cities and towns, such as the East Coast Greenway.
- Incorporate bike lanes, sharrows, or bike boxes when planning for new streets or when re-paving streets.
- Implement "Safe Routes to School" and "Safe Routes for Seniors" programs in municipalities to facilitate walking by children and seniors.

8. Improve and expand bus transit while holding the line on the fares.

Bus service is the backbone of Connecticut's public transit system, serving both those who depend on it and those who prefer it. The newest type of bus service, bus rapid transit, uses a dedicated travel-way for buses to efficiently transport people along an exclusive route with a limited number of stops. Because the buses bypass congested roads, it is quicker and cheaper than driving a car. Connecticut has recently funded

the first bus rapid transit in Connecticut, the New Britain-Hartford Busway renamed *CTfastrak*. It will transport riders from the New Britain area and ten intermediate stops toward Hartford, ending at the Union Station transit hub. There, passengers can connect to other buses and trains including, eventually, trains to Springfield, New Haven and onward to New York, Boston and Washington when the proposed New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail line is completed. As these connectivity improvements are made, public transit becomes easier and more popular.

Connecticut should:

- Expand bus routes identified in the Transit for Connecticut 2010 "Missing Links" study done by Regional Plan Association. This report lists specific corridors and routes where adding transit service would be most effective.
- Implement real-time bus location system to provide schedule certainty and increase safety and convenience. The location data can also be made available to third party developers for smartphone apps.
- Keep fares affordable.
- Implement pre-board fare collection by installing kiosks at bus stops to buy the bus ticket and utilize "reloadable" fare cards that can be swiped when entering the bus. This will speed up bus service and reduce idling time of buses.
- Dedicate existing highway lanes for buses only. It's as simple as painting bus lanes on existing highway lanes and adding signage. Buses will move people faster thereby attracting more riders.
- Install signal prioritization. This new technology utilizes a system to hold green lights for buses and minimize the time the bus idles at a red light. Speed and efficiency is critical to attracting new bus riders.
- Improve transit websites to be more user-friendly and consistent to make transit travel easier and to increase ridership. A single statewide website that includes, or links, to all the many transit entities to allow a customer to type in a starting point, departure time and destination, and receive a travel plan using the bus and/or the train, including fare information and arrival time, is needed.
- Ensure adequate funding for Dial-A-Ride as it provides our seniors with transportation for medical appointments and community events, a service that enables many seniors to continue living independently.

9. Invest in rail.

Given today's security requirements at airports and regular flight delays, imagine getting on a high speed train in Hartford and four hours later being in the center of Washington DC versus traveling to the airport, arriving two hours early, getting your flight, arriving outside the city, renting a car or taking an expensive taxi ride to the center of the city and potentially sitting in traffic on both trips to and from the airport. In the densely populated northeast, high speed rail just makes sense. And for commuters, rail service is a cheaper, more efficient option than commuting by car especially in Fairfield County. MetroNorth is the busiest commuter rail line in the country serving over 36 million riders annually. While MetroNorth is critical for economic development for Fairfield County businesses, Shore Line East provides commuter service to New Haven and onward and is also beneficial to the tourism business in southeast Connecticut. Investing in rail is an investment in our economy. Connecticut should:

- Continue to invest in the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield high speed rail line and the planning for transit-oriented development around the stations, recognizing that each station must be developed within the context of that particular community.
- Improve and increase capacity of the New Haven Line by planning and providing dedicated funding for repair of the aging, movable bridges, enhancement of the stations and parking facilities, and roll out of the M8 rail cars.
- Invest in and upgrade existing rail lines with priority given to those areas with highest potential for transit oriented development within one half mile of the rail stations.
- Support bus expansion for better connection with passenger rail stations.
- Improve communications with the public by investing in technology for real time information, consolidating website information, and making it easier for riders to find out about delays or cancellations.
- Implement a consistent policy to allow bike racks on trains and provide safe bike racks, lockers and shelters at the stations.

10. Incentivize clean fuel options.

Although a transit-based strategy will reduce the number of vehicles necessary for Connecticut residents, many will find that they still need personal vehicles to achieve all their travel needs. There are ways the state can encourage citizens to buy fuel efficient cars that burn cleaner fuel or use alternative energy sources. Connecticut should:

- Develop a state-wide plan with guidelines and incentives for 21st Century infrastructure for electric and natural gas cars and trucks including charging stations.
- Continue to require stringent fuel economy standards following California's lead.
- Support additional incentives for hybrids and electric vehicles, such as reinstating the hybrid car tax rebate.
- Implement policies to incentivize state employees to use public transit.
- Invest in clean fuel fleets for state vehicles.

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**CONNECTICUT LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS**
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