



## THE PROBLEM

Transportation accounts for 38% of Connecticut's greenhouse gas emissions and is a major contributor to our global climate crisis. Emissions from the transportation sectors disproportionately harm urban, low-income, and minority populations. If we want to meet our carbon reduction goals and fight climate change, it's critical that we find new solutions centered on public transit, electrification, and more.

Connecticut is long overdue for transportation reform. For too long, infrastructure investment has centered only on road improvements and highway widening. Public transit options in our cities have long been neglected, and recent commitments to transition our state fleet and buses to electric vehicles are currently unfunded and in need of support.

## INVESTING IN ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Electric, zero-emission vehicles are necessary to combat climate change and improve public health. Pollution from traditional fossil fuel vehicles has rapidly increased asthma and other respiratory diseases in our children and elderly. Electrifying our vehicles will improve air quality and reduce health impacts.

As part of the 2019 budget, the General Assembly committed to electrify 50% of our light-duty fleet purchases and 30% of our heavy fleet purchases, including public buses. Going forward, Connecticut should ensure that all vehicle purchases and replacements are zero-emission, unless there is a performance-specific reason to exempt it (i.e. ambulances).

The CGA also implemented a sustainable source of funding for electric vehicle infrastructure. This effort is laudable, but requires a greater focus on low-income and communities of color that face the worst congestion and air quality, and are particularly reliant on public transportation for their daily commutes. These communities should be the first to receive electric buses and transit.

Connecticut must also rapidly expand access to charging infrastructure both within urban communities and rural areas. This will require adequate funding for infrastructure and incentives for residents to buy these vehicles. Unfortunately, in October 2019, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) drastically cut electric vehicle rebates. These cuts must be reversed.



Furthermore, Connecticut must establish an EV-ready building code and zoning requirement that ensures compatibility with Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) chargers. This is a major opportunity for the state to lead by example by requiring a minimum amount of EV-ready parking spaces at state buildings. Ensuring people have a place to charge their EVs while at work will go a long way to promoting the use of these vehicles statewide.

To ensure equity in electric vehicle investment, Connecticut must work to promote urban electric vehicle car share programs. These programs would bring electric vehicles to inner cities where car ownership is low and promote better air quality and improved public health.



**EXPANDING PUBLIC TRANSIT**

Connecticut's existing public transportation system is in dire need of reform. Too often, lawmakers focus on intercity rail connections. While improving travel times to New York or Boston may be important, these investments cannot come at the expense of intra-city public transit options.

For instance, it may take a resident of North Hartford more than three hours by bus to reach their job at the Westfarms Mall—a trip that would only take fifteen minutes by car. There are long intervals between bus arrivals and a lack of decent routes particularly on evenings and weekends.

Improvements to the public transit system must include better and more frequent bus routes. Not only will this keep cars off the road by making public transportation a viable option for workers, it will also provide greater access to employment, education and medical appointments for residents who cannot afford to own a personal vehicle.

**IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CT 2030 PLAN**

In November 2019, Gov. Ned Lamont issued his transportation plan to upgrade our state infrastructure.

While the CT2030 plan includes \$6B in funding for commuter rail, most of this would benefit residents of wealthier communities traveling to New York or Boston. There is little funding for upgraded public bus transit. Additionally, much of the plan is centered around the expansion of roads and highways, which would put more cars on the road, not remove them.

Furthermore, the plan calls for increased vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This does not make much sense in a state with a declining population and aggressive greenhouse gas reduction standards. Increasing the number of vehicle miles traveled will also increase emissions.

The CT2030 plan must be revised to include direct investment in public transit, bike paths, and walking trails. Not every resident can afford a personal vehicle, and we must ensure everyone in Connecticut has access to reliable transportation to school, work, and elsewhere.



**FAST FACTS**

- Washington state passed legislation in the 90's to reduce VMT, and now over 70% of Seattle center-city commuters do something other than drive alone. Seattle recently added 50,000 jobs and 20,000 residents, but didn't increase VMT.
- Both Metro Hartford and Metro New Haven have bus transit system improvement plans complete and ready to fund.
- According to Transport Hartford's 2019 state-wide transportation survey, 92% of survey-takers would like to see improved existing public transit options, including buses, trains, and dial-a-ride.

**CONTACT**

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