

# GREATER HARTFORD AREA COMPREHENSIVE TRANSIT SERVICE ANALYSIS

## Advisory Committee Meeting #4

November 6, 2015, 1:00 PM

CTtransit Offices

## Meeting Summary

### Welcome

Cara Radzins, Project Manager for CRCOG, welcomed everyone to the meeting and recapped the purpose of the study and the work completed to date by the Nelson\Nygaard consulting team.

### Public Forum

There were no public comments.

### Minutes from April 29, 2015 Advisory Committee Meeting

A motion was made by Mark Pellegrini, seconded by Mike Sanders, to accept the minutes from the Advisory Committee meeting held on April 29, 2015. This motion was passed unanimously.

### Update on Ongoing CTtransit and CRCOG Efforts

Dave Lee, CTtransit, provided an update on efforts to introduce new transit technologies on the local Hartford fleet. These include two technologies now used on CTfastrak buses:

- Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology. This “GPS-like” technology will: 1) help manage bus operations in real time; 2) enable more accurate bus scheduling based on actual travel time by time of day; and 3) provide the opportunity to develop real time bus tracking applications for customers.
- Automated Passenger Counters (APC). This technology will more accurately count and report passenger boardings by location. Information collected will help in route planning, as well as potential bus stop consolidation efforts.

These technologies will significantly increase the volume and quality of data available to support CTtransit operations and service planning. Mr. Lee suggested that the more accurate scheduling resulting from AVL might also translate into less interest in moving towards “clockface” scheduling, particularly as smart phone usage increases.

Ryan Visci of CRCOG provided an update on CRCOG’s regional bus shelter program. Phase 1 has been ongoing since 2011, and new shelters are being installed along existing bus routes throughout the region. The initial focus has been in Bloomfield, South Windsor, Wethersfield and Windsor Locks. Phase 2 will focus on East Hartford and Hartford. CRCOG is working to expand this program.

### Update on Comprehensive Service Analysis (CSA) Process

Anne Galbraith of ASG Planning described how the team is looking to build upon existing strengths of the current transit system. The team is also using individual route assessments to identify areas where service is not performing as well and where improvements or service modifications might be warranted. A first step in this process was to establish a hierarchy of service types and to determine

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the specific market each route is designed to serve. Many of these service types exist in the area today, but new categories include “arterial BRT” or fast, frequent service running in high density, transit-supportive urban arterials.

Boris Palchik of Nelson\Nygaard shared a heat map of transit ridership in the region, showing that a number of very strong transit corridors emerge. These corridors are good examples of the system strengths and are candidates for arterial BRT service. This service would be supported by physical treatments, such as higher quality shelters and passenger amenities, consolidation of bus stops, introduction of signal priority for transit buses, stricter parking enforcement and traffic improvements to improve the flow of bus transit.

The corridors form the basis of two alternative service improvement strategies: Tweak and Overhaul. The Tweak Scenario makes minor adjustments along existing routes to make service more effective. The Overhaul Scenario makes more significant changes to the structure of transit service in the region, focusing on the key transit corridors and making connections to these corridors from across the region.

Mr. Palchik and Ms. Galbraith led the group through proposed service improvement strategies in various parts of the region, for both the Tweak and Overhaul Scenarios. Mr. Palchik noted that the team had met with the individual towns to discuss and modify these proposals over the last month.

## **Discussion**

Lisa Rivers, CTDOT, noted the proposed changes to Route 69 have already been made by *CTtransit*. She also suggested the Tweak Scenario be renamed, perhaps to Service Adjustment Scenario, to reflect that the changes proposed might not be considered “tweaks” by impacted riders.

Mike Sanders, CTDOT, said it can be difficult to design effective transfer opportunities at outlying hubs or other destinations. Such connections work well in the inbound direction (i.e. going to Hartford in the AM) when a less frequent feeder route connects to a higher frequency corridor. However, in the outbound direction, riders must plan carefully to make connections with the outlying service. Many choose to drive and park near the more frequent service. Mr. Palchik agreed, and noted one solution to this challenge is to increase overall service frequency during peak commute times, but offer connecting service less frequently during off-peak hours.

Pointing to the initial success of the *CTfastrak* brand, Mike Sanders said CTDOT must be careful to retain this standard and to expand it only when new services offer equally strong characteristics and qualify.

Dave Lee noted that CROG has a regional vision for Complete Streets and should take the lead on making sure future arterial BRT improvements are incorporated into that vision. Lisa Rivers said CTDOT also has a statewide Complete Streets policy and has been considering “key transit stop” as they make corridor improvements along state roads.

Peter Souza, Town of Windsor, asked what sort of treatments would define a hub. Mr. Palchik explained it would differ by location and depend on both local community and CTDOT input. Hubs might include large or branded shelters, real time passenger information, and/or improved pedestrian connections to the surrounding area. Mr. Souza further stated that the presentation has provided him with a good understanding of the value of transit, and it would be helpful for towns to have a menu of action items that they could implement to support transit. A phased approach would be helpful. He also reiterated a key focus in Windsor is access to jobs.

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Mark Pellegrini, Town of Manchester, agreed a list of needed local improvements would be helpful and noted the importance of local support as CROG and *CTtransit* move forward with implementation. If *CTtransit* simply makes route and service adjustments without complementary local investment, the plan will not be successful. Towns must help install shelters, consolidate stops and develop key hubs in to attract more riders. He also reiterated strong local support for *CTfastrak* East.

Emily Hultquist from CROG noted that CROG has developed model zoning for Transit Oriented Development and these guidelines can be used to help communities improve transit access.

Mike Sanders remarked that Governor Malloy has proposed a large-scale transit improvement package which should provide new tools and resources to support transit. It would not be unreasonable to assume a 25% increase in transit services over a longer term (30-year) horizon. But, local support of this package will be needed.

Dave Lee reminded everyone that any changes recommended as a result of this study will need to undergo a Title VI analysis to ensure there are not disproportionate impacts on low income or minority populations.

CTDOT requested that public presentations in January depict less capital intensive treatments for local arterial BRT corridors, such as a range of potential treatments that could selectively applied to individual corridors as appropriate. It may be unlikely that local corridors can accommodate dedicated transit lanes or other more intensive treatments

### **Next Steps**

Public meetings are being planned for mid-January 2016. A proposed schedule and format was distributed, and Ms. Radzins encouraged Advisory Committee Members to get back to her with any comments or suggestions. She also asked for any comments on the Service Improvements Strategy document to be provided to CROG.

After public comment is received in January, the study team will further evaluate alternatives and develop a proposed implementation plan. A draft set of recommendations will be presented to the Advisory Committee at the next meeting, anticipated for the spring of 2016.

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**In Attendance**

- Advisory Committee
  - Charlie Carson, *CTtransit*
  - Philip Fry, *CTtransit*
  - Anne Hayes, Travelers
  - Dave Lee, *CTtransit*
  - Michelle Lipe, South Windsor
  - John Mullen, Hartford
  - Mark Pellegrini, Manchester
  - Ed Perzanowski, *CTrides*
  - Sara Radacsi, CTDOT
  - Lisa Rivers, CTDOT
  - Mike Sanders, , CTDOT
  - Peter Souza, Town of Windsor
- Interested Parties
  - Emily Hultquist, CRCOGs
- Study Team
  - Anne Galbraith, ASG Planning
  - Boris Palchik, Nelson\Nygaard
  - Cara Radzins, CRCOG
  - Ryan Visci, CRCOG