

February 18, 2011

Joint Committee on Transportation  
The State Capitol  
Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Senators and Legislators:

Unfortunately I could not attend today's hearing but feel compelled to share my thoughts about the Busway project between Hartford and New Britain.

I have characterized my thoughts under major categories with some dialog regarding each of the categories. I hasten to add that I am not an expert on many of these areas but a thoughtful citizen who was born and raised with public transit in New York City. I hope my comments will at least cause some sensible thoughts on this important issue.

### **Economic Impact**

#### Transit oriented development.

Will bring opportunities to areas surrounding the bus terminals that can expand small businesses provided goods and services to commuters.

#### Subsidized ridership

I don't believe they will become any more self-sufficient than the shoreline commuter services.

#### Cost escalations

Any project with a time line as long, as the development of mass transit, will have escalations in cost over the design build timeline. Abandoning the Busway and beginning the rail alternative will itself have built in cost escalations.

#### Equipment life cycle

Are buses or trains less expensive per ride? This is a DOT question.

#### Terminal Construction

It would seem that the rail alternative would require much larger terminals due to the frequency of train arrival verses the bus frequency.

#### True cost of tunnel repairs

I have overheard discussions regarding a tunnel and the undocumented cost of simply repairing the facility being exorbitant, and wonder what else is undisclosed

### **Light Rail**

#### Personal experiences

My personal experience is that whenever there is light rail, there are higher population densities, and effective interconnect with bus lines. Places such as Phoenix have such services and I have always used them in lieu of car rental at these cities. I also use bus services in the same way. They both work reasonably the same, for the need to move people but differentiate based on population density.

### Population Density

Our population density (or lack thereof) makes the rail option less appealing.

Chicago, New York City, and Washington DC elevated and subway systems move hundreds of thousands of people in a geographic area with huge densities. That density does not exist in Connecticut with a possible exception of the shoreline and Fairfield County.

### **Convenience**

#### One seat service

Same seat arrival to loop through Hartford commercial neighborhoods. Pick up and drop off services in the "feeder" towns and cities work equally as well.

Once the train arrives Union Station where do I go from here?

#### Frequency of service

There will no doubt be more buses per hour than trains per hour, leading to longer time to wait, load, and unload.

Additional space requirements at each station would be a necessity.

#### Routing opportunities

Periodic continued transit to other destinations such as Bradley can easily be accommodated on the bus way as a scheduling option.

#### Reliability

Examine the issues with the Waterbury Line being "temporarily" closed and buses being used to provide coverage? This occurs on a lesser basis but creates huge problems all along the rail corridor.

If a bus fails it can easily be removed. That option is not there for rail?

#### Alternative uses

Other uses such as bike trains and emergency service uses can be accommodated.

### **Timing to completion**

#### Completion

The Busway has the least time to ride.

It is far along the path of design, acquisition, and construction

#### Additional Time

Any form of rail service will require significant development of the right of way and not be done in a timely manner

#### Changes to the Hartford 84 elevated highway

Can certainly be more easily accommodated by changes in bus routes.

Changing a train route would be reasonably impossible.

Is the plan far enough along to be sure of the train routing?

## Political

### Decision Process

We have hired "professional" personnel at the Department of Transportation who appear to believe that this project is the correct approach.

Why do we second-guess the people we hire, to tell us what the best solutions are to our problems?

### Why are the political bodies "debating" this?

Is this about mass transit or about "you didn't include us"?

Is this the same old anti rationalization posture?

## Ridership

### How many people will be accommodated?

Do we believe more people will ride the train than the bus?

I doubt opponents of the bus plan explored this.

### What does the DOT say about ridership?

They have a great deal of information that was gathered. They have "experts" who have reviewed these alternatives why not lean on their expertise?

Submitted in hopes of preserving the Busway as the right choice at this point in time.....



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