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February 1, 2013

Dear Chairman

I would like to thank the Chairman for holding a public hearing on the West Haven Train Station parking garage. I would also like to thank Representative Davis and Senator Slossberg for proposing Bill #696.

Traffic in the area of the Train station site currently is congested on a regular basis. The opening of the train station will only add to the grid lock. Without an adequate number of parking spaces within the train station property, commuters will be circling the surrounding streets in search of parking creating a traffic nightmare, not only for all others trying to traverse that area, but for local merchants trying to conduct business. I own a local business in the center of West Haven, about half mile from the train station so I hear a lot of opinions, and it is a concern of local business people that commuters will not find any parking at the train station and park in their parking lots, creating a parking problem for their customers in essence, literally driving their customers away. A multi-level parking garage would help reduce automobile traffic on the surrounding streets and neighborhoods of the station.

The New Haven station has 1200 parking spaces, Milford has 444 and the West Haven proposal was for about 1100, which was reduced to 685 in 2010. The West Haven Train Station will be one of the largest in the state, the size of New Haven and Stamford. At present, parking for just two hundred more cars than Milford, a station that consist of a smaller platform and a small station, all outbound and inbound trains stop at New Haven, Stamford and eventually West Haven yet a much smaller schedule of trains stop in Milford, and the smaller stations, again making parking a potential problem for West Haven.

Another by-product having a West Haven parking garage at the site of the train station is security and employment. A 24-hour garage would allow a commuter to walk to their car all hours of the day in a much safer environment, under the watchful eye of security officers and video surveillance.

Also in these tough economic times there are many West Haven residents out of work and a garage operated 24 hours would employ a large number of people to provide security, maintenance, cashiers, etc. Hopefully, a large percent of these jobs will be filled by West Haven residents.

It is my opinion that a station without adequate spaces for parking will hamper the option for commuters wanting to use our station. It will reduce the number of potential customers that could increase West Haven's economic base and severely negatively impact our already congested streets and neighborhoods.

Again, I thank you for holding this public hearing and would urge you to study what issues would arise from not building this garage and all the countless positive effects a 24-hour four hundred car parking garage would do for the residents of West Haven and the surrounding towns' commuters.

Thank You.

Sincerely,

Ed O'Brien