



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

## ***TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE***

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Testimony Supporting House Bill No. 6851

### AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT TRANSIT CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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Senator Osten, Representative Miller and members of the Committee, I am Gian-Carl Casa, Undersecretary for Legislative Affairs at the Office of Policy and Management. I thank you for the opportunity to discuss HB 6851, Governor Malloy's proposal to establish a Connecticut Transit Corridor Development Authority (TCDA).

#### *Background*

The bill would establish a quasi-public CT Transit Corridor Development Authority (TCDA) to focus on transit-oriented development projects within a half-mile radius of any transit station.

TCDA will be governed by an 11-member board of directors: four appointed by the Governor, one appointed jointly by the Speaker of the House and Senate President Pro Tempore, one appointed jointly by the majority leaders of the House and Senate, and one appointed jointly by the minority leaders of the House and Senate. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, as well as the commissioners of the departments of Transportation, Housing and Economic and Community Development or their designees will be ex-officio members with the right to vote. The chief elected official of the municipalities in which development projects occur are ex-officio, non-voting members of the board for matters affecting that project.

TCDA will have the authority to issue bonds and take other actions consistent with operation of a quasi-public entity. It will have eminent domain powers within its designated development areas, in consultation with the chief elected official of the host municipality.

Please note that most of the provisions of the bill were drawn from existing statutes that created the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA). We are not breaking new legal ground with this proposal – just extending that model to transit nodes across the state.

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### *Why TCDA?*

Connecticut has long talked about what is often called sustainable patterns of development – encouraging development where the infrastructure to support it exists, rather than in undeveloped greenspaces. We have also talked much about “transit-oriented development” which concentrates housing, parking, cultural and commercial development near transit stops – reducing the need for travel by car and creating “walkable and livable” areas.

But that development has not occurred quickly enough. Connecticut is at the beginning of a major new effort to upgrade transportation infrastructure, and this proposal will help ensure that development near transit stations occurs more quickly and in concert with statewide transportation initiatives such as the new rail line between New Haven-Hartford-Springfield, *CTfastrak* and the existing rail lines such as New Haven Line, Shore Line East, and branch lines.

Connecticut has had a successful history with using quasi-public agencies to accomplish statewide priorities. The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, Connecticut Innovations, Inc. and CRDA are examples of the way in which a focused effort can help us meet our shared goals.

TCDA will not be an entity that will act on its own, but will coordinate with the municipalities within which the development occurs along with regional organizations, the state departments of Economic and Community Development, Housing, Transportation and the Office of Policy and Management. The bill before you provides that the chief elected official of the community within which a development occurs will be an ex-officio member of the Authority for matters affecting projects in their municipalities. We would welcome a requirement that TCDA also consult with the appropriate regional planning organizations (RPOs).

### *Summary*

This bill presents an opportunity for Connecticut to put into action its long discussions about “smart growth” type development. TCDA is based on existing and successful Connecticut entities. I urge you to support this bill and help make our state not just a model of transportation infrastructure, but of planning, too.

Thank you for your consideration.