



Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging

A Nonpartisan Public Policy and Research Office of the Connecticut General Assembly

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*With 21 volunteer
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Testimony of
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Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging

Transportation Committee

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Senators Maynard and Leone, Representatives Guerrera and Arce, and esteemed members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Julia Evans Starr, and I am the Executive Director for Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging. I thank you for this opportunity to comment on several bills before you today.

As you know, Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging is the non-partisan, public policy and research office of the General Assembly, devoted to preparing Connecticut for a significantly changed demographic and enhancing the lives of the present and future generations of older adults. For over twenty years, the Legislative Commission on Aging has served as an effective leader in statewide efforts to promote choice, independence and dignity for Connecticut's older adults and persons with disabilities.

Bills concerning non-motorized transportation options

- **Proposed Bill No. 484, An Act Concerning Bicycle Crossings**
- **Proposed Bill No. 502, An Act Concerning Bicycle Safety and Transportation Options**
- **Proposed Bill No. 6368, An Act Allowing Towns to Establish Two-Way Protected Bicycle Lanes**

Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging **supports** any efforts to broaden choice and increase safety for individuals utilizing non-motorized transportation options. These efforts are important for all residents but are especially critical for the third of the population that does not drive, including older adults, persons with disabilities, children, and those who for various reasons cannot operate or do not own a vehicle.

Connecticut is undergoing a permanent and historic transformation in its demographics: it is aging. Connecticut is the 7th oldest state in the nation with the 3rd longest-lived constituency, and between 2010 and 2040, Connecticut's population of



people age 65 and older is expected to grow by 57%.¹ Moreover, older adults suffer disproportionately from pedestrian deaths in the U.S. While currently comprising 12.6% of the total population, adults age 65 and older accounted for nearly 21% of pedestrian fatalities nationally from 2003 to 2010.²

Following our statutory charge³, we're convening, engaging, inspiring and supporting local and regional efforts to create more livable communities for residents across the lifespan. We're working with diverse partners, connecting related initiatives, and promoting ideas, innovations and resources. Through this work, we know that Connecticut residents overwhelmingly want to stay in their homes and communities as they grow older, retaining choice, independence and dignity. Accordingly, ensuring that there are diverse, accessible, safe and affordable transportation choices across the lifespan is more important than ever before. Transportation is the vital link that connects residents with their communities and the elements of a vibrant and engaged life.

As you know, Complete Streets are designed and operated to safely accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit-riders of all ages and abilities. There is no singular Complete Streets design principle, with urban, suburban and rural communities encouraged to adopt different plans to suits their unique community contexts.

In Connecticut, 9 out of 169 towns (just over 5%) report having a local Complete Streets policy in place—New Haven, Middletown, Hamden, South Windsor, Coventry, Torrington, Milford, Stonington and Bridgewater.⁴ In October 2014, the Connecticut Department of Transportation issued a policy statement, articulating that, as a condition of funding, Complete Streets must be considered.⁵ These are important first steps toward continued adoption and implementation of complete streets policies across Connecticut.

The benefits of broadening transportation options include healthier, more active lifestyles for everyone; lowered vehicular congestion and air pollution because of reduced driving; improved

¹ Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging. Connecticut for Livable Communities. A Report Pursuant to Public Act 13-109, to the Connecticut General Assembly's Committees on Aging, Housing, Human Services and Transportation. July 1, 2014. <http://www.livablect.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Annual-Report-2014-FINAL-2.pdf>. Accessed February 10, 2015.

² Smart Growth America and National Complete Streets Coalition. Dangerous by Design 2014. <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/dangerous-by-design-2014/dangerous-by-design-2014.pdf>. Accessed February 10, 2015.

³ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-420

⁴ Bike Walk Connecticut. Connecticut 2014 Bike-friendly, Walk-friendly Town Scorecard. http://www.bikewalkct.org/uploads/1/1/8/5/11852691/media_release_-_town_by_town_scorecard_2014.pdf. Accessed February 10, 2015. In this survey instrument, 65 towns either (a) did not know whether or not their town has a Complete Streets policy or (b) did not respond. Accordingly, there may be additional towns with Complete Streets policies, not captured in this indicator.

⁵ Connecticut Department of Transportation Complete Streets Policy Statement. http://www.bikewalkct.org/uploads/1/1/8/5/11852691/ex_o_-31_complete_streets_-_oct2014.pdf. Accessed February 10, 2015.

connectivity between residents and economic opportunities; and reduced household transportation costs, freeing up income for other purposes.

Developing guidance and standards for complete streets (**Proposed Bill Number 502**) and otherwise enhancing the safety for users of non-motorized transportation (**Proposed Bill Numbers 484 and 6368**) are important steps in helping Connecticut ensure that its transportation system evolves to optimally support the state's changing demographics.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide comment today on these bills.