Testimony of the Partnership for Strong Communities
In Support of SB19, An Act Establishing The Transit Corridor Development Assistance Authority
Planning & Development Committee, March 4, 2016

Sen. Osten, Rep. Miller, Sen. Linares, Rep. Aman, Rep. Linares, Distinguished Committee Members,

The Partnership for Strong Communities is a statewide housing policy organization that works to end homelessness and expand housing choices to strengthen Connecticut communities. The Partnership staffs and manages two statewide campaigns – Reaching Home and HOMEConnecticut focused on these goals, respectively.

The Partnership **strongly supports SB19, An Act Establishing The Transit Corridor Development Assistance Authority.** We believe a Transit Corridor Development Assistance Authority will provide the coordinated and targeted resources needed to support the creation of a wider array of housing choices and combine them with transit, and therefore employment access, that will foster both economic growth for Connecticut and individual opportunity for working households across the state. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects will allow the state and its municipalities to leverage the significant investments Connecticut has made in mass transit so it can attain its full value.

The Partnership believes that housing is the foundation of opportunity. But housing affordability is not exclusively predicated on rent or sales price. Integral to that success is ensuring low- and moderate-income households are considered in the TOD process so that those families can gain access to jobs, services, education, and healthcare. When a household is within 1/2 mile of transit, their transportation costs can be as low as 9%, as compared to households that are not near transit, whose transit costs can reach 24% of their household income. This 15% difference provides a significant increase in household income available for daily necessities. This is especially crucial for the state's low- and moderate- income households struggling to meet their basic needs.

With the coordination and resources SB19 would confer, a Transit Corridor Development Assistance Authority can help support the creation of housing affordable to a range of households located near transit. Housing proximate to transit advances several important policy goals: (1) households, including low- and moderate-income households, near transit would have much broader access to employment, training, educational, healthcare and

other opportunities; (2) employers the Authority would be able to help locate near transit would have access to a much wider array of skilled and educated workers; (3) housing around transit hubs provides riders to advance the economic sustainable of the state's investment in mass transit; and (4) promotion of commercial and retail development around transit nodes.

Many of the municipalities located along Connecticut's key transit corridors – MetroNorth, ShoreLine East, CT*fastrak*, and the Hartford rail line – are small and have had little experience with proactive housing creation and transit-oriented development and may need assistance and coordination. A Transit Corridor Development Assistance Authority could help bring support to interested communities, assisting with resources and capacity to jumpstart development.

To date, the Partnership has worked with more than 20 municipalities along those same transit corridors. All are interested in creating smaller, denser, affordable and energy-efficient housing – along with new commercial ventures that would deliver employment opportunities – in walkable neighborhoods near existing or new transit stations.

The Partnership for Strong Communities firmly believes in the value of the proposed TCDAA, and the opportunities to advance the work of many communities that are keenly interested in developing transit-oriented-development and integrating mixed-income housing that meets the needs of residents today and into the future.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.