

Questions for Transportation Commissioner Nominee

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Transportation Commissioner ([CGS §§ 13b-3 & 13b-4](#))

The Department of Transportation (DOT) commissioner is responsible for all aspects of planning, developing, maintaining, and improving transportation in the state. The commissioner's specific duties include the following:

1. developing a comprehensive, integrated transportation policy;
2. operating a modern, safe, efficient, and energy-conserving system of highway, mass transit, marine, and aviation facilities and services;
3. cooperating with federal, state, interstate, and local agencies performing transportation activities;
4. providing for the construction and repair of capital improvements needed to operate a safe and efficient transportation system;
5. promoting coordinated and efficient use of all available and future modes of transportation; formulating and implementing plans to improve transportation safety; and
6. studying ways to provide parking facilities to encourage travel by combining motor vehicles and other forms of transportation.

Nominee Questions

General

1. What is your vision for transportation in Connecticut? What does the state need to do to get there? What are the potential barriers?
2. You have extensive experience in rail management. How has this experience prepared you to lead a multi-modal agency?
3. What are DOT's legislative proposals for this session? What are the top priorities?

Transportation Funding

1. Do you believe the state's current transportation funding sources are adequate to keep its transportation system in a state of good repair over the next 15 years? Given the instability of the federal Highway Trust Fund, is there a significant risk of losing federal funding in the future? Could Connecticut weather that storm?
2. What do you think are the benefits and drawbacks of tolls? Do you think tolling is an option worth pursuing for Connecticut?
3. What are your thoughts on alternative project financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships (P3s) or infrastructure banks? Could Connecticut benefit from these policies?
4. This past November, the constitutional transportation "lockbox" passed by a vote of about 860,000 to 110,000. How does this impact the department's ability to make investments in transportation infrastructure?

Agency Operations and Transportation Planning

1. How should DOT prioritize transportation projects? Should there be more emphasis placed on a project's potential economic benefits?
2. What types of strategic planning does DOT need to do to meet future transportation and mobility needs?
3. Is DOT's current staff level adequate? How has the department handled the loss of senior staff to retirement? How does the level of DOT staff affect project delivery?
4. About 40% of annual Special Transportation Fund revenue goes to DOT's operating budget. Is DOT doing enough to control administrative costs?

Highways and Bridges

1. According to the [American Society of Civil Engineers](#), much of Connecticut's roads and bridges are over 50 years old. How does this affect transportation planning and funding? What are the challenges of maintaining an aging transportation system?
2. According to [TRIP](#), Connecticut drivers in urban centers spend an average of 40 to 49 hours per year sitting in traffic. How does congestion affect the state's economy? What can be done to improve it?

Public Transit

1. You took over Metro North in 2014 amid a safety crisis, and many credit you for turning the railroad around. What steps did you take to improve the railroad? What issues still exist, and how should they be addressed?
2. At his inauguration, Governor Lamont highlighted his "30/30/30" vision for a commuter rail system that would provide 30 minute rides from Hartford to New Haven, New Haven to Stamford, and Stamford to Manhattan. Is this achievable? What actions and resources would be needed to get there?
3. The New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line opened in 2018, but it has encountered a few issues, including passengers with non-Amtrak tickets being asked to get off Amtrak trains despite the "one ticket, one train" policy. What is your assessment of the line's performance to date? How can the department address the ticketing issue? What other improvements do you suggest?
4. What improvements would you like to make to bus service in Connecticut? How can the state better integrate rail and bus service?
5. Many experts, including the Federal Transit Administration, indicate that transit-oriented development provides many benefits, including increased ridership and associated revenue gains for transit systems, economic returns to surrounding landowners and businesses, and neighborhood revitalization. How can the state, and DOT specifically, promote transit-oriented development?

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