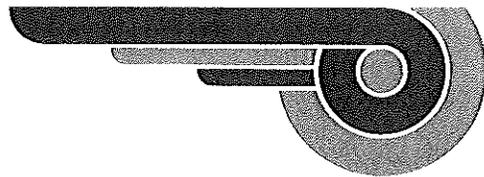


NORWALK TRANSIT DISTRICT



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Comments for the Joint Transportation Committee

August 19, 2009

My name is Louis Schulman and I am the Administrator of the Norwalk Transit District. The Norwalk Transit District is one of I believe, four Transit District's in Connecticut to have been selected by ConnDOT and the Federal Transit Administration for ARRA funding. In our case we have received a grant of \$1,500,000 to fund the reconstruction of our pulse point, the single location where all local and regional buses meet in Norwalk.

In summary, the project includes a three hundred foot long canopy, bus shelters, cctv security cameras, benches, new curbing, street and sidewalk reconstruction, safety bollards, and streetscape plantings. The pulse point serves not only Norwalk Transit District buses, but those from greater Bridgeport, Milford, Danbury and CT Transit's Stamford division. As a result, this is a project of regional importance and enjoys the strong support of the South Western Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The entire project has a cost of approximately \$3,500,000. ConnDOT provided matching funds for the design of the new facility. Over the course of the last eight years the District has received over half a dozen earmarks and federal 5307 capital grants to fund the project. However, these earmarks and grants all require a 20% match. ConnDOT has been asked on numerous occasions to provide this match. The response has always been that ConnDOT does not match transit district earmarks. In response to the department's refusal to provide matching funds the District's legislative delegation in effect placed a State earmark in Public Act 07-06. However, the governor has eliminated these funds from Bond Commission consideration.

The District has gone out to bid and bids have come back below budget. We are prepared to award a contract but cannot without a commitment from ConnDOT that the matching funds will be available. The Federal Transit Administration has said we can spend all federal funds first, so that no ConnDOT funds will be needed before 2010. We have asked ConnDOT to provide assurance that the matching funds will be made available, and that if the Bond funds become available the DOT funds will not be spent. The response from ConnDOT has been that they do not fund transit district earmarks. Without matching funds of \$455,000 we are not in a position to do this project because it is a \$3,500,000 project not a \$1,500,000 project. The ARRA funds were granted on a basis of a complete project which includes the \$2,000,000 in earmarks and match. As a result, we may lose a project we have been working on for eight years and that ConnDOT supports. It goes without saying that the ARRA funds, which can be spent immediately if we award a contract, will remain in limbo putting no one to work.