



## QUESTIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER NOMINEE

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### **TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER ([CGS §§ 13B-3, 13B-4](#))**

The transportation commissioner is responsible for all aspects of planning, developing, maintaining, and improving transportation in the state. Specific duties include: developing a comprehensive, integrated transportation policy; operating a modern, safe, efficient, and energy-conserving system of highway, mass transit, marine, and aviation facilities and services; cooperating with federal, state, interstate, and local agencies performing transportation activities; providing for the construction and repair of capital improvements needed to operate a safe and efficient transportation system; promoting coordinated and efficient use of all available and future modes of transportation; formulating and implementing plans to improve transportation safety; and studying ways to provide parking facilities to encourage travel by combining motor vehicles and other forms of transportation.

### **NOMINEE QUESTIONS**

#### ***Transportation Funding***

1. There has been much discussion recently about creating a “lockbox,” possibly through a state constitutional amendment, to ensure that money raised from transportation revenue, such as the gas tax, is used solely for transportation purposes. The idea was raised last session, but failed. Do you think the state needs a lockbox? If not, how can the state ensure it will be able to adequately fund its transportation needs?
2. The federal Highway Trust Fund, which has funded state transportation projects for nearly 60 years, is running out of money. With federal money no longer assured, states are seeking stable revenue sources of their own, such as by increasing gas taxes or implementing tolls. Should Connecticut look to either of these funding sources? Are there other options?
3. There has been some uncertainty about the federal position on tolling existing highways. What is your understanding of where and when the federal government will allow tolling of existing roadways?

## ***Highways and Bridges***

1. Do you support the idea of widening I-95 in southwestern Connecticut? Some observers say widening or adding another lane would just attract additional traffic, leaving the state with the same problem as before. What is your response?
2. Recent news stories have highlighted the need to repair state highways and bridges. What constitutes a "state of good repair" for state roads, bridges, and transit? How much money is needed annually and for the next 20 years to keep our infrastructure in a state of good repair?

## ***Transportation Planning***

1. The Department of Transportation (DOT), through its "Transform CT" project, is seeking ideas from residents, businesses, civic groups, and others on how they want the state's transportation system to look in the future. What have you learned so far? Have the responses led you to reconsider DOT initiatives or embark on new ones?
2. You have said that DOT would like to move from an 80/20 split between highways and other transportation modes to one closer to 50/50.
  - a. What are you doing to effect this change?
  - b. How long will it take before the transition is complete?
  - c. What percentage of commuters would have to switch to public transit to most efficiently use the state's highway and transit systems?
3. What, if any, opportunities exist to take advantage of public-private partnerships in advancing the state's transportation agenda?
4. What types of strategic planning does DOT need to do to meet future transportation and mobility needs? For example, how can the department best address the needs of an aging population?

## ***Public Transit***

### ***Buses***

1. CTFastrak, the busway between New Britain and Hartford, is scheduled to begin operating in two months. The new system is not without its skeptics. How many riders does CTFastrak need to be considered a success? How will the busway impact traffic in the New Britain-Hartford corridor?
2. What else is DOT doing to (a) expand commuter bus service in the state, and (b) better connect existing routes?

3. Please discuss the recent court case involving DOT's effort to use its eminent domain power to acquire the certificates that allow bus companies to operate on certain routes. What does DOT hope to achieve by exercising this power?

### ***Metro North***

1. The past two years have not been easy ones for Metro North commuters. What can the state do to ensure commuters have safe, quick, and trouble-free service on this vital rail link? Are you satisfied with Metro North's efforts to improve service?

### ***Hartford Line***

1. What is the status of the Hartford rail line? Specifically, how much money is needed to complete this project? When do you expect trains to be running? How will this service benefit residents?

### ***On-Demand Car Services***

1. DOT regulates taxi companies. In the past year the Uber car service, which relies on cell phone apps to obtain customers, began operating in the state, much to the consternation of the taxi companies with whom they compete. Should DOT regulate Uber and similar ride share programs the same way it regulates taxis or should it develop a new regulatory scheme for such firms, as some other states have done?

### ***Other Questions***

1. You became DOT commissioner in 2011. What are the department's greatest achievements during your time as commissioner? What would you like to see the department accomplish in the next four years?
2. Does the loss of senior DOT personnel to retirement mean the department will rely more strongly on consultants? How does DOT balance the use of in-house staff and outside consultants to implement projects and programs?
3. What is the status of the renovations to the state's service areas? Are you satisfied with the progress that has been made?
4. What is the department doing to maintain and expand the state's freight rail system?

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