



COURTESY OF BILLINGS FORGE COMMUNITY WORKS

CONNECTING THE DOTS

The good news is that we already have some of the pieces of the puzzle needed to form a great transportation system. Now we must connect the dots. To do that, we need to consider first and foremost what we want to preserve and then where and how we want to grow. Preserving and enhancing the unique character of our 169 individual communities must come first. From there we should decide what we need to invest in and how to prioritize the limited available funds to complete our transportation system. We need to connect the dots so that our major travel corridors link roads, transit, multi-use trails, sidewalks, bike lanes and airports with our communities so people can have more choices in how they get to where they want to go.

One big piece of the transportation puzzle is developing a system that conveniently connects trains, buses, bike paths and sidewalks with neighborhoods and transit stations. Investments in this area are slowly being realized in Connecticut.

The first Bus Rapid Transit line between New Britain and Hartford, now called *CTfastrak*, is expected to open in 2014. It will have a dedicated bus-only lane and preferred signaling. Pre-paid boarding options will quickly move 16,000 riders a day bypassing one of the most congested highways in Connecticut. It will include a multi-use trail and allow people to walk or bike to a local station, jump on a bus and get to a job, a major health center, a state university, a shopping mall or the Capital city in record time in a comfortable, secure and efficient way.

DID YOU KNOW?



The Connecticut transportation system provides over

**38.4
MILLION**

trips per year on buses and over

**38.3
MILLION**

trips per year on rail lines running throughout the state.

Source: Connecticut DOT



COURTESY OF CONNECTICUT DOT

FACT

With SEVEN ZERO EMISSION FUEL CELL BUSES, Connecticut is a national leader in moving to a clean air fleet of public transit buses.



DID YOU KNOW?



CT Transit-Hartford has mounted bicycle racks on the front of all buses.

There is no additional fee for this service and it is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Investments in high speed rail between New Haven, Hartford and Springfield are also evolving. The goal is to reinstall double tracks along the rail line and make station improvements that will attract 5,000 new riders



daily. This rail corridor will be used for both passenger and freight service over a 62 mile route. Improvements to this rail line will increase Connecticut's regional economic competitiveness and allow for more travel options. Upgrading the rail line between New Haven, Hartford and Springfield is one of the critical connections between Boston and Washington D.C. for a fully functioning Northeast rail corridor. Investing in this rail corridor continues to have bi-partisan support at the federal, regional and state level.

The East Coast Greenway, a multi-use trail that will eventually run 3000 miles from Canada to Florida, has been compared to the Appalachian Trail, both in terms of its forward thinking vision and its connectivity between the eastern states. In Connecticut, the East Coast Greenway will eventually include 198 miles of trails and travel through some of the state's most scenic areas, major cities and small towns. Steady progress on the trail in Connecticut has occurred in recent years. According to the East Coast Greenway Alliance, completing the segments that run parallel to the Merritt Parkway and closing the gaps in the Farmington Canal Greenway will help bring the trail to fruition.

While the East Coast Greenway is impressive, its purpose is primarily recreational. In order to make biking and walking really viable as functional modes of transportation, Connecticut must invest in making our roads safer and more accessible for bicycling and walking. For every future transportation project, pedestrian and bicyclists should be given the same consideration as drivers. Recently, after a great deal of citizen advocacy, the Connecticut DOT agreed to add a sidewalk to the Putnam Bridge rehabilitation project to allow non-drivers to cross the Connecticut River between Glastonbury and Wethersfield. The DOT is to be congratulated on changing the project to add the sidewalk. In the future we hope DOT will include sidewalks and bike lanes in the planning and design phase of every road, bridge and transit station project to encourage more people to walk or bike to where they want to go.