



## **Transportation & Climate Initiative CT Stakeholder Kickoff Meeting August 13, 2019 at UConn Hartford**

### ***Small Group Discussion Summaries***

In Connecticut's major urban areas and arteries, worsening traffic congestion has led to roughly \$2.4 billion annually in lost time and wasted fuel. Public bus transportation is either limited or non-existent in 70 Connecticut towns, slowing down commuters and reducing access to healthcare. Poor evening and weekend bus service serves as a hurdle for those that need to get to and from work. As we search for lasting solutions to boost our state's economy and improve mobility, we must also consider the growing environmental impact of transportation. Cars, trucks and buses are now the largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Connecticut. In fact, transportation is currently responsible for 40% of Connecticut's GHG emissions and about 67% of the state's NO<sub>x</sub> (Nitrous Oxide) emissions. This must be addressed for the state to meet its climate goals and to protect its most vulnerable populations.

### **Environmental & Economic Justice**

Environmental and economic justice issues affect marginalized communities across CT, with economic disinvestment and pollution concentrated in communities that have been least empowered to protest. Considering access to transportation as a basic human right, CT's TCI approach must actively include those most affected by systemic environmental justice issues. In the Hartford area, systemic EJ issues include the omnipresence of highways throughout the city that both cause public health problems and stifle economic growth; overreliance on single occupancy car travel, which privileges higher income commuters over low income residents; and the trash burning plant that concentrates solid waste from more than a third of the towns in the state in one neighborhood. To address historic inequities and disinvestment, TCI framework should prioritize jobs access in low income communities, transit-oriented development that includes affordable housing, improve and expand local public transit networks, and address respiratory and other health issues exacerbated by pollution. TCI investments should be made with intention, representation, and transparency.

### **Public Transportation**

Electrification of the public bus fleet is an opportunity to create jobs and reduce emissions. Rural communities lack access to public transportation; in urban communities, a public transit ride can take 3-5 times longer than driving a car, and thus most riders use bus service because they have no other way to travel. How close is the state to implementing transit network improvement plans? Planning should include transit-oriented development; alignment of housing and businesses with bus routes; facilitating first/last mile connections; and better connections for rural residents. Quality public transportation contributes to economic vitality and road safety.

## **Transportation Pollution**

Transportation pollution negatively impacts human health, and makes outdoor work and other activities such as biking and walking difficult and dangerous, especially in our cities. To address this, TCI should invest in ways that reduce transportation pollution in cities and towns already overburdened with pollution; these investments should include electric transit and school buses, more transit buses, more trains, and first/last mile planning. Transit oriented development and better biking and walking routes should be planned. Innovations such as designated lanes, subsidies for low-income residents, workplace incentives, and trade in programs should be considered.

## **Health & Housing**

Getting more CT residents to live near their work would go a long way toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. Asthma and other respiratory issues are prevalent in CT, particularly in low-income communities where pollution is concentrated. Impacts include lost productivity, more dangerous roads, increased cancer rates due to particulates of emissions. Some solutions include a universal housing code that influences transportation access; making public transportation cheaper, safer, more reliable, and more accessible; building affordable housing and planning transportation hubs; disincentivizing driving and single occupancy vehicle trips; electrifying vehicles, including incentivizing private vehicle purchases and converting fleets; engaging communities on transportation issues; and improving walking and biking facilities.

## **Accountability**

TCI-generated funds must be protected, then used as intended - not diverted by legislature to fund other non-sustainable transportation efforts or plug budget gaps. Clear, regular, public communications reinforcing clear statutory language, are necessary. The state should track and publicize how investments are being collected and made, making the information available online and in multiple languages. To ensure emissions reductions, TCI should include a steep penalty for non-compliance, as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative for energy pollution (RGGI) does. Specific metrics and transparency for reducing pollution in environmental justice communities are needed.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

- **Thurs, 9/26, 4:30-5:30 PM, “TCI 102” web meeting, online and teleconference ([RSVP Here](#))**
- **Tues, 10/29, 4:30-7:30 PM, CT’s Transportation Future Networking Dinner and Community Meeting, Hartford ([RSVP Here](#))**
- **Mon, 11/25, Northeast Multimodal and Transit Summit, New Haven ([Register Here](#))**

## **Videos from the Aug 13th, 2019 Meeting -**

- [Video 1](#) - Jordan Stutt of the Acadia Center, Intro to Transportation Climate Initiative Goals
- [Video 2](#) - Katie Dykes, Commissioner of CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, and Tom Maziarz, Director of Policy & Planning at CT Dept of Transportation, discussing state’s planning efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, and where CT can invest revenue

## **If you have questions or want to get more involved:**

- **Email** - [TransportHartford@ctprf.org](mailto:TransportHartford@ctprf.org), Anthony Cherolis, Transport Hartford Coordinator
- **Phone** - 860-247-3227 ext 20
- **Transportation Climate Initiative** - [Intro Webinar](#), & [Our Transportation Future Website](#)
- **Facebook discussion group** - [Transport Hartford - Talking Transportation](#)