



## ***Transportation Committee - Board of Representatives***

Robert "Gabe" DeLuca, Chair Terry Adams, Vice Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Thursday, February 11, 2010  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Republican Caucus Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard

The Transportation Committee met as indicated above. Present were Chair DeLuca and Vice Chair Adams and Committee Member Reps. Lombardo, McNeil, Raduazzo and Young. Also present were Reps. Layton, Mallozzi and Zelinsky; Jack Condlin of the Stamford Chamber of Commerce; Marty Levine representing the League of Women Voters; Josh LeCar, City of Stamford; and Stuart Popper, David Chase and Stephen Gazillo of URS.

Chair DeLuca called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Vice Chair Adams took over as Chair of the meeting.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
2. <a href="#">T28.003</a>	REVIEW; FINAL study on feasibility of light rail project in Stamford.	<b>REPORT MADE</b>

Representatives of URS gave a brief presentation (see [attached](#)) covering the Final DRAFT Report (report is available in Board Office). In addition to the attached overview of the presentation, URS noted:

- This proposal is not just for commuters, it is intended for current and future residents.
- The proposal is intended to make the City more attractive downtown to attract more residents.
- The scope of the project did not include looking at economic development, but URS did develop what is now a national model to determine the economic impact of a Light Rail System (LRS) on a community.
- Stamford has a good bus network, and the LRS should complement the busses.
- New LRS technology includes battery operation for sensitive areas.

- The first steps are 1) establishing a bus priority corridor; 2) bringing the public in to get a perspective on their sentiment; 3) perform an Alternatives Analysis, which is required if Stamford wants to apply for federal funding, to look at ridership and the best transportation model (e.g., bus, LR, etc.); and 4) perform an environmental assessment.

Vice Chair Adams called for questions from representatives.

- Rep. Mallozzi stated that it is very important for us to know in which direction Mayor Pavia will go on this project, and in light of his statements during the campaign that he is not in favor of it, it seems somewhat pointless for representatives to be reviewing lengthy studies and to continue holding hearings on the matter.
- Mr. LeCar stated that he has extended an offer to the Mayor to meet to discuss the study, but the Mayor has been busy with other things.
- Chair DeLuca stated that he presumes that the Mayor will take into consideration the Committee's recommendations because the Mayor will have to work with each Committee and this Board.
- Rep. Layton asked if the project could be constructed in sections. URS representatives replied that they are typically built this way.
- Rep. Adams discussed his recent experience with trolley busses in Savannah, Georgia, and felt this was more flexible than fixed rail and would cost a fraction of a LRS.
- Mr. Condlin reminded everyone that trolley busses were tried in the early 1980s, and the ridership was terrible as it was perceived as a bus, not a trolley.
- URS stated that trolley systems are used by a different demographic than busses. The economic development benefit will only be realized if a fixed rail system is installed. Property owners and businesses do not look at busses the same way they look at LRS.
- Rep. Raduazzo felt that this was somewhat of a luxury and that it might attract ridership at first, but after the novelty wears off, patrons will return to using the busses.
- Rep. Zelinsky stated that the consultants had initially planned a public hearing in January, and it has not taken place. Mr. LeCar responded that they were holding off on the public hearing until after the Mayor has weighed in on the project.
- Rep. Zelinsky stated that during his campaign, he did not meet one resident who was in favor of this project, and that in his opinion, the project is "dead on arrival."
- Chair DeLuca stated that he still thinks there is a possibility for this project, even if it is years from now, similar to the the Mill River Project (which was conceived of in the 1920s). Chair DeLuca stated that the Transportation Committee should hold a public hearing at the next meeting rather than wait for the mayor to decide. He suggested an announcement be placed in the newspaper to notify the public. At the

- Rep. Mallozzi stated that the report is useful and he is glad that the consultants are considering busses in addition to the LRS.
- URS advised that there are capital funds available from the Federal and state governments as well as from private sources. Some cities use parking ticket revenues, etc. to fund these projects. The fares would be the same as the bus fares. Since Stamford does not currently contribute toward the bus system, it is anticipated that it would not contribute toward the LRS.
- Currently, the “Small Starts” program offers \$75 million on projects up to \$250 million. The Obama administration has a new program, “Urban Circulator Systems,” set up in late 2009, for these types of projects.
- Mr. LeCar stated that at this point, he is trying to build support for this project and does not see anything happening for 5, 10 or 15 years. Rather than seeing what funding is available, he suggested that Stamford determine what is best for Stamford and then find the funding that supports the project.

Chair DeLuca stated that hopefully the Committee will recommend a public hearing in March, and he stated that Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup> will be the next Transportation Committee meeting.

Upon motion duly made and seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Adams, Vice Chair