

# Missing Links

Prioritized Bus Service Expansion Plan  
January 2010

## Transit for Connecticut

*Helping People, the Economy and the Environment*

AARP Connecticut  
Bridgeport Regional Business Council  
Capitol Region Council of Governments  
Career Resources, Inc.  
Connecticut Association for Community Transportation  
Connecticut Association for Human Services  
Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby  
Connecticut Coalition on Aging, Inc.  
Connecticut Conference of Municipalities  
Connecticut Fund for the Environment  
Connecticut Technology Council  
ConnPIRG (Connecticut Public Interest Research Group)  
Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency  
Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Waterbury Chamber of Commerce

In partnership with

Regional <sup>CT  
NJ  
NY</sup> Plan Association



Hockanum Valley Community Council, Inc.  
League of Women Voters of Connecticut  
MetroHartford Alliance  
Norwalk Chamber of Commerce  
Regional Plan Association  
Retired Senior Volunteer Program (Western Connecticut)  
Southeast Area Transit  
Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging, Inc.  
Southwestern Region Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Southwestern Regional Planning Agency  
The Business Council of Fairfield County  
Connecticut State Independent Living Council  
The Kennedy Center  
The Workplace, Inc.  
1000 Friends of Connecticut

## Transit for Connecticut

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### Missing Links- Prioritized Bus Service Expansion Plan

January 2010

Each day, over 74,000 Connecticut residents board public transit that carries them to school, jobs, shopping, and family. Current initiatives to improve the availability and quality of transit in Connecticut include the recent order of 300 new commuter rail cars, a bus rapid transitway on the cusp of obtaining federal funding, studies to improve our commuter rail branch lines, and continued progress toward expanding commuter rail to the Hartford region. These efforts will take time and still leave many residents car-dependent. In an effort to determine where the most serious gaps exist in our state's transit network coverage, Transit for Connecticut commissioned a study by Regional Plan Association that analyzed vehicle trip patterns to determine where additional transit service might serve the most new riders. This report outlines 13 expansions to our bus system that could best reduce our state's dependence on motor vehicles, expanding access to employment and job growth while working toward state goals to reduce transportation-related carbon emissions. These new linkages represent a critical next step in improving transit service in Connecticut.

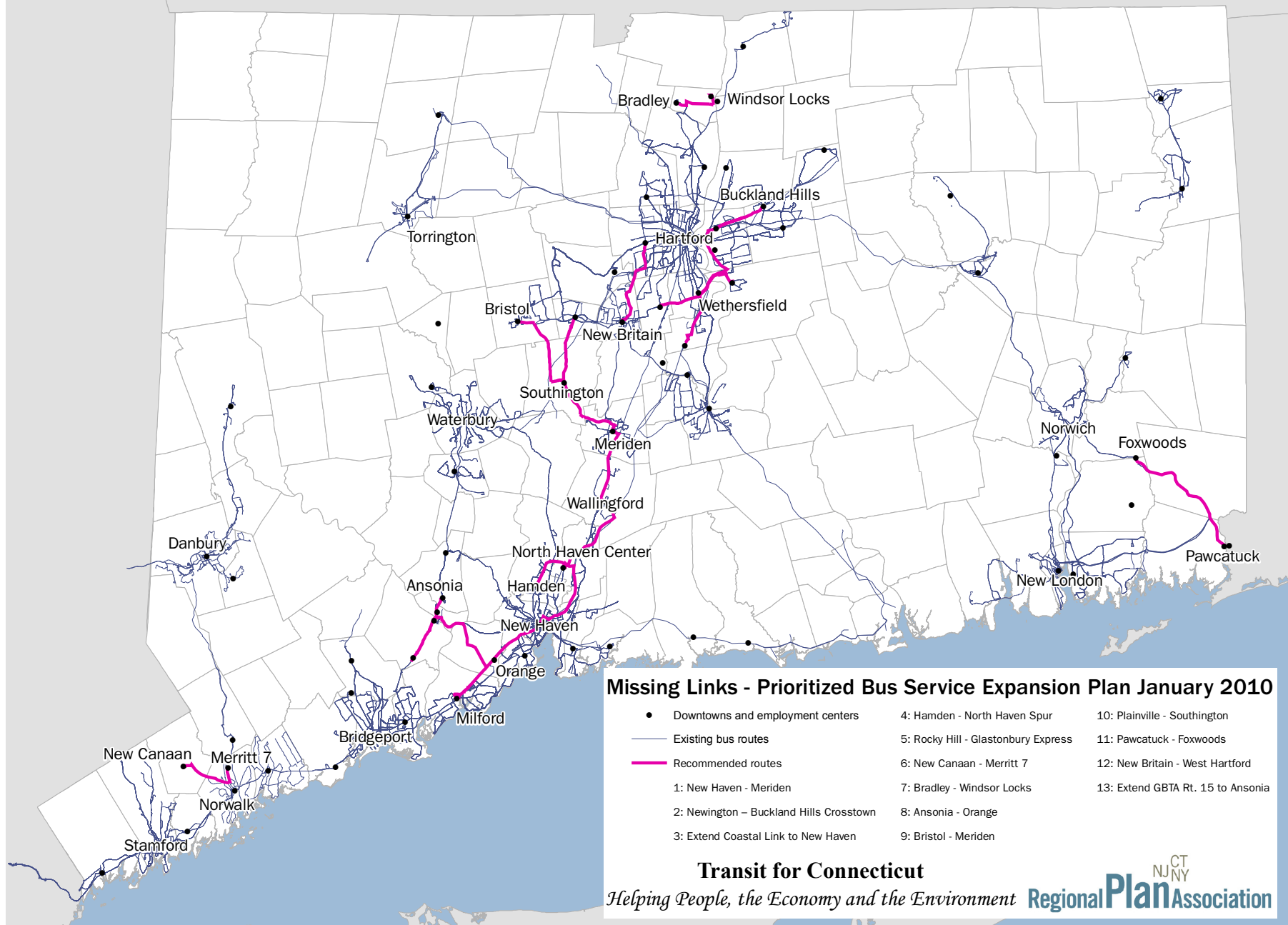
The study analyzed Connecticut Department of Transportation data that pairs vehicle trip origins and destinations to determine the most frequent routes traveled by drivers in Connecticut. Origin/destination pairs with high vehicular trip counts but no convenient transit service offer opportunities to initiate new bus routes that can shift existing drivers to transit and enhance mobility

for the transit-dependent. While many of the top origin/destination pairs are already served by rail or bus service, others lack convenient transit options, particularly when destinations are in suburban employment centers or when bus travel currently requires transferring from one transit agency network to another.

Many of the routes proposed as a result of this analysis would serve suburb-to-suburb trips that have become more common due to the increasing share of employment located outside traditional city centers. Routes include a new bus transfer point in Wethersfield for suburban Hartford riders, bus links to existing transit in New Canaan and the Naugatuck Valley, and an additional bus route to Foxwoods Casino. While new bus routes can improve mobility to areas with a sprawling development pattern, the best and most efficient way to increase transit access in the long term is to orient new growth around our existing transit corridors, a strategy that will be essential to meet state goals for carbon emissions and economic development.

The 13 bus improvements proposed here would provide transit options that could replace 64,000 trips each day in Connecticut with "walk-to" bus services connecting Connecticut's Main Streets and major employment centers. Preliminary cost estimates for a service expansion of this scope include approximately \$4.5 million in additional annual operating costs and \$17 million in capital expenses for purchasing additional buses.

# Recommended Transit Links



## Recommended Transit Link Priorities

**1) New Haven/Meriden Express, connecting points in North Haven and Wallingford.**

Considerable travel occurs between homes and employment centers north of New Haven along the existing rail/highway corridor. Connecting bus service will support employment growth and commuter patterns that can later be served by the planned New Haven/Hartford Springfield commuter rail. Daily vehicle trips to/from New Haven, North Haven, Wallingford, and Meriden total over 14,000 per day.

**2) Newington/Wethersfield/Rentschler/East Hartford/Buckland Hills Express.**

This "bypass" route links communities south of Hartford with the shopping and job centers of East Hartford and Manchester and establishes a bus hub for transfers at Wethersfield. Top links are East Hartford-Burnside/Rentschler Field (3,512), (Newington/Wethersfield (2,141), Rentschler Field/Wethersfield (1,492), Rentschler/Buckland Hills (1,478), Wethersfield/East Hartford-Burnside (460), Rentschler/Newington (449).

**3) Extension of the Coastal Link to New Haven**

Coastal Link bus service connects riders along the Route 1 corridor from Norwalk to the Connecticut Post Mall in Milford, where eastbound travelers must transfer to local bus services. Continuing Coastal Link to New Haven would ease bus travel from Milford to Orange (5,979 trips) and simplify trips for other riders that transfer to other bus routes in downtown New Haven.

**4) Hamden-North Haven Spur.**

A spur would connect Hamden with the New Haven/Meriden express at a transfer point in North Haven. Nearly 7,000 trips are made per day between Hamden and North Haven.

**5) Rocky Hill/Wethersfield/Glastonbury Express and Wethersfield Hub.**

Considerable inter-suburban travel occurs between Hartford's southern and western suburbs. To enable the best service possible, a transfer point at Wethersfield would enable connections between several existing and proposed routes. The primary additional route would connect Century Hills in Rocky Hill with Wethersfield and Glastonbury, enabling transit options for up to 3,300 daily trips.

**6) New Canaan to Merritt 7.**

It's challenging to link the communities of northern Fairfield County with transit because of the Merritt Parkway's low bridge underpasses. A connection from New Canaan to existing buses and trains at Merritt 7 enables transit use from New Canaan to points along the Norwalk to Danbury corridor without a long detour south to Stamford. Top unserved links include Merritt 7/New Canaan (2,052) and New Canaan/Norwalk (1,625).

**7) Bradley Airport- Windsor Locks.**

This connection links the airport with existing and planned transit along the I-91/rail corridor. Bradley/Windsor Locks: 2590. Bradley/Enfield: 321. Bradley/East Windsor: 294.

**8) Ansonia/Derby/Orange.**

This route travels to the Route 1 corridor in Orange, providing access to jobs and shopping and enabling more convenient connections between towns west of New Haven and the Shelton corridor. Ansonia/Orange: 721. Shelton center/Orange: 497. Derby/Orange: 339. Shelton corporate/Orange: 319.

**9) Meriden/Southington/Bristol**

A link between Meriden and Bristol could serve the considerable travel to and from Southington while linking the cities of Meriden and Bristol. Total trips: 2,091.

**10) Plainville/Southington**

This spur route connects the 1,099 trips between Plainville and Southington while allowing for transfers to New Britain and points east at Plainville.

**11) Pawcatuck (Stonington)/Westerly to Foxwoods.**

This section of Stonington is adjacent to Westerly, RI. In state daily travel to/from Foxwoods is 1,601 trips, and more riders could be served with a short extension over the border to Westerly.

**12) New Britain/West Hartford Express.**

Initial routing would stop at CCSU and Westfarms Mall. Ultimately, this route would travel via the planned busway, connecting downtown New Britain with West Hartford center. New Britain/West Hartford: 601 daily trips. Transfers from Newington at New Britain could add an additional 822 trips.

**13) GBTA Bus 15 extension to Ansonia.**

This extension would provide one-seat service from Ansonia to jobs in the Shelton corporate corridor without a transfer to GBTA 15 in Derby. Ansonia/Shelton Corporate: 1,214.

Methodology for prioritizing missing links in Connecticut's transit network:

RPA analyzed vehicular travel to and from 78 locations in Connecticut cities and towns that have concentrations of employment or population that might support transit use. Trips beginning or ending within ½ mile of each key location were ranked according to their frequency. The analysis also considered Connecticut employment in downtown and midtown Manhattan. Top origin/destination pairs were then assessed for existing transit service using GIS route information and transit agency maps and schedules. Links were considered transit-served if one-seat rides or convenient transfers were available to connecting routes. RPA developed proposals for new or extended routes that could capture vehicular traffic and better connect riders to existing routes. This study did not assess the frequency of service on existing transit routes.

**Appendix:**

The online version of this document, available at [www.rpa.org](http://www.rpa.org), contains links to the following:

Table: Top Travel Links in Connecticut

Table: Top Unserved Travel Links in Connecticut and

Expanded Methodology- determining places of significance and ranking missing links

Preliminary Cost Estimate

**Credits:**

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