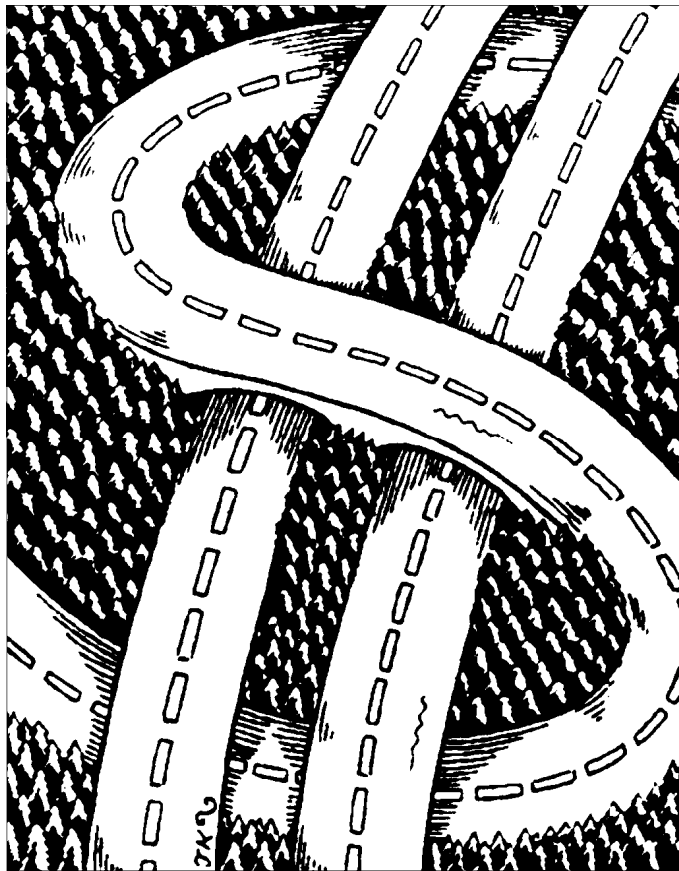


Reform: The Road Not Taken

A Review of Projected Transportation
Spending in Connecticut, 2007-2010



Tri-State Transportation Campaign
May 2007

Introduction

Connecticut's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program is a compilation of upcoming transportation projects and anticipated construction spending that the Connecticut DOT publishes every two years, in conjunction with the state's eleven metropolitan planning organizations and four rural regional planning organizations. It is the best single indicator of where the state is putting its transportation dollars. But while the official document itself resembles a telephone book or set of coded ledgers, this analysis of the Program is designed to provide a summary picture of where the money is going, and thus illustrate the state's current transportation priorities. We intend it as a further contribution to the debate over new priorities in this period of heightened public policy attention to Connecticut's transportation system.

The current Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) covers fiscal years 2007 to 2010 – it lists all of the construction and equipment-purchase projects expected to be funded during this period, along with expected expenditures and funding sources. Seventy fiscal year 2011 projects are also included as placeholders, but funding for them is not necessarily approved or forthcoming. Only projects receiving federal funding are required to be included in the STIP, though the state and local contribution to those projects is also detailed. It does in fact cover all major capital projects in the state, although spending totals do not cover state-only funded programs such as Town Aid for Roads.

An important caveat to our analysis is that the STIP does not yet include projects included in the recent major transportation initiatives (hereafter referred to as “funding initiatives”) undertaken by the Rell administration and state legislators in 2005 and 2006. These funding initiatives approved significant state funding for transit and highway projects, totaling \$1.3 billion over ten years in Phase 1 and \$2.3 billion over ten years in Phase 2 (the legislature is currently discussing a third phase). Unfortunately, not all details of how these new funds will be spent are available yet, but we have included estimates of how these funds will be used in 2007-2010 nonetheless. The assumptions we have made to allocate this funding to the 2007-2010 spending period, based on extant information are detailed in the report's appendix.

Part of our analysis compares the 2007-2010 STIP to a similar analysis we undertook for the 2000-2002 STIP, to show whether and how the state's spending emphasis has changed.

Summary of Findings

- Connecticut allocates the majority of transportation capital funding to highways and bridges, with 59 percent of funds in that category of projects. Thirty-seven percent of capital funding is dedicated to mass transit, while less than one percent is devoted to bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- In recent years, the share of mass transit spending in overall transportation funding has increased significantly.
- Of the portion set aside for bridge and highway spending, more than 60 percent is dedicated to roadway expansion projects. This is a reversal of spending programs earlier in this decade which allocated nearly three-quarters of bridge and highway funds to maintenance.
- Connecticut's failure to make infrastructure upkeep a spending priority has real consequences. More than three-quarters of roadway lane miles are in "less than good" condition, while 33 percent of the state's bridges are rated deficient.
- Connecticut has not used flexible federal funds to diversify transportation investments. Failure to take full advantage of U.S. DOT programs such as Transportation Enhancements and Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality has forced interest groups and Members of Congress to supplement meager ConnDOT cycling and pedestrian funding with one-time earmarks.

Recommendations

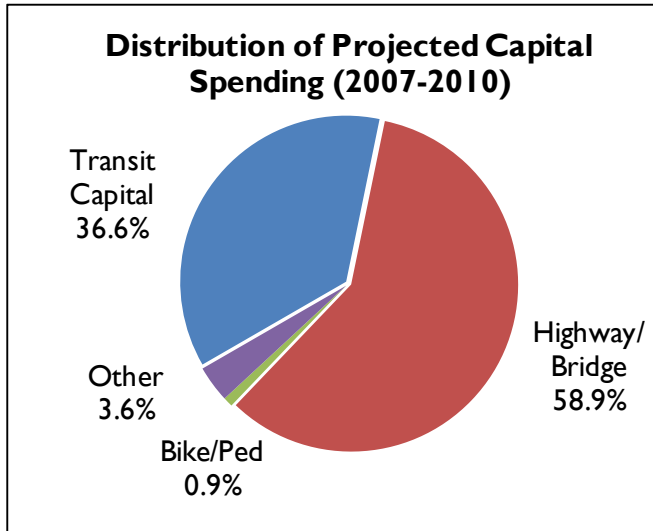
Fix it first — The state should review the cost-effectiveness of expanding highways to address roadway congestion, weigh the costs to government and the public of neglecting existing infrastructure and commit to exceeding national averages for state-wide road and bridge conditions. Downsizing or calling off road expansions that are destined to quickly re-fill with traffic could free up sizeable capital funding for more sustainable investments.

Develop more effective tools to manage congestion — Consider sustainable congestion relief measures, including efficient land use planning and roadway pricing. Evaluate whether conventional highway expansion serves any long-term public purpose. Publicly declare when new highway capacity is expected to become fully utilized by new traffic. Include these issues centrally in the review of ConnDOT recently ordered by Governor Rell.

Create a much stronger bicycle and pedestrian program — The state should take overdue advantage of flexible federal funding opportunities to diversify its mix of transportation projects. It should consider incentive programs to promote municipal efforts on cycling and walking, such as a bike/pedestrian program within the Town Aid for Roads funding.

Transportation Capital Spending by Mode

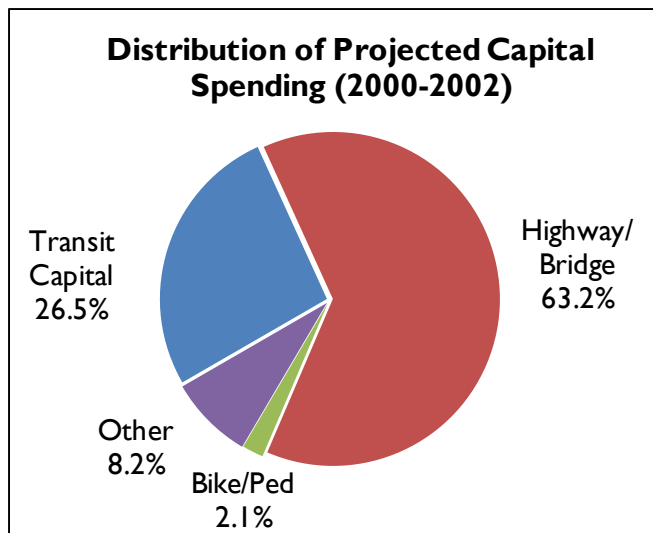
Connecticut allocates the majority of federal, state and local transportation funds to highways and bridges, according to our analysis of the 2007 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and the state’s recent transportation funding initiatives.



A rough breakdown of the \$3.98 billion in transportation capital funding authorized for fiscal years 2007 through 2010 shows that almost 59 percent of the total amount is allocated to highway and bridge projects. A significant portion of the anticipated roadway spending is in fact allocated to highway expansion projects (see next section).

Just under 37 percent is dedicated to mass transit projects, with large sums for new rail car and bus purchases, station development, maintenance facilities, and the Hartford to New Britain busway included in the funding

initiatives. In a state where the 2000 Census found a 4 percent mass transit commute share, this proportion is significant. It not only signals a strong recognition that Connecticut’s mass transit infrastructure had reached a near-ruinous state of disrepair by the middle of this decade, but also that a more balanced transportation system is a 21st Century necessity and will require large-scale investment to forge.



Bicycle and pedestrian projects receive just under one percent of the total funding. Other projects, including transportation demand management, signalization, and environmental mitigation, receive 3.6 percent of total funding.

Over time, the share of funding dedicated to highway and bridge construction and repair has fallen slightly to 59 percent in 2007-2010 from about 63 percent in the 2000-2002 STIP. Meanwhile, mass transit’s share of anticipated capital spending jumped significantly, from 26.5

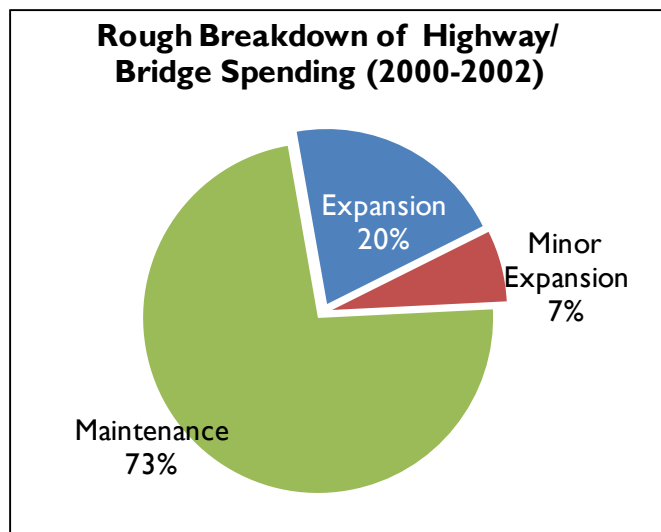
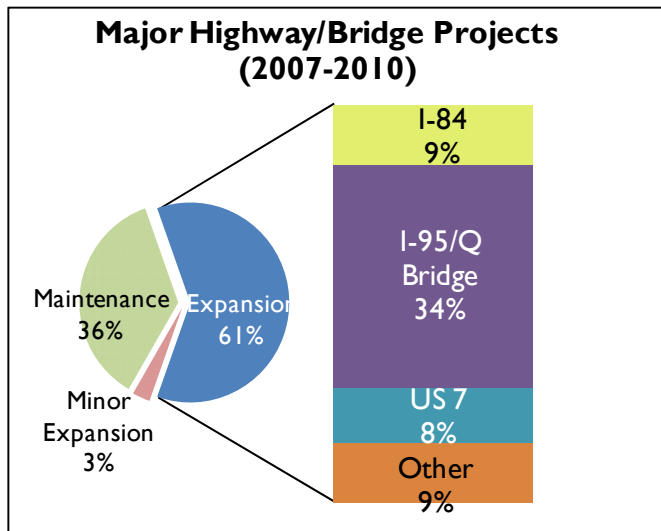
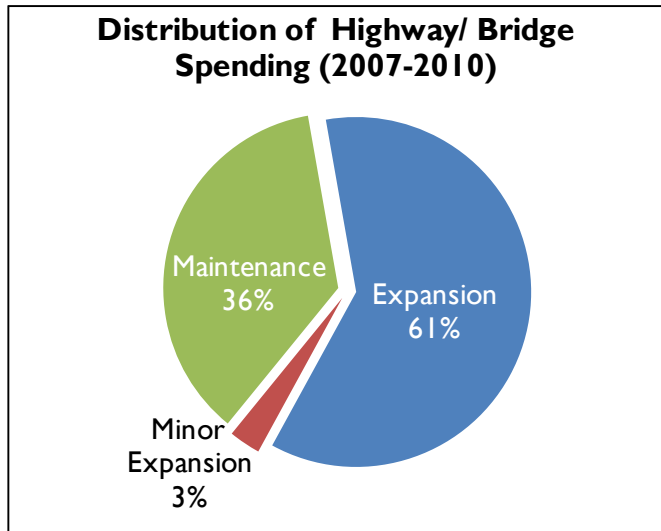
percent to 36.6 percent in the most recent STIP and recent state funding initiatives. This represents a 38 percent increase in transit's share. The portion of total funding slated for bicycle and pedestrian and other projects has declined somewhat over time.

Fix It First?

Many citizens and advocates testifying at the Hartford "Transportation Summit" convened by the Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby and attended by legislative and ConnDOT leaders on January 10, 2007 urged the state to prioritize infrastructure repair as a means of reinvesting in towns and cities and improving road safety. They may be dismayed to learn how far from such a policy state highway spending actually is.

Detailed examination of the \$2.34 billion in bridge and highway funds authorized in the STIP and state funding initiatives reveals that Connecticut favors highway expansion projects over maintenance of existing roads. Sixty-one percent of highway funds are dedicated to expensive widening projects such as the Q Bridge in New Haven and and US 7 in Fairfield County. An additional 3 percent of the total goes to minor expansion projects such as the addition of turn lanes. Maintenance projects such as resurfacing and rehabilitating roadways receive just 36 percent of total road spending.

A handful of major projects comprise the vast majority of projected highway and bridge expansion funding. These include the expansion of I-84 from four to six lanes, the widening of the Q Bridge from six to ten lanes, and the expansion of US 7 from two to four lanes, including the Brookfield Bypass. These three



projects together make up more than half of projected highway and bridge spending for the next three years.

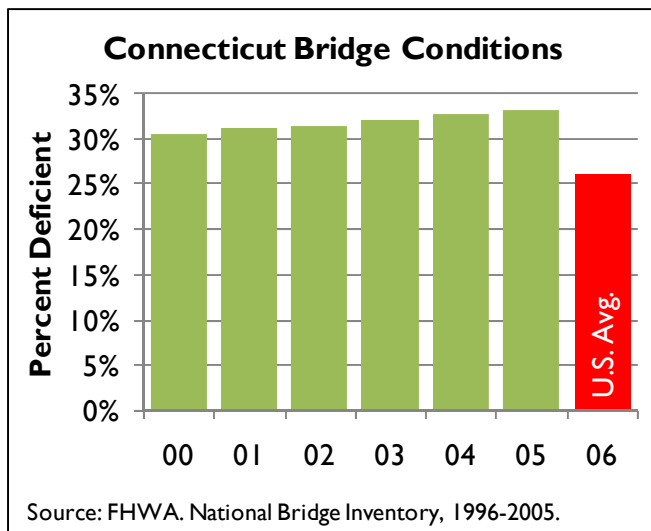
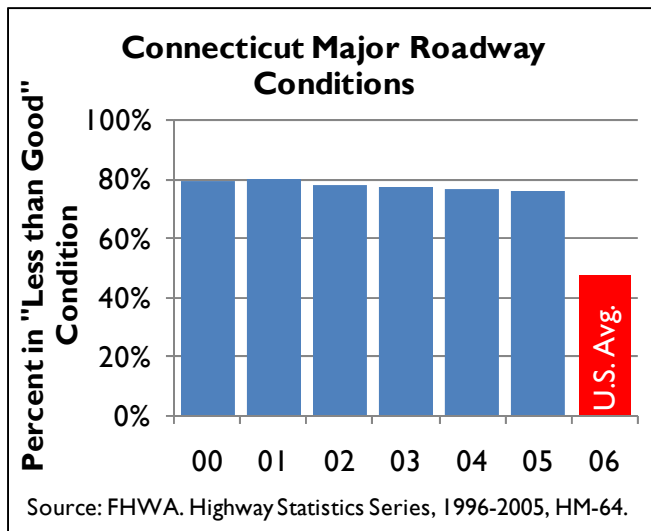
As a share of total spending, the maintenance and expansion categories have reversed position from spending plans set out early in this decade. In the 2000-2002 STIP, the state dedicated nearly three-quarters of total highway and bridge spending to maintenance (compared to 36 percent in the current program). Expansion projects received just 20 percent of total highway and bridge spending (compared to 61 percent in the 2007-2010 STIP). This stark reversal is due to the inclusion of the major, expensive expansion projects detailed above – I-84 and US 7. The reconstruction of the I-95/I-91 interchange/Q Bridge expansion accounted for nearly half of the expansion funds included in the 2000-2002 STIP. Assuming some of these funds have been carried over to

the most recent STIP, the Campaign’s comparison of highway expansion spending is conservative — actual highway expansion spending over the 2000-2002 period was likely be much lower than projected in the published STIP.

Road and Bridge Conditions Suffer

Connecticut’s spending emphasis on new highway capacity is unlikely to bode well for the condition of its major roads and bridges. While neither bridge nor pavement conditions have deteriorated dramatically in this decade, neither has either category improved to any significant degree. For bridges, slow but steady deterioration is underway. Connecticut ranks fifth worst in the U.S. in terms of the percentage of major roadway lane miles in “less than good condition” (scoring 95 or greater on the International Roughness Index). The pavement in more than three-quarters of the state’s highway lane miles was in “less than good” condition in 2005, according to FHWA data.

Connecticut bridge conditions steadily worsened from 2000 to 2005. By 2005, one-third of the state’s bridges were rated deficient. The vast majority of those bridges are faulted for



being functionally obsolete, indicating they don't conform to modern bridge design standards. Nationally, 26 percent of bridges are deficient.

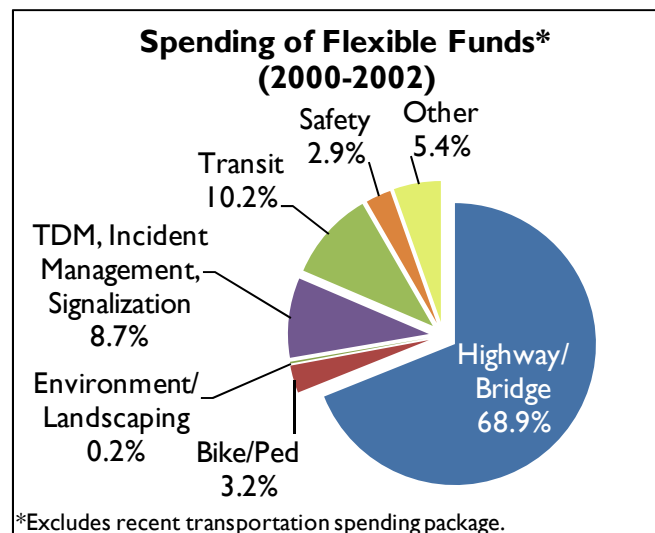
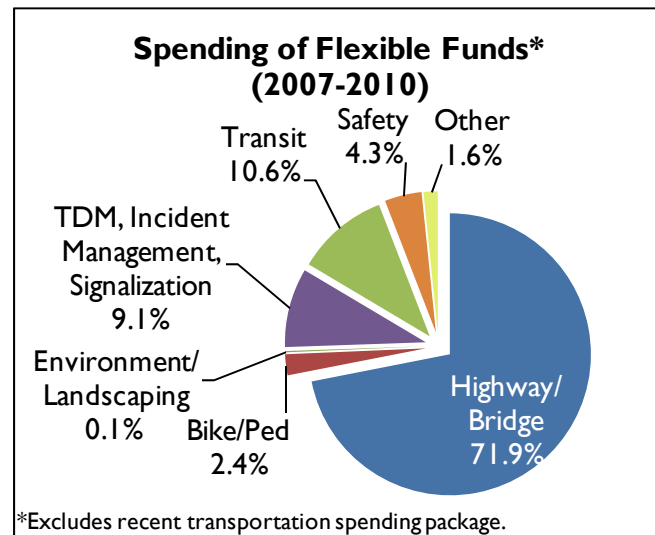
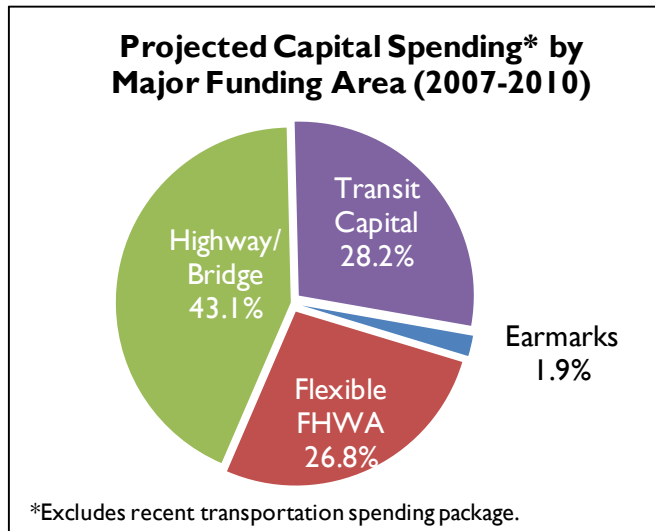
Flexible Funding?

We also analyzed capital spending according to which federal-aid account monies were authorized from. Major projects in Connecticut generally have a significant share of federal funding. In federal transportation authorizations (most recently, the "SAFETEA-LU" act of 2005), Congress authorizes specific spending levels for each of dozens of funding categories. The largest of these are the "Interstate Maintenance," "National Highway System," "Bridge," "Surface Transportation" and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement" programs. Transit capital and small amounts of special transit operating funds are also specified in the law.

Forty-three percent of total capital spending authorized in the STIP is from straightforward federal highway and bridge funding categories such as the National Highway System (NHS) and Interstate Maintenance programs. Those programs generally pay for traditional highway infrastructure needs, although NHS allows for a variety of mobility strategies within key highway corridors (for instance, Manhattan's heavily-used West Side bikeway, alongside NY Route 9A, was built with NHS funds).

Another 28 percent is authorized in programs specific to mass transit. Congressional earmarks and "demonstration" projects make up not quite two percent of total capital funding.

Highly flexible programs such as the Conges-

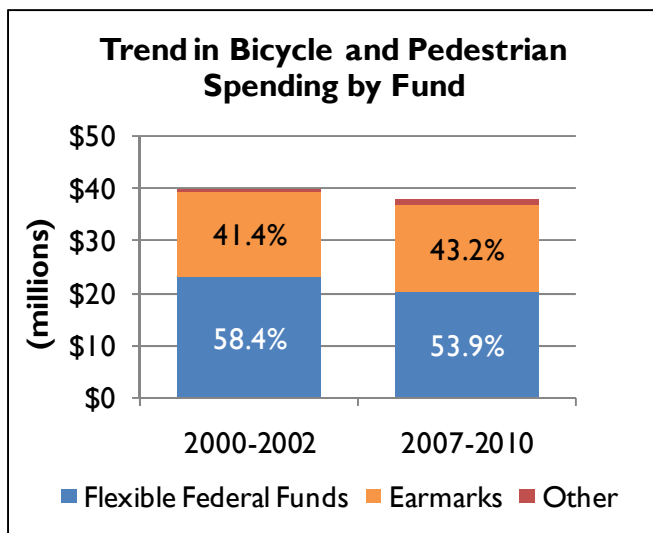


tion Mitigation and Air Quality and Surface Transportation programs comprise 27 percent of total capital spending. These funds may be spent on highway expansion or maintenance, mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), or other projects related to transportation.

Of the more than \$846 million in flexible federal funds anticipated to be spent by Connecticut, the vast majority (72%) is allocated to highways and bridges. Mass transit projects receive almost 11 percent of flexible funds, and transportation demand management (TDM) programs, including rideshare projects, incident management and signalization receive just over nine percent. Safety projects are just over four percent of total flexible funds. Just 2.4 percent of flexible funds are provided for bicycle and pedestrian projects. The remaining 1.7 percent is for environmental mitigation, landscaping and other projects.

Connecticut has been fairly consistent in devoting most of the federal aid that could be used for innovative projects or new areas of investment to traditional road and bridge projects. In the 2000-2002 STIP, highway and bridge projects received the lion's share of flexible funding at 68 percent of the total. The fact that this percentage has grown over the course of this decade, as public debate on the need for a more varied and balanced array of transportation choices has risen to the top of Connecticut's public policy debate is a bad sign and points to the need for policy and institutional reform.

Flexible federal funding programs were established to give states the opportunity to shift funds to less traditional projects, particularly bicycle and pedestrian and mass transit projects. The state has incurred a significant opportunity cost by largely failing to take advantage of this opportunity. For instance, it is re-



lected in the state's lower than average per capita bicycle and pedestrian spending (over the past three fiscal years, Connecticut has spent just \$0.94 on bicycle and pedestrian projects per resident, compared to \$1.34 nationally and \$7.31 in neighboring Rhode Island).

Interestingly, ConnDOT officials have recently complained of a lack of bicycle and pedestrian resources as a reason for not doing more in these areas: Acting Bureau Chief of Policy and Planning recently told the Central Connecticut Bicycle Alliance that, **“currently, there is no funding available for additional bicycle**

facilities and safety promotion activities” [letter from ConnDOT to the Alliance, January 30, 2007]. Furthermore, recent analysis from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy identifies Connecticut as among the worst states in terms of underspending the federal Transportation Enhancements program, the federal program most responsible for a dramatic escalation in U.S. spending on bicycle and pedestrian projects since 1992. According to that analysis, Connecticut recently “rescinded” (gave back to the federal government) nearly \$10 million in unspent Transportation Enhancements funds [Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse *Connections*. Spring 2007. v. 10, n. 2].

Connecticut citizens and lawmakers have taken matters into their own hands, earmarking federal funds for specific bicycle and pedestrian projects. One-time earmarks comprise more than 40 percent of total bicycle and pedestrian spending in recent state capital programs, representing the largest single source of bicycle and pedestrian funds for the state, perhaps the only U.S. state where this is the case. Unfortunately, such earmarks do not represent a steady source of funding for ongoing improvements, and often are not large enough to see projects through to completion.

Recommendations

Fix it first — The state should review the cost-effectiveness of expanding highways to address roadway congestion, weigh the costs to government and the public of neglecting existing infrastructure and commit to exceeding national averages for state-wide road and bridge conditions. Downsizing or calling off road expansions that are destined to quickly re-fill with traffic could free up sizeable capital funding for more sustainable investments.

Develop more effective tools to manage congestion — Consider sustainable congestion relief measures, including efficient land use planning and roadway pricing. Evaluate whether conventional highway expansion serves any long-term public purpose. Publicly declare when new highway capacity is expected to become fully utilized by new traffic. Include these issues centrally in the review of ConnDOT recently ordered by Governor Rell.

Create a much stronger bicycle and pedestrian program — The state should take overdue advantage of flexible federal funding opportunities to diversify its mix of transportation projects. It should consider incentive programs to promote municipal efforts on cycling and walking, such as a bike/pedestrian program within the Town Aid for Roads funding.

Appendix

Assumptions for analysis of the new transportation funding initiatives. Please refer to the included tables for details.

- Phase I projects with annual authorizations dictated in the legislation (SB 2000) were categorized by the Campaign into broad project types and added to the appropriate fiscal year. (Phase I Table, lines 1, 5, 8)
- Three Phase I projects, \$187 million for improvements to I-95, \$150 million for improvements to I-9, I-84 and other highways, and \$7.5 million for bus purchases were grouped together in the discussion of annual distributions. For the purpose of this analysis, we distributed these proportionately, according to their share of the total sum, \$344.5 million. For example, it was assumed that \$38 million was authorized for I-95 improvements in FY07 ($\$187/\$344.5 * \$70$). (Phase I Table, lines 2, 3, 4)
- Because no details were provided for the \$300 million New Haven maintenance facility project, we assumed that the amount was distributed evenly over the 10 year initiative. (Phase I Table, line 6)
- Governor Rell’s press release for Phase I of the new transportation initiative states that there will be \$667 for rail car purchases, yet only \$485.65 is legislatively authorized (detailed in Phase I Table, line 1). We assumed the difference between these amounts (\$116.2 million) would be distributed evenly over seven years beginning in 2008. (Phase I Table, line 7)
- Legislation summaries obtained by the Campaign from ConnDOT provide estimated funding amounts for several of the projects included in Phase 2, amounting to \$459 million. For these projects we assumed that funding would be evenly distributed over the ten years of the program. (Phase II Table, lines 9—20)
- Governor Rell’s press release on Phase II of the new transportation initiative states that Phase II will provide \$2.3 billion. However, the Campaign was able to find details for only \$459 million. We assumed that the difference between these amounts (\$1.841 billion) would be evenly distributed over ten years. (Phase II Table, line 21)
- As with Phase I projects, the Campaign categorized into broad project types each of the Phase 2 projects for which estimated funding information was available, and added them to the appropriate fiscal year.

Details of Phase I of the new transportation funding initiatives (Roadmap to Connecticut's Economic Future)

Project Description	Project Type	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
1 Rail rolling stock and maintenance facilities, including rights-of-way, other property acquisition, and related projects*	Transit Capital	26.45	32.8	49.4	55	55	54	54	54	54	51		485.65
2 Operational improvements to I-95 between Greenwich and North Stonington**	Highway - Expansion	14.4	26.1	38.0	54.3	54.3							187
3 Transportation system improvements other than on I-95**	Highway - Expansion	11.5	20.9	30.5	43.5	43.5							150
4 Purchase of buses**	Transit Capital	0.6	1.0	1.5	2.2	2.2							7.5
5 Municipal demand-responsive transportation programs*	Transit Operations	5.0	5.0										10
6 New Haven maintenance facility***	Transit Capital	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0		300
7 Additional funds for rail rolling stock and maintenance facilities****	Transit Capital				16.6	16.6	16.6	16.6	16.6	16.6	16.6		116.2
8 General transportation purposes and capital resurfacing*	Highway Maintenance	21.1	44.2										65.3
Total, Phase I		88.0	136.9	193.6	201.6	201.6	100.6	100.6	100.6	100.6	97.6	0.0	1321.7

*Details from PA 05-4 Summary (www.cga.ct.gov/2005/SUM/2005SUM0004-R0/ISB-02000-SUM1.htm)

**Based on details from PA 04-5 Summary (see above), assuming annual distribution among the 3 programs is proportional to each program's share of the total amount.

***Assumes total amount would be distributed evenly over 10 years

****Rail press releases state there will be \$667 for purchase of rail cars, yet PA 05-4 Summary states only \$485.65 is authorized for this purpose; the amount here represents the difference between these 2 figures.

Details of Phase II of the new transportation funding initiatives (Roadmap to Connecticut's Economic Future)

Project Description	Project Type	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
9 Commuter rail service between New Haven, Hartford and Springfield***	Transit Operations	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.6	146
10 Commuter rail station between New Haven and Milford***	Transit Capital	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	11
11 New Britain to Hartford busway***	Transit Capital	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	52
12 Rehabilitating 40 Metro North locomotives***	Transit Capital	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	25
13 Capital improvements to New Haven line branch lines***	Transit Capital	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	45
14 Capital costs of parking and station improvements on New Haven Line and its branches and the Shore Line East service***	Transit Capital	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	60
15 Southeast Area Transit federal pilot project***	Transit Operations	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	10
16 Norwich Intermodal Transit Hub Roadway improvements***	Transit Capital	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	7
17 Environmental Planning and Assessment for expansion of I-95 between Branford and Rhode Island***	Highway - Expansion	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	6
18 Capital costs of greater Hartford highway infrastructure improvements***	Highway - Minor Expansion	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	25
19 Preliminary design and engineering for I-84 widening between Waterbury and Danbury***	Highway - Expansion	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	70
20 Commercial Vehicle Information System Network***	TDM	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	2
21 Unknown***	Unknown	184.1	184.1	184.1	184.1	184.1	184.1	184.1	184.1	184.1	184.1	184.1	1841
Total, Phase II		230.0	230.0	230.0	230.0	230.0	230.0	230.0	230.0	230.0	230.0	230.0	2300

***Assumes total amount would be distributed evenly over 10 years

****Rail press releases state there will be \$2.3 billion provided in Phase II, yet details are available for only \$459M; this amount represents the difference between these 2 figures, distributed over 10 years.

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



Mobilizing the Region

350 West 31st Street, Suite 802

New York, NY 10001

Ph: 212-268-7474

Fax: 212-268-7333

www.tstc.org