
**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)
Equity and Environmental Justice Workgroup -
Mitigation Subcommittee**

Meeting Location: Zoom link
<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/j/98007780905>

ATTENDANCE

Working Group Member	Title	Organization	Present
Sena Wazer	Codirector	Sunrise Connecticut	X
Cary Lynch	Research Analyst, Office of Climate Change Technology & Research Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	Research Analyst, Office of Climate Change Technology & Research Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	X
Becca George	Graduate Student	Yale School of the Environment	X
Dino Pascua	Test Bed Program Coordinator	Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy, DEEP	X
Chris Phelps	State Director	Environment Connecticut	X
Gannon Long	Policy and Public Affairs Director	Operation Fuel	X
Jeff Howard	Environmental Analyst	CT DEEP: Office of Climate Change	X
Craig Peters	Coordinator	Capitol Clean Cities of CT	X
Denise Savageau		CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation	X
Caitlin Daddona	Intern	UCONN Office of Sustainability	X
Kirsten Rigney	Legal Director	CT DEEP	X
Dianne Lauricella	Principal	EIG	X

Associated Staff	Title	Organization	Present
Max Teirstein	Intern	CT DEEP: EJ Program	X
James Albis	Senior Advisor to the Commissioner	CT DEEP: Office of the Commissioner	X
Edith Pestana	Director	CT DEEP: EJ Program	X

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome and Announcements

Agenda Item(s)

Facilitated by Sena Wazer, Sunrise CT

- Review recommendations from the transportation workgroup (link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W9Jqzty2Coy_B0gbcf7M70B51MZOs5R4KHH-36J_f0w/edit?usp=sharing) and give EEJ suggestions
- Begin reviewing recommendations from cross-sector work group
- Broader goals/basics of the meeting:
 - Soliciting E&EJ feedback on recommendations from other working groups
- 1. Expanding access to EVs in LMI communities
- 2. [work in progress] prioritizing investments from alternative funding mechanisms
 - Who decides where investments are going?
 - There needs to be a way of ensuring that EEJ is considered here
- Wondered whether the recommendation should include something about cultural sensitivity and the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has on LMI communities
- How are we making sure that more rural LMI folks have reliable access to public transit?
- Disabled community's access to public transit needs to be improved

Public comments

James Albis, CT DEEP

- Since there's specific mention of state fleets, (currently covered in union contracts, so GC3 role is questionable)—unions reimburse state employees for parking but not for use of transportation
 - Especially helpful for LMI folks without car
 - This is already addressed in the doc
- Are there proposals for a vehicle miles traveled tax or a carbon tax that may come up in the next legislative session?
- Reminded participants that the GC3 process will continue through December 2021
 - Some issues may need to be pushed off until 2021
 - Recommendations for January and the additional areas to be mentioned in the January report but more meaningfully addressed after January
 - Transit-oriented development is really complicated. January report may say "we need to do more in terms of DOT" and then after that the next report can list specific ways those concerns can be addressed

Gannon Long, Operation Fuel

- Ms. Long sought clarification of goals for the meeting today
- Vehicle-miles-traveled tax
 - Doesn't know how likely that is to be passed, report will have a lot of ideas that aren't policy plans
 - VMT tax is hard to explain, may be important to make language more accessible
 - LMI residents in rural communities will be paying high taxes
 - Important to avoid charging people for driving since they may not be

- able to afford to live in the expensive town where they work
 - Funding for transportation projects is down since the gas tax hasn't increased
 - VMT tax replaces that funding mechanism
- Reminded the group to pay special attention to not only where revenue is being invested, but how it's being generated—shouldn't be raised regressively
 - New investments that target LMI communities and communities of color, current status quo is for lower income folks to be subsidizing things for higher income folks
 - Don't need equal investment across the board, need greater investments for LMI communities and lower investments for higher income communities
- Agreed with Ms. Savageau about the need for further pedestrian information
- Section on COVID impact—people not riding transportation. Only people using it right now are people who have no other choice. Doesn't know how much the drafters are going to go into the details of COVID and public transit.
 - DOT feels uncomfortable putting numbers around that, too early
 - Fare-free rides for everyone?
 - Bills before the legislature to expand pass for university students, state workers, municipalities are exploring that
 - Could do it 20 different times for 30 different industries, or maybe fare-free busses are something to explore
- Formatting of report has been a greater focus than discussions about policies themselves
- Report does have a recommendation to disincentivize urban sprawl
 - We're trying to do both/and. Transit-oriented development, but don't want to keep leveling forests to build condominiums. As much as we can, we need to suggest things that are complementary.
- Advocates for disabled folks in the EEJ group? We need multiple folks who work on issues particular to those communities.
 - **Sena Wazer:** Marisa Rivera is on this, should be looped into this conversation

Chris Phelps, Environment Connecticut

- Recalled that there are lots of policy discussions going on, more important to get into the equity piece than to get sidetracked by the exact mechanism of revenue
- The issues around transportation derive from the increasing urban sprawl of CT

Dino Pascua, BETP

- Desire to adhere to the structure placed on each report, e.g., to place equity discussion at top of document
- Noted that Section C addresses pedestrian life better
 - Builds off a recommendation from the 2018 report that promote walkability in urban and suburban areas
 - Could've included more language about this issue but there was concern about page count
- Press event earlier today regarding transit ridership, should be considered
 - <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/coronavirus/gov-lamont-state-dot-to-distribute-masks-to-ct-transit-bus-passengers/2308677/>
- We have to go back to the main goal of these reports, which is to advance programs and initiatives that will meet the GHG targets. When you're talking about increasing

transportation options, we have to think on a higher level and leave the details to the particular agencies in charge of designing those policies.

Denise Savageau, CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation

- Document discusses the challenge to pedestrian safety, but Ms. Savageau didn't notice anything that discussed improvements to pedestrian life.
 - It's a good thing to have pedestrian-friendly communities. How do we encourage those?
- Dealing with EJ, usually we're talking about something brought into the community that shouldn't be there. Here, the opposite is true. Access to services needs to be where the people are. Reduce transportation by bringing the services to the people, instead of bringing the people to the services.
 - Food deserts—when people don't have access to basic services (food, medical, etc.)
 - How vulnerable is our food supply? How can we increase access to it? Concentration on vehicles obscures solutions that get people out of their vehicles
- Mass transit system is still set up for the old commuter going to New York City. We're seeing an exodus from the city now, as we did in the wake of 9/11
 - Intra-state transportation needs special consideration. The rail especially—not just as interstate but as intrastate.
 - If it takes 4 hours on mass transit from Stamford to Hartford, you're never going to get out of your car. How do we get people moving around our state the way they need to move around the state?
- Even if you're near the system, it often doesn't work. Maybe one of our recommendations should
- Lots of plans to update roadways, but we're not making that commitment to mass transit. I'm not suggesting that we promote sprawl by putting mass transit everywhere, but we need better mass transit
 - How do you get to something in Hartford without a car? Stamford to New Haven takes way longer than getting in the car even with the traffic on I-95. How do we fix this? Add on another type of light rail, aerial rail?

Edith Pestana, DEEP

- Does data exist statewide on the number of individuals/population groups that use public transit to see a doctor or go to a medical facility?
 - **Dino Pascua**: We are relying on DOT to provide information on ridership numbers, but doesn't know if there are numbers that get into that level of detail
 - **Gannon Long**: data only really tells you weekday/weekend and where they got on. Not demographic info and destination. Reluctance to put numbers/goals on ridership because they don't know how long it will be until people feel comfortable on public transit again. So many unknowns
 - Didn't know if there were any projections on people who used public transit to transport them to medical providers. Is there data that assumes that if people don't have vehicles that they will just use public transportation to get to medical care?
 - Similar to food deserts—how accessible are medical providers to people

- **Gannon Long:** Outside the scope of this working group. Bussing, van services, rideshares. Doesn't know that DOT would have info on all of that, but it may be too granular for this group, which is focused on broader policies, not necessarily on that subset of transit riders.

Craig Peters, Capitol Clean Cities of CT

- Are you looking for data on ridership in the midst of COVID? I do have some information on that if that's what you're looking for.
 - Bus ridership is about 55% of what it was before COVID, rail is about 89%. 39% of those riders are from inner cities, lower income.