

# Combining the Middletown and Estuary Transit Districts

*Improving Transit Service in the Lower Connecticut River Valley*



# BACKGROUND

In June 2020, a Lower Connecticut River Valley Transit Study, funded by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), recommended expanding the Estuary Transit District (ETD) to be the single transit operating entity for the Middletown and Shoreline region.

The consolidation of Middletown Area Transit (MAT) and ETD districts is jointly supported by CTDOT, MAT, ETD, and the River COG.

# VISION

Strong Fiscal Stewardship

Efficiencies of Scale

Talent & Core Competencies

Service Improvements

Public Benefits

# BENEFITS



Staffing



Technology



Service



Facilities

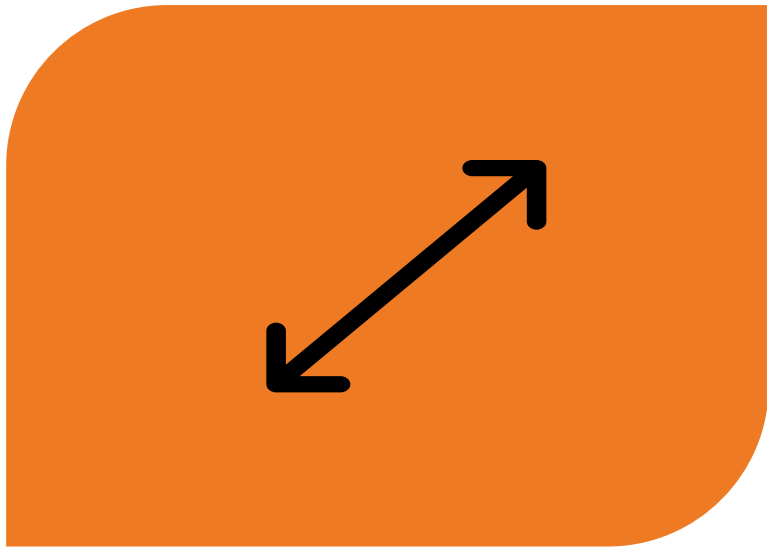
# STAFFING BENEFITS



Combining the workforce of two relatively small districts into one larger entity will:

- Increase opportunities for advancement
- Provide back-up capabilities when vacancies occur
- Increase staff technical capacity

# STAFFING BENEFITS



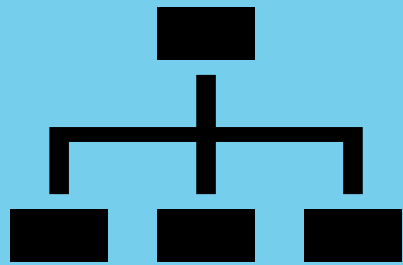
Attracting and retaining quality staff will be enhanced.

# STAFFING BENEFITS



There will be only one Executive Director and one Finance Director, thereby freeing up funds for other needed positions.

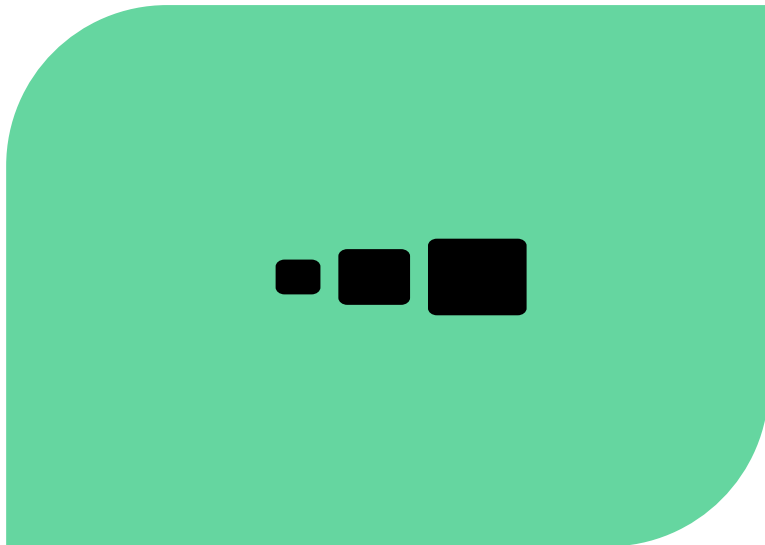
# STAFFING BENEFITS



Recommended additional administrative positions will provide enhanced management oversight for transportation and maintenance functions.



# STAFFING BENEFITS



- No existing positions will be lost as a result of the expansion.
- It will not be necessary for personnel to relocate.

# TECHNOLOGY BENEFITS

Upgraded technology and equipment across the region reduces redundancies and adds conveniences for transit riders.

An interoperable radio system creates unified communication.

An upgraded district-wide fare collection system offers a single fare structure.

An Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) provides regional real-time bus tracking.

A shared scheduling software system for Dial-A-Ride offers real-time location & reminder calls.

# SERVICE BENEFITS

The expansion will result in improved connectivity to statewide transit services including:

- CTtransit bus routes from Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, and New Haven
- Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) bus routes from Norwich-New London
- Hartford Line, Shoreline East, and Amtrak rail services.

# SERVICE BENEFITS

In-house vehicle maintenance and bus washing facilities will improve reliability, efficiency, and reduced costs.

# SERVICE BENEFITS

Improved efficiencies from combining the Districts will result in savings that can be used to improve and expand services.

# FACILITIES BENEFITS

The expansion will result in the following new and upgraded facilities:

- Existing Middletown facility at 91 North Main Street will be renovated and expanded.
- A new shared vehicle maintenance facility in Middletown will be constructed.
- A new operating facility at a shoreline location to be determined will be constructed.



# FACILITIES BENEFITS

These new or renovated facilities will:

- Improve vehicle maintenance capabilities.
- Provide for growth with space for potential fleet expansion.
- Incorporate the latest energy-efficient technology.
- Provide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging capabilities.

# EXPANSION IMPLEMENTATION

The three MAT member municipalities (Middletown, Middlefield, and Durham) vote to join ETD.

The ETD Board of Directors accepts the new members.

The expanded ETD will initially consist of 12 member municipalities.

Other adjoining towns may join in the future (Portland, East Hampton, East Haddam, Haddam, etc.)



# EFFECT ON EXISTING SERVICE

- Existing transit services of both MAT and ETD will remain unchanged during the transition.
- MAT and ETD personnel will continue to operate their respective services.

# GOVERNANCE

## ➤ **Board Composition**

- Eleven of the member municipalities will each appoint one Director. Per statute, based on population, Middletown will appoint two Directors.

## ➤ **Quorum**

- A quorum will require 2/3 of the member municipalities (8) to be present **and** that the present directors represent a majority of the weighted vote.

# GOVERNANCE

## ➤ Voting

- The statute requires weighted voting based on the relative population of each member municipality.
- Voting will require a majority of the municipalities present **and** a majority of the weighted vote for directors who are present.
- This structure ensures that equitable decisions will be made by broad support of the membership.

# BRANDING

- The legal name will continue to be Estuary Transit District.
- A new d.b.a. reflecting the expansion will be established.
- Transit services of both MAT and ETD will be re-branded.
- New bus designs, bus stop signage, uniforms, schedules, logos, and website design will be implemented.

## EXPANSION FUNDING

As recommended by the study, CTDOT funding is anticipated for:

- Needed additional administrative positions.
- Land acquisitions.
- Construction and renovation of facilities.
- Operating costs of facilities.
- Operational projects and planning studies.

# EXPANSION FUNDING

- These upfront investments will generate long-term savings through efficiencies.
- **No increase in local contributions is anticipated as a result of the expansion.**

# EXPANSION FUNDING

- ETD has requested an allocation of \$2.5 million from Federal funds to support operational needs for the next three years.
- Funding is in place for special projects and studies.
- State and Federal funding will further support the expansion.

# ACTIONS TO DATE

- A committee was established with board members from both ETD and MAT to oversee the transition and expansion.
- The Boards have signed inter-district agreements to implement the expansion:
  - A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) outlines the framework for the expansion.
  - An Employee Services Sharing Agreement governs the activities of the staff providing services to both districts.



# ACTIONS TO DATE

- By-laws and Board governance policies to be adopted by the expanded ETD have been developed and reviewed by legal counsel.
- ETD administrative offices were relocated to the MAT campus in early May 2021.

# TIMETABLE FOR NEXT STEPS

CTDOT funds land acquisition for Shoreline facility.

MAT member towns vote to join the expanded ETD.

ETD votes to accept the new member towns.

Begin operations as one Transit District.

After July 2022: Additional towns may request to join ETD.

Sep. 2021

Sep. 2021

Oct. 2021

Nov. 2021

Dec. 2021

Dec. 2021

July 2022

July 2022

August 2022+

CTDOT funds 3 new admin positions indicated by study.

Special studies and capital projects begin.

Land acquired for shared maintenance facility in Middletown.

Facilities Master Plan completed.