

## House Republican Press Release

October 11, 2007  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **Rep. Harkins & Sen. Debicella Meet With DOT Over Stratford Train Station Concerns**



HARTFORD- State Representative John Harkins (R-Stratford) and State Senator Dan Debicella (R-Shelton), along with Bruce Alessie from the Stratford Economic Development Department met yesterday, October 10<sup>th</sup> with Commissioner Ralph Carpenter of the Department of Transportation concerning the slow progress of the parking garage, and other upgrades at the Stratford Train

Station. They met at DOT headquarters in Newington.

The meeting focused on the slow progress of the construction of a new commuter parking facility, the inadequate capacity of the garage, and long-term solutions to a long waiting list for parking spaces.

They also discussed long-awaited extensions of the platforms and protective canopies at the train station, safety and security issues, as well as the movement of ticket machines to better service commuters. The subject of graffiti was also addressed.

“This is the first of what I feel will be many meetings we will continue to have in order to ensure improvements to our train station occur in a timely fashion,” said Representative Harkins. “As a member of the Transportation Committee I fully understand the pressing challenges we have in addressing transportation needs throughout the state. However, the Stratford Train Station is in desperate need of improvement and is a priority to make sure the improvements occur now instead of later.”

"Expanding parking at Stratford is critical not just to folks who ride the train, but is key to reducing traffic on I-95 and the Merritt Parkway," Debicella said. "This delay in opening the station is unacceptable, and I am glad the DOT is working with us to get construction started as soon as possible."

The meeting with Commissioner Carpenter was the result of an informational meeting hosted by the legislators on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Gene Colonese from the DOT attended a meeting with Stratford Mayor Miron and his staff, and commuters at the Stratford Library to give updates on the project. Heavy commuter dissatisfaction on the progress and status prompted Harkins and Debicella to act.

Rep. Harkins and Senator DeBicella said that the Department was apologetic for the lack of progress. Commissioner Carpenter pledged his intervention to shorten the time frame of the project which was originally scheduled for 2012.

Canopies will go out for bid design for inclusion as part of the rehab, and increased platforms will extend to accommodate eight cars. Also, the yellow barrels on West Broad Street will be removed. Monthly updates will now be provided by the Department to state and local officials on the status of the project.

“We are very appreciative of the Commissioner and DOT’s willingness to meet with us and attempt to resolve these issues,” said Representative Harkins. “We will continue to have an open and regular dialogue with the Department to assure this project goes forward quickly and positively.”