

## Public: 'Don't Move the Stamford Train Station Parking Garage!'

An overwhelming majority declared the idea of moving the station garage one born of backwards priorities.

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[Don't move the parking garage 1/4-of-a-mile away.](#)

If there was only one sentence allotted for coverage of the public hearing held Thursday night in the auditorium of [Stamford High School](#), that sentence would be it. Almost every single resident or commuter who chose to speak made the point to the Connecticut Department of Transportation officials that it was considered a huge inconvenience to move the parking garage to such a distance, some more creatively than others.

"There's good news and bad news here. The good news is the state appears to acknowledge it is incompetent at putting up buildings," said Martin Levine, who claimed to be a Stamford commuter for over 50 years to grand central and was referencing the more than 10 years the current project has been [muddled in planning mode](#), allowing the now-25-year-old garage to continue aging.

Levine suggested adding the parking garage for commuters where it is now and allowing a developer to build business above the space, but forcing the developers to instead be the one who had to sell customers on parking a 1/4-mile away and then coming to visit.

"The problem, of course, is that no tenant is going to move into an office building where the parking is a quarter-of-a-mile away," Levine said. "So why would you expect Stamford commuters, who live here and pay taxes, to accept a quarter-mile walk in the rain and snow or whatever."

Levine called out the ConnDot representatives as catering to developers needs while sacrificing the needs of the commuters who live here. Redeker said he was happy so many people came out to voice their opinions, but believed there was a lot of misinformation floating around that was stirring up panic when there need not be any.

"My job is transportation, first and foremost," ConnDOT Commissioner James P. Redeker. "My commitment is to the riders and commuters first and foremost. This process, if you look at it all,

sets forth those projections. Here's what I heard tonight: 'Don't moving the parking further away.' and I got that, and you're right. Nobody here said, 'Move it.' And frankly, I didn't either."

Jim Cameron, Chairman of the Metro-North Commuter council, has been one of the most outspoken detractors to the ConnDOT proposal to possibly move the garage. Cameron said the meeting Thursday was an empty gesture, believing decisions had already been made.

"This evening is the first time the DOT has sought public commuter input on this process," Cameron said during the hearing. "The RP bids are in the works. They're do four days after this commentary period has ended. The bids are being worked on now. The time for public input would've been a year ago, before the [Request for Proposals] was issued, not while it was already in process. It's a done deal."

Redeker said the commuters are his number one priority because they are the ones who keep him employed.

"In the end, you pay my salary," he said. "I work for you and I report to the government."

Redeker said no proposal would come close to being considered if it didn't have the commuters in mind first and development second. He also address the belief that the residents of Stamford were not consulted on the plan.

"I just reject that," Redeker said. "We worked with Stamford through this process. We worked through the report that generated recommendations for the transportation center collaboratively. We adopted all of our recommendations and principals and put them in our RFP."

Cameron said the commissioner did a great job fielding questions from the Stamford public and "made it clear he heard what people were saying," and explaining the process to them, but said he would still be holding them accountable for not making the process more transparent from the beginning.

"There's 700 people in that garage who are going to lose their parking," Cameron said. "Had there been signs in the station letting people know about this hearing, the auditorium would have been full. We've got to increase public involvement. There's got to be more hearings. There's got to be more outreach. There's got to be more explanation."