

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2018

FROM THE COMMISSIONER



Since the launch of the CTrail Hartford Line passenger rail service this past June, ridership has met first year projections with approximately 69,000 trips through the first six weeks of service.

As proud as we are of the new service, we cannot help but continue to look towards the future and the benefits of the NHHS Rail Program's next phase. To advance the 2030 Regional Vision, the new Program phase underway includes the design of additional new stations in North Haven, West Hartford, Enfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks, as well as the design of a second track between Windsor and Springfield.

CTDOT continues to seek funding for construction of these elements. Once funded, these rail corridor improvements will allow us to increase Hartford Line service and frequency. Our goal is to serve thirteen Hartford Line stations with a total of 50 trains per day, which is a key component of the regional vision that connects the entire northeast corridor.

In this newsletter, we highlight several achievements and success stories since launching Connecticut's first new passenger rail service in nearly 30 years, including customer amenity upgrades, completion of the third new Hartford Line station, service and infrastructure upgrades, and a continued focus on rail safety.

I hope you enjoy this edition and continue to stay engaged with Program developments into 2019 and beyond.

James P. Redeker
Commissioner,
CT Department of Transportation



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Hartford Line Momentum Continues

The CTrail Hartford Line continues to build momentum since its launch in June. Through October 31st, ridership along the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail corridor has totaled over 222,000 passenger trips! This includes an average of nearly 49,000 trips per month in July, August and September and over 56,000 trips in October. These trips are in addition to the nearly 22,000 trips that were made during the free opening weekend promotion on June 16th and 17th.

The total number of trips in the first six weeks more than doubles the total from the same period in 2017, during which Amtrak service was the only available train service along the corridor. The incredible passenger response totaled an approximate average weekday ridership of 1,860. By the one-year anniversary of the Hartford Line service launch, CTDOT hopes to reach 1,945 daily trips, and surpass 2,000 trips by June 2020.

The Hartford Line recently unveiled its new Spanish language website, which increases accessibility to customers. The new website offers the same features as the English website including all interactive components, such as the Trip Planner. CTDOT has a number of initiatives in design for new features and amenities, such as upgraded restrooms and bicycle accommodations, aimed at improving customer experience and accessibility.

CTDOT has also continued to promote Hartford Line service at several local



Busy rail boarding platform at Hartford Union Station on opening weekend (June 2018)



Attendees of the Get Hired Career Expo learn more about Hartford Line service (Sept. 2018)

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events. Recent events included the Hartford Courant Trade Show, New Haven Chamber of Commerce Business Expo, several fall festivals and fairs including the Berlin Fair, and the Hartford Latino Fest, among others.

Through social media, the Hartford Line continues to promote local events and encourage business and event patrons along the corridor to use the rail service for their travel, including sporting and entertainment events, fall festivals, and other seasonal activities. The #RideTheLine hashtag on social media continues to feature local success stories of passengers who are taking full advantage of the Hartford Line to live, work, and play in communities along the corridor. Check out some of the photos, and be sure to follow @HartfordLine and @NHHSRail on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!



Visitors at the Downtown Hartford "District Night" Pop-Up Block Party (Nov. 2018)

CTrail Bicycle Update

On August 16th, CTDOT began permitting bicycles onboard all CTrail Hartford Line trains. In response to customer requests and outreach by the bicycle advocate community, CTDOT and TASI/ACI determined that bicycles could be safely stored onboard. The new policy allows customers to bring their bicycles on any CTrail Hartford Line train, but not Amtrak trains. The bicycles must be stored in accordance with crew member directions to ensure the safety of customers and train crews.

"Cyclists throughout Connecticut welcome the new bicycle access policy on the CTrail Hartford Line. For those who ride to and from stations or bring their bikes aboard local buses or on other rail lines, this new policy extends the range for car-free travel in Connecticut," stated Paul Hammer, past president of the Connecticut Bicycle Coalition.



Bikes on trains press event (Aug. 2018)

Collapsible and folding bicycles are permitted on any CTrail Hartford Line train, but must be folded or collapsed before boarding. Collapsible and folding bicycles must be stored in luggage storage areas at the end of the coach or under a seat, and are not to be stored in overhead racks. These protocols will remain in place until bike racks are installed on CTrail Hartford Line coaches. The bike racks are being designed and tested, and will provide a permanent storage area for bicycles when installed in early 2019. CTDOT is working with Amtrak to expand the program to Amtrak trains traveling along the Hartford Line. Currently, Amtrak trains traveling along the Hartford Line accommodate folding and collapsible bicycles only. Additional information about Amtrak's bicycle onboard program may be found at Amtrak.com/bring-your-bicycle-onboard.

The mid-August announcement was summarized best by CTDOT Public Transportation Bureau Chief Richard Andreski who stated, "Some of the best days for cycling are still ahead this year and we look forward to welcoming customers with bicycles on board our trains". Just over a month after the announcement, CTDOT noted that Hartford Line trains had already accommodated over 300 trips using bicycles!

Another Phase of Track Construction Completed

Over the past several years, construction crews have worked diligently to "double track" 27 miles of rail line from North Haven to Windsor. The last four miles, located between Hartford and Windsor, were completed in September.

Double tracking refers to the addition of a second track along the rail corridor. Double tracking provides increased rail capacity along the corridor and allows trains to pass one another in either direction safely and quickly. The completion of the last segment improves the reliability of rail service north of Hartford and reduces the potential for delays.



Double track along the rail line in Windsor (May 2018)

CTDOT Commissioner James P. Redeker stated, "This is another milestone for the NHHS Rail Program and the Hartford Line service. It represents another step closer to the 2030 vision of expanded rail passenger service in New England."

Future phases of the Program include the installation of a second track between Windsor and Enfield. This segment, currently in design, connects the existing double track between Enfield and Springfield and completes the full double tracking of the Hartford Line, except for the Hartford Viaduct and Connecticut River Bridge. While design is fully funded, CTDOT continues to seek opportunities to secure construction funding for this final segment.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Held at Berlin Station

Governor Malloy and Commissioner Redeker along with several local, state, and federal officials, celebrated the completion of construction at the new Hartford Line station in Berlin at a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 23rd. Berlin Station is the third new station to be constructed as part of the NHHS Rail Program. Like the new stations in Wallingford and Meriden, this station provides amenities aimed at improving the passenger experience for Hartford Line riders.

High-level platforms on both sides of the tracks allow for safe and efficient passenger boarding. The platforms are connected by stairways, elevators, and a pedestrian bridge, and provide safe and convenient access over the tracks. Hartford Line riders are sheltered from direct sunlight and precipitation by an overhead canopy covering 50% of each platform, as well as an automatic snow melting system that quickly melts ice and snow during winter weather. The station is also equipped with security cameras and Blue Light emergency call boxes. To accommodate multimodal connections and alternative vehicle options, the station includes bicycle racks and an electric vehicle charging station.

A 235-space parking lot at the station is available to both Hartford Line passengers and the public on a first come-first served basis. Parking rates at the station are \$2 per day, or \$20 per month, and is free on weekends and federal holidays. Parking payments can be made by utilizing the pay stations located near the station entrance. Hartford Line passengers can purchase tickets at the station via **CTrail** ticket vending machines quickly and easily. Tickets are valid for all Hartford Line trains.

With construction of the new station in Berlin completed, CTDOT continues the design of several additional new stations that will serve the Hartford Line in the future. Stay tuned for updates in future editions.



Public officials cut a ribbon at Berlin Station (Oct. 2018)

Hartford Line Releases New Schedule

As of November 12, 2018, Hartford Line service is operating on a new schedule that refines and improves rail service. This is a result of the recent completion of double track between Hartford and Windsor, which supports higher train frequency north of the Hartford area and facilitates two primary service improvements.

To improve connections to other transportation services during the weekday morning commute, southbound Hartford Line Amtrak train number 451 now connects with a Metro-North train to allow riders to arrive in New York City prior to 9:00 AM. This is a significant improvement for passengers traveling to Manhattan for work and greatly improves connectivity.

The new schedule also includes the extension of a **CTrail** train that formerly only operated between New Haven and Hartford, to now stop at Windsor, Windsor Locks, and Springfield. This extended train operates on both weekday and weekend/holiday schedules, increasing the number of **CTrail** trains providing service to the entire New Haven to Springfield corridor from two to three on weekends and from three to four on weekdays. The weekday train that departs from New Haven at 8:15 AM now arrives in Springfield at 9:47 AM. This same train operates on a return schedule and departs Springfield at 10:40 AM and arrives in New Haven at 12:12 PM. The weekend/holiday train that departs New Haven at 9:25 AM now arrives in Springfield at 10:58 AM and operates on a return schedule that departs Springfield at 11:30 AM and arrives in New Haven at 1:01 PM.

These service improvements do not require additional trains to operate and provide more service and improved connections to Metro-North and Shore Line East. As part of the new schedule, other minor revisions have been made to improve efficiency of Hartford Line service. Please visit www.hartfordline.com to view the new schedule.

EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 12, 2018

Includes holiday operation information

- SPRINGFIELD
- Windsor Locks
- Windsor
- HARTFORD
- Berlin
- Meriden
- Wallingford
- New Haven - State Street
- NEW HAVEN - Union Station

hartfordline.com
 1-877-CTrides (877-287-4337)

Restrooms Reopened on CTrail Hartford Line Trains

On August 10, 2018, the Federal Railroad Administration reversed a previously announced mandate requiring that all restrooms on **CTrail** trains be closed until at least one restroom per train is ADA-accessible. The revised decision came following an analysis conducted after receiving a complaint in June 2018 arguing that the closure of all restrooms violated the rights of individuals with certain disabilities. As of August 13, one restroom per train was opened for use by passengers. This decision balances the needs of individuals with mobility impairments with those of individuals who require restroom access on an unpredictable basis.

Fully ADA accessible, portable restrooms, which CTDOT installed at the Hartford Line stations in Berlin, Meriden, Wallingford, Windsor, and Windsor Locks prior to service launch, will remain available during onboard restroom modifications. Permanent, fully accessible restrooms are available at New Haven Union Station, Hartford Union Station, and Springfield Union Station.

It is anticipated that the restroom conversions on coaches will be completed in early 2019, with the remaining conversions to be completed by mid-2019. Once completed, at least one car on each train will include a fully-ADA accessible restroom.

Website Photo Gallery

The Program website features photos documenting major Program milestones. The newest gallery includes photos from the Berlin Station ribbon cutting ceremony.

Visit the online photo gallery at www.nhhsrail.com/gallery to view all the latest photos.



Berlin Station on the day of the ribbon cutting ceremony (Oct. 2018)



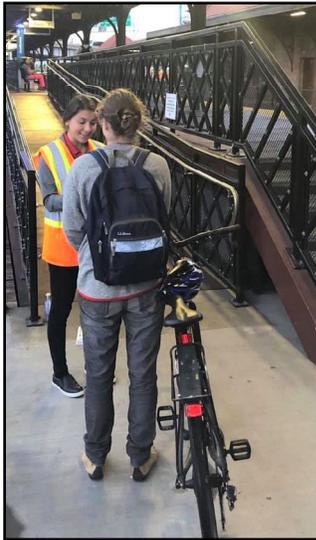
A Hartford Line train pulls into Berlin Station (Oct. 2018)

Operation Lifesaver: Rail Safety Week

CTDOT and Connecticut Operation Lifesaver (OL) participated in the 2nd Annual National Rail Safety Week, a national event to raise public awareness about rail safety, from September 23-29. The theme of this year's Rail Safety Week was "Stop Track Tragedies."

"While CTDOT engages in rail safety public awareness year-round, Rail Safety Week (RSW) provides the opportunity to bring our efforts to the forefront of the public's attention," stated Commissioner Redeker at a press event held at the Hartford Line Station in Wallingford on September 23rd. At the press event, Redeker praised the work of Connecticut Operation Lifesaver which has shared simple, yet lifesaving rail safety tips with over 30,000 people in the past year.

At the press event, CTDOT Commissioner Redeker offered several rail safety tips, listed below. Please review them and share with your family and friends!



An OL rep. distributes safety information during RSW (Sep. 2018)

- **Never trespass on railroad tracks.** It is both dangerous and illegal to cross rail tracks at any point other than a designated public railroad crossing. Between 2012 and 2016, there were six injuries and 25 fatalities resulting from trespassing collisions in Connecticut.
- **Drivers should never attempt to drive around a lowered gate or disregard other audio or visual cues.** Even if you cannot see or hear a train, these cues all mean that a train is approaching the intersection, and you should STOP and exercise caution. Between 2012 and 2016, there were 15 reported grade crossing collisions in Connecticut, resulting in three fatalities and one injury. If for any reason your vehicle becomes stuck on tracks, immediately clear the area and locate the emergency sign located at all grade crossings and call the number posted to report the issue.
- **Children should never play on or near railroad tracks.** Trains are often quieter and faster moving than they appear and can take more than a mile to fully stop. Per the FRA, nearly 1,100 pedestrian casualties occurred nationwide in 2016. Many children are fascinated by trains, and are among the most vulnerable to misunderstanding the risks associated with trains and tracks.
- **Bicyclists should always disembark and walk across railroad tracks at grade crossings, when possible.** Always cross tracks at a 90-degree angle to avoid narrow wheels getting stuck between the rail/street gap.
- **Rail passengers should stay alert when on a platform or train.** Be sure to stand away from the edge, as trains are wider than the tracks. Mind the gap between the platform and doorway when boarding and disembarking a train.

To learn more about Operation Lifesaver, visit www.oli.org and the Connecticut Operation Lifesaver Facebook page.

GET INVOLVED & STAY INFORMED

NHHS Contact List

Over 4,000 residents, businesses, local groups and public agencies have already subscribed to the NHHS contact list! Subscribing to the contact list on the www.NHHSrail.com website takes only a few minutes and ensures that you will receive:

- E-alerts with Program updates,
- Construction impacts,
- Future issues of the Program newsletter,
- Notices of upcoming public meetings.

Questions & Comments

The Program website (www.nhhsrail.com) provides an easy way to ask questions or provide comments to the Program team and receive a response via email.