

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2018

FROM THE COMMISSIONER



On June 16, 2018, after years of anticipation, excitement, and hard work, the **CTrail Hartford Line** launched! During opening weekend, the new rail service attracted a total of 21,850 riders. It was a tremendous success and surpassed all ridership expectations.

On behalf of the Connecticut Department of Transportation, I want to thank everyone who rode the trains on inaugural weekend. Whether you were with your family, friends, or simply enjoying the ride on your own, we appreciate your support.

The success of the Hartford Line is a result of the dedication and commitment of the CTDOT and the many consultants and contractors who contributed to this Program. Over the past seven and a half years, the team utilized 1,450 individuals who spent over 4 million hours planning, designing, and constructing this new service! I would like to also thank the nearly 200 Hartford Line ambassadors who greeted and helped customers at stations throughout the first week of service.

All this work was for one simple purpose – to provide those who live, work, and play in communities throughout the region a cost-effective and efficient transportation alternative. Our Program partners led the call to reinvigorate a once vibrant rail corridor and create a rail service that offers opportunities for economic development in communities along the line. Together, we are reducing congestion and pollutants and promoting healthy lifestyles through active and multi-modal transportation alternatives. For that, we should be proud.

This edition highlights several key components of the Hartford Line that are vital to its early success, including new stations, track improvements, enhanced ticketing options, and improved rail safety.

I hope you enjoy reading and encourage you to ride the Hartford Line so that you can expand your travel options through Connecticut and beyond. While launching the Hartford Line is a momentous milestone, more work is yet to be done, so stay tuned for future editions of the NHHS newsletter. In the meantime, remember that with the launch of the Hartford Line, "Your World Just Got Bigger!"

James P. Redeker
Commissioner,
CT Department of Transportation

HARTFORD LINE
CT rail

Launched June 16, 2018!

www.HartfordLine.com

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Hartford Line Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies Kick-Off Service Launch Weekend

Beginning with two ribbon cutting ceremonies, one at Union Station in Springfield, MA and another at Union Station in New Haven, the Hartford Line launch celebration held on Friday, June 15 showcased the line's regional importance. Following these ceremonies, an inaugural train left each station and arrived at Hartford's Union Station for the grand celebration!



Governor Malloy and Commissioner Redeker alongside a new Hartford Line train.

In Springfield, Mayor Domenic Sarno opened that ribbon cutting ceremony followed by remarks from U.S. Representative Richard Neal, MassDOT Rail & Transit Administrator Astrid Glynn, and Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) Deputy Commissioner Anna M. Barry. After the ceremonial ribbon was cut, local dignitaries boarded the inaugural train headed south to Hartford.

Meanwhile, in New Haven, Governor Dannel P. Malloy opened a ribbon cutting ceremony alongside New Haven Mayor Toni Harp, and CTDOT Commissioner James P. Redeker.

"This new commuter train service will mean fewer cars on the roads and highways, that in turn will lead to congestion relief and a more efficient regional transportation system in general," said New Haven Mayor Toni Harp. "These benefits will continue to add up. Fewer cars and less congestion improves air quality, work productivity, and the overall quality of life in Connecticut."

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Following the ceremony, dignitaries boarded the inaugural train in New Haven, and headed north to Hartford to meet officials and invited guests traveling from Springfield.

Inside Hartford Union Station, hundreds of guests filled the Great Hall, awaiting the arrival of the first trains. Each train broke through a ceremonial banner as they arrived at the station. As passengers departed the trains, they were greeted by the sound of music played by CTDOT employee Edgardo Block and his keyboard as they entered the Great Hall. Guests were encouraged to visit Hartford Line and Operation Lifesaver booths to learn more about the service and rail safety.

At noon, CTDOT Commissioner James P. Redeker welcomed everyone and introduced CTDOT employee Christina Smith who sang a moving rendition of "America the Beautiful." Among the featured speakers were Governor Dannel P. Malloy, Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, former U.S. Senator Chris Dodd, Federal Rail Administration Chief Counsel Juan D. Reyes III, U.S. Representative John Larson, and U.S. Representative Richard Neal.

"With the launch of the Hartford Line, Connecticut is taking long-overdue, bold steps to invest in our future – laying the tracks for job growth, business expansion, and the revitalization of our urban areas," Governor Dannel P. Malloy said. "Investing in our transportation system is critical to drive economic growth, boost development, create jobs, and improve the overall quality of life for our residents. If we want our state to be competitive and attract



Hartford Line Launch Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Hartford Union Station.

the jobs of the future, investing in our transportation system is not optional."

"Investing in transportation means investing in a stronger Connecticut," said CTDOT Commissioner James P. Redeker. "It's taken the leadership of Governor Malloy and many others to leverage federal funds to bring this much-needed service to our state. We've already seen an explosion of interest in transit-oriented development (TOD) in rail communities and we expect that will only grow as young people continue to make clear that they want transit at the heart of their hometowns."

"This is a great day for Hartford and all the communities along the line," Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin said. "This will not only improve the lives of Hartford residents who use public transit regularly, it helps bring transit-oriented development opportunities to the forefront, bringing jobs to people and people to their jobs."

The ceremony concluded with the sounding of the new Hartford Line train horn. Guests then mingled and boarded their respective trains to the sounds of the Connecticut 102nd Army Band.



Sample advertisement from the service launch campaign.

Turnout for Service Launch Weekend Exceeds Ridership Expectations



Passengers riding the Hartford Line on opening weekend.

or to take a round-trip to experience the new service," CTDOT Commissioner James P. Redeker said. "Additional trains and buses operated to accommodate all trips on the system throughout the weekend."

Regular weekday service, including 17 roundtrip trains traveling between New Haven and Hartford, 12 of which continue north to Springfield, began Monday, June 18. Weekday trains run approximately 45 minutes apart during peak morning and afternoon peak periods. Connections to major cities such as Boston and New York City, and beyond, can be made at the New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield stations. Local bus service is available at most stations along the Hartford Line, including the Bradley Flyer that travels between Hartford Union Station and Bradley International Airport.

On Saturday, June 16th at 8:00 a.m., **CTrail** train #6400 left New Haven's Union Station carrying the very first Hartford Line passengers! Throughout opening weekend, which was free to the public, a total of 21,850 riders from all over the state came out to ride the new service. Nearly 200 ambassadors in red shirts were present at Hartford Line stations during all hours of operation through opening weekend to assist passengers with train schedules, purchasing tickets, and to answer questions.

"People were making trips to numerous activities that were happening throughout the region this weekend, including the New Haven Arts and Ideas festival, Hartford Yard Goats games, the block party in Hartford,



Passengers boarding the Hartford Line on opening weekend.

New Hartford Line Stations Open in Meriden and Berlin



New station in Meriden.

In April 2018, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the new **CTrail** Hartford Line Meriden Station. Located at 60 State Street, the new station replaced the old station located on the same site. While the station has been in service since Fall 2017, the formal ribbon cutting ceremony was scheduled for the spring to ensure all subsequent track work was completed prior to celebrating the station's completion.

Meriden was among the first communities to see the economic benefits of Hartford Line service, with a transit-oriented development (TOD) constructed at 24 Colony Street, prior to service launch! Associated with this TOD project was the construction of a 225-space parking garage, which is offered to Hartford Line customers at a reduced rate. 24 Colony Street is among the first of many TOD projects spurred by Hartford Line service.

In June 2018, the new Hartford Line station in Berlin opened to the public prior to service launch. Featuring all the same amenities as the new stations in Wallingford and Meriden, Berlin Station is located at 51 Depot Road. The partial opening of the station allows passengers to use the entirety of the west side platform, as well as approximately 200 feet of the 500-foot platform on the east side (parking lot side) of the tracks. Twenty spaces of the total 220 space parking lot will be unavailable through final construction. Upon full opening, the remaining 20 spaces will become available, including an electric vehicle charging station, and the remaining 300 feet of the east side platform will be operational.

Speaking about the new station, CTDOT Commissioner Redeker stated, "The Hartford Line is about making connections and getting to destinations on time and with ease. Furthermore, it's about becoming a catalyst for economic development. We hope that, aside from providing countless transportation benefits, communities like Berlin will continue their efforts to implement TOD and generate economic activity around the new stations."

Berlin Station is expected to open fully in Fall 2018. In addition to the new stations in Berlin and Meriden, a new platform at the existing State Street Station in New Haven was opened for use in June 2018, prior to service launch, and additional improvements, including the reconstruction of stairs in the main entry will be completed in early fall.



24 Colony Street TOD near Meriden Station.

Customer-Centric Amenities Available at Hartford Line Stations

The new Hartford Line stations in Berlin, Meriden, and Wallingford offer amenities to create an inviting passenger experience to complement rail travel. 500-foot high-level platforms facilitate safe and efficient passenger boarding onto Hartford Line trains. Connecting the two platforms at each station are stairways, elevators, and an overhead pedestrian bridge to provide safe and convenient access across the tracks. To shelter passengers from inclement weather, overhead canopies cover approximately 50% of the station platforms. During winter weather events, the new platforms are equipped with a heating system to melt snow and ice to improve passenger safety on the platforms. Passenger train information systems provide real time service updates including arrival, departure, and track information. Each station is fitted with security cameras and Blue Light emergency call boxes to provide a safe environment for your trip. To improve multi-modal connections, each station features several loop bicycle racks. Each station parking lot has varying capacity to charge electric vehicles, allowing two vehicles to charge at once.



High-level platform at the new Meriden Station.



New bicycle racks at State Street Station.

Existing stations in Hartford and New Haven underwent several upgrades to improve the passenger experience prior to service launch. Completed in Summer 2016, Hartford Union Station was upgraded with a new 260-foot high-level platform to facilitate quick boarding to improve the station's ability to handle additional rail service. Similarly, the existing State Street Station in New Haven was upgraded with a new, 344-foot high-level platform to ensure capacity to accommodate Hartford Line passengers in addition to other rail services such as Shore Line East. Other upgrades include a new entrance canopy, the installation of bicycle racks to promote multi-modal connections, and the construction of a new overhead pedestrian bridge and tower to facilitate movement across the tracks.

Additional station information can be found in the stations factsheet in the website library.

One Ticket - Any Train!



Gov. Malloy uses a new Hartford Line ticket vending machine.

To provide a seamless customer experience, **CTrail** worked with Amtrak to develop simplified ticket options for Hartford Line service. Upon service launch, Amtrak began accepting **CTrail** tickets onboard all trains between New Haven, Connecticut, and Springfield, Massachusetts, with the exception of the Vermonter (Trains 54, 55, 56, and 57). Additionally, passengers with Amtrak tickets can travel on **CTrail** trains using their Amtrak ticket. This means that Hartford Line passengers can use any ticket to travel on the Hartford Line!

Recently unveiled at most Hartford Line stations, the new **CTrail** ticket vending machines (TVMs) provide a quick and easy way to purchase rail tickets! **CTrail** TVMs sell **CTrail** Hartford Line tickets, connecting tickets for New Haven Line trains (operated by Metro-North) via Union Station in New Haven, and Shore Line East tickets. Hartford Line TVMs do not sell Amtrak tickets. Tickets are available for purchase onboard for an additional surcharge. The surcharge is waived if purchasing tickets when boarding a train in Windsor or Windsor Locks or if the passenger is eligible for reduced fares. **CTrail** TVMs are expected to be installed in Windsor and Windsor Locks in Fall 2018 at which point the surcharge will no longer be waived at those stations.

Amtrak has adjusted fares to match **CTrail** and normalize fares with all Hartford Line trains. Amtrak tickets are available via several options provided by Amtrak including online, Amtrak mobile app, Quik-Trak Kiosks, Travel Agents at major stations, or over the phone. It is important to note that Amtrak will not sell **CTrail** tickets onboard Amtrak trains.

CTrail TVMs offer a variety of ticket options to suit your travel needs. Hartford Line ticket types include one-way, ten-trip, weekly, and monthly. Discounted one-way fares (50% of the full ticket price) are available for senior citizens (65+) and persons with disabilities. This reduced fare is available only for **CTrail** Hartford Line trains. Other services such as Amtrak may have discounted rates that differ from **CTrail** rates. Passengers purchasing a monthly **CTrail** ticket can choose to add access to **CTtransit** local bus service for only \$10.

U-Pass CT can be used for travel on **CTrail** Hartford Line trains and all Amtrak trains operating between New Haven and Springfield, with the exception of the Vermonter. Enrolled students can obtain a U-Pass from participating Connecticut universities and colleges. A valid student ID must be shown at time of use. More information can be found at ctrails.com/u-pass.

Details regarding ticket types, fares, and service schedules can be found on the Hartford Line website at www.hartfordline.com/fares-schedules.

This successful ticketing coordination between **CTrail** and Amtrak provides a seamless Hartford Line experience, so that the fare structure and ticket types are easily interchangeable among all Hartford Line trains for the convenience of rail passengers.

Hartford Line Service Spurs Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in Windsor Locks

Windsor Locks continues to advance TOD initiatives near the site of the future station, located on Main Street, just north of the historic train station. Improvements include sidewalk realignment and widening, traffic calming measures, and much more. The improvements (known as Complete Streets) seek to improve multi-modal connections along Main Street in Windsor Locks to the future Hartford Line station, provide a safer pedestrian environment, and encourage economic activity along this important corridor.

These improvements seek to improve access to local businesses and the Montgomery Mill residential complex which is currently being developed. The adaptive reuse of the former mill will feature 160 residential units within a 5-minute walk of the future Windsor Locks Hartford Line station.

In addition, Windsor Locks has adopted a tax increment financing (TIF) district in the future station area. The new TIF district seeks to capture the value of new development in the area, associated with new rail service, and use this funding for additional public realm improvements. Windsor Locks is among the many communities harnessing the potential of Hartford Line rail service to the benefit of the local economy. The town joins other municipalities such as Meriden, Windsor, Berlin, New Haven, and others that are investigating or actively implementing TOD in communities serviced by the Hartford Line.

Visit nhhsrail.com/benefits to learn more about TOD in other municipalities along the Hartford Line.



Ongoing construction at the Montgomery Mill TOD site.

All Aboard! Hartford Line Ambassadors Lead Successful First Week of Service



Hartford Line Ambassadors preparing to assist passengers on opening day.

Nearly 200 **CTrail** ambassadors assisted customers with information, schedules, and travel tips during the first nine days of Hartford Line service. Ambassadors included CTDOT employees, as well as volunteers from local transportation and rail organizations. The Ambassadors filled more than 135 shifts, each consisting of two ambassadors at each station, wearing bright red shirts and enthusiastic smiles. They provided personalized service to help customers navigate the new rail service. Ambassador Captains for each shift traveled up and down the line assisting passengers on trains, checking in with station Ambassadors and refilling supplies such as train schedules, and on opening weekend, free travel tickets. Hartford Line's Ambassador program was well received by customers both in person as well as on social media accounts.

"Those Ambassadors were really cool and very helpful!" said opening weekend passenger, Fred G. on the Hartford Line Facebook page.

"The best part of riding the new Hartford Line was seeing and feeling the excitement in the air," Lisa B. of the Making Meriden business center said. "Folks across all demographics could see the possibilities the new train line will bring. Whether it's access to employment centers or recreational travel or seeing opportunity right here in Meriden, you can feel the buzz around town."

"My wife and two children took the train and we were impressed by the crowds," James V., owner of Black-Eyed Sally's Restaurant in Hartford, said. "My servers said they couldn't believe how many of our guests said they took the train here. This will really help Hartford businesses."

While the Ambassador Program was featured only during the first nine days of service, passengers may contact Hartford Line customer service, which is provided by **CTrides**, by calling 1-877-CT**rides** (1-877-287-4337) or online at www.hartfordline.com/customer-service/.



An Ambassador assisting a Hartford Line passenger at Union Station in New Haven.

Operation Lifesaver Promotes Rail Safety Alongside Increasing Train Activity

Connecticut's Operation Lifesaver campaign has been busy this spring and summer! Connecticut Operation Lifesaver is the state chapter of Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI), a national, non-profit organization dedicated to increasing public awareness about rail safety to reduce collisions, fatalities, and injuries at street-level rail crossings and trespassing on or near railroad tracks.

Connecticut Operation Lifesaver expanded its rail safety awareness campaign for the launch of the Hartford Line, prior to the increase in rail traffic. For example, many people are not aware that it takes a mile or more for a train to stop! So, it is important never to go around or under a lowered gate at a street-level rail crossing—whether driving, biking, or walking.

Rail Safety Ambassadors have been busy visiting neighborhoods throughout the Hartford Line corridor, conducting targeted outreach to pedestrians and bicyclists near street-level rail crossings, visiting schools and local organizations to conduct age-appropriate presentations on rail safety, and communicating simple, yet lifesaving tips, about how to stay safe near rail tracks.



Operation Lifesaver representatives at the Hartford Line launch event.



Operation Lifesaver messaging, promoting rail safety.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) developed a fact sheet with safety tips tailored to pedestrians, drivers, bicyclists, and train passengers. The factsheet can be viewed in English and Spanish in the Information Center on the NHHS Program website at www.nhhsrail.com/info_center/library.aspx.

Visit CT Operation Lifesaver's Facebook page @CTOperationLifesaver for more information.

Free rail safety presentations are available for any group, business, or organization—including schools, parent-teacher organizations, youth groups, and neighborhood associations. To learn more or request a free safety presentation for your group, please contact the CT Operation Lifesaver State Coordinator, Kevin Burns, at Kevin.Burns@CT.gov.

Website Photo Gallery

The Program website features photos documenting construction progress and major milestones. The newest gallery includes photos from the Hartford Line ribbon cutting ceremonies. Visit the online photo gallery at www.nhhsrail.com/gallery to view all the latest photos.



CTDOT Deputy Commissioner Anna Barry at the Hartford Line launch ceremony.



Attendees at the New Haven ribbon cutting include Governor Malloy, Commissioner Redeker, and New Haven Mayor Toni Harp.



The first Hartford Line train arrives in Hartford!



The Connecticut 102nd Army Band performing to conclude the ceremony.

Did You Know?

From Monday, June 18 through Sunday, June 24, during its first full week of regular operations in which full-fare tickets were required, the new **CTrail** Hartford Line service ridership exceeded 10,700 customers!



Hartford Line train crew on opening weekend.

CTDOT Commissioner Redeker stated, "I've spoken with scores of riders who have begun to use the Hartford Line and who are saying their commute has become much easier and less stressful. With easy access and connections to our **CTtransit** buses, we are opening all kinds of options for getting around Connecticut – whether you're going to work, to school, or simply playing the role of tourist."

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, including station construction
- 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.

www.twitter.com/NHHSrail

www.facebook.com/NHHSrail