

CONNECTICUT COMMUTER RAIL COUNCIL MEETING

August 2020

1. What has the Metro North workforce been up to for the past four months?
MNR has been effectively responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic ensuring that risks to customers and employees are minimized. Cars are sanitized once every 24 hrs. and stations twice a day. Reduced train service has provided larger work windows for CDOT Capital Projects to progress.
2. Would Metro North consider the transportation and climate initiative and make public transit free?
This is a policy question for the governor and legislature. We currently do not have the resources to make public transportation free. Also, the Special Transportation Fund, which funds transit and rail operations as well as the capital program, requires a new revenue infusion. This is the most urgent priority.
3. Is there any consideration to purchasing multiple train sets?
Push/pull coaches have been determined to be the right fit given the requirement for the variety of propulsion options on our lines. It is more cost effective to purchase cars that can be pulled by either diesel or either mode of electric locomotive and have a single unified fleet of passenger cars.
4. Why is wire replacement still requiring daytime outages when machines can replace a mile of wire in an overnight shift?
The work around the Devon Bridge related to replacing the last section of fixed tension catenary with constant tension catenary is much more intensive than simply replacing contact wire. The remaining work in that area involves the installation of a system that is specific to moveable bridge span on the Devon Bridge. Since this is a complete replacement of the old system it requires a full-time track outage until the work is completed, inspected, tested and commissioned.
5. Why does the ballast work going on around Milford require daytime outages when we have machines that can regulate miles of track in one overnight shift?
There is Mudspot Remediation on TK2 east of Milford. The work is performed during the day to improve safety and efficiency. MNR does not have the equipment that can complete this work in a single day.
6. What is the status of M8s on Shore Line East?
The Office of Rail Ops staff, MNR, KRC, Amtrak and others continue to finalize all the requirements and logistics to efficiently execute both tests. Some impacts to the schedule have developed as a result of COVID-19, but the team continues their work.
 - a. **Acceptance Testing** – Outstanding M-8 EMU testing that will enable MNR to finalize acceptance of the fleet of M-8 rail cars from KRC. The majority of acceptance testing was conducted on NHL. The remaining testing includes pantograph/overhead catenary

wire interaction testing, Passenger Information/Automatic Station announcement (ASI/PIS) tests and additionally, Positive Train Control (PTC) on SLE testing.

- b. **Traction Power Study** – Study to verify the computational model of currently running, as well as additional future electric trains, including M-8's on Amtrak's N.E. Corridor/SLE territory. This will be accomplished via measurement of Power collection from both the substations on SLE (from New Haven Mill River to New London) and the motive power (Amtrak passenger electric locomotives (ACS64 & Acela) and M-8 EMU rail cars.

- c. **Current status:** Fall 2020 estimated MNR/KRC
 1. Acceptance testing (Pantograph, ASI/PIS, PTC): October 2020
 2. Traction Power Study Testing: September 2020:

Note: Systra/G-F site visits completed; in process of revising Traction Power Study test plan for Amtrak's review/approval; PAL (for TPS) executed, with issuance of NTP shortly.

- 7. Why was there no substitute bus service for the New Haven line service that was knocked out by Isaias?

Ridership as a result of the impacts of COVID would have been an issue in providing buses to support the demand with social distancing. We also saw substantial tree damage along the line, bus access to the stations was limited. We had to cancel the busing operation for the New Canaan as a result of the local road impacts from trees and wires on Thursday.

- 8. When will we have regular weekend service on the NH line? (trains are very crowded)

MNR will be implementing a schedule change effective Monday August 31, 2020. Based on ridership levels that MNR has been tracking, the weekend service will remain hourly. The increases that are being observed by MNR, the weekday service level will be increased in accordance with the ridership demands.

- 9. Can you explain the level of attention that the restrooms are getting during the pandemic as some appear to be unsanitary?

As a result of the COVID-19 impacts, MNR has implemented a schedule for the rolling stock bathroom servicing, once per day.

The station bathrooms are also being maintained daily with touch points being treated more frequently.