



## MEMBERS

Chair	Jim Gildea	Derby
Vice Chair	Jeffrey Maron	Stamford
Secretary	Roger Cirella	Ansonia
	Jessica Bremner	Hartford
	Marcellus Edwards	North Haven
	Mitch Fuchs	Fairfield
	Ashlee Fox	Fairfield
	Douglas Hausladen	New Haven
	Melissa Kane	Westport
	Blaize Levitan	Guilford
	Julia McGrath	Old Saybrook
	Sue Prosi	Stratford
	Zell Steever	Groton

# 2021 Annual Report

The Connecticut Commuter Rail Council (CCRC) is an independent board which acts as the advocate on behalf of commuters on railroad lines throughout the state, including the New Haven line, New Canaan, Danbury and Waterbury branches, Shore Line East, and the Hartford Line.

## [CT General Statute - CCRC Power & Duties](#)

Sec. 15. Section 13b--212c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):  
The Connecticut Commuter Rail Council shall study and investigate all aspects of the daily operation of commuter rail lines in the state, monitor their performance and recommend changes to improve the efficiency and the quality of service of the operation of such lines. The council may request and shall receive from any department, division, board, bureau, commission, agency, public authority of the state or any political subdivision thereof such assistance and data as it requests and will enable it to properly carry out its activities for the purposes set forth in this section. The council shall also work with the Department of Transportation to advocate for customers of all commuter lines in the state and shall make recommendations for improvements to such lines.

The Governor and senior leaders of the General Assembly appoint council members in order to make certain that a broad range of perspectives are included in all meetings. We work with both the Department of Transportation and Metro North Railroad to bring forth the experiences of rail commuters and ensure their voices are heard. We are committed to improving the commuting experience for everyone.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONNECTICUT COMMUTER RAIL COUNCIL ADVOCACY FOR COMMUTERS IN 2021

[Minutes: Connecticut Commuter Rail Council 2021](#)

[Agendas: Connecticut Commuter Rail Council 2021](#)

## **Council:**

This year the CCRC began the year in 2021 with a very successful Hartford based meeting in Hartford where we met with the Governor's office, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and members of the State Legislature both the Governor's office as well as the Transportation Committee. It was a successful start to the year.

The coronavirus was with us all year and rail transportation was impacted in a way that none of us had for-seen or had experienced. The Council continued to meet virtually. We did our best to stay relevant, engaged, informed and a resource for those commuters who were still using real transportation but also for those who would do so in the future.

One silver lining was that by meeting virtually, we were fortunate that we had participation from all the various service providers of the various branches and lines to attend meetings, weigh in, be available and answer questions.

We continued to meet, and hold mainline and branch line meetings. For instance, we held Waterbury Branch, Hartford Line, Danbury Branch and New York City themed meetings.

As of this writing, the Council has two vacant positions. One position is designated as an appointee of the Governor and is the chief elected official of a municipality located on an operating or proposed new rail line, and the second is by the ranking member of the Transportation Committee and must be a representative of either the Danbury or Waterbury Branch.

## ***Safety / Security:***

In the area of safety, Metro-North Railroad was declared the winner of the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) 2021 Gold Award for Commuter Rail Safety for an innovative system that allows train dispatchers to ensure worker safety by de-energising tracks at the touch of a button, streamlining a process that formerly involved manually filling out paper forms.

Known as the Plate Order Protection System (POPS), the safety system was developed in-house by Metro-North's Communications and Signals Team. POPS gives rail traffic controllers and power directors a computer-based option to set parameters for de-energising tracks within a work area from the Operations Control Centre in real time. A plate order is a request that is filled out to remove a track from service for electrical work. Under this new system, it is submitted by the power director and graphically displayed on the dispatcher's screen, protecting employees working within a defined work zone and preventing misrouted trains from getting too close.

The Council has been working to better understand the "total" experience of the commuter. In that regard, we are trying to integrate a security metric into our monthly Operations Report. The Council has request that Metro North begin including the "Major crimes metric per station" as part of that monthly report.



### **Social Media:**

The CCRC's website continues to serve as a resource for commuter rail passengers and advocates. The CCRC posts all relevant meeting information to the website (members, contact information, meeting agendas, minutes, operations reports, etc.).

The website also serves as a vehicle for commuters to communicate with the CCRC on commuting issues. In 2021, the Council website attracted over 6,000 visitors.

The CCRC's Twitter feed continues to attract new followers. The CCRC uses Twitter to update followers on Council business and provide a glimpse into the work of the council. The feed is also used to share updates that are provided to the CCRC by the Connecticut Department of Transportation and Metro North Railroad as well as other news items of interest.

The CCRC continued to use all available methods to connect and reach out to the commuters we advocate for including taking live Twitter questions and live streaming meetings. We will continue to do so in the upcoming year. The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of multiple forms of communication.



### **Legislative:**

In January, the Council held its 7th annual Hartford based meeting. The Governor's office was in attendance, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and members of the State Legislature. CDOT provided an update on the Transportation and Climate Initiative Program. Program details include the fact that CT will see at a 26% reduction in carbon emissions and generate annual revenue of \$89 million in 2023, increasing to \$117 million in 2032. Savings will be re-invested in cleaner transportation options. Some examples included: The funds will be used to convert buses and trucks to electric. The EV charging infrastructure will be expanded. Roundabouts will be created to reduce crashes and improve air quality.

In addition to the meeting in Hartford, the Council took a much more active role in sharing their opinions on a wide range of legislative topics and participating in legislative events:

- We aggressively worked with the various legislative appointing authorities to fill all Council member appointments
- We met with representatives of the Governor's office to discuss their legislative priorities.
- We had a very successful Hartford meeting with a number of legislators (I will list out all legislators who attended our meetings)
- We completed and shared our Rail Plan recommendations
- The Council endorsed and submitted legislation on HB5423 – An Act Concerning the Expansion of Passenger Train and Ground Transportation Services In Eastern Connecticut
- The Council submitted legislation on HB5839 - AN Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for Operational Growth and Expenses of the Naugatuck Valley Waterbury Branch Line of the Metro North Commuter Railroad.
- The Council played a role in the recent 12.3M RAISE Grant to upgrade and update the Derby Train Station
- The Council was a part of the "Let's Go CT" press event and spoke at the event
- The Council was a part of the "WBL Service increase" press event and spoke at the event

Testimony can be read on the Council website: <http://ctcommuterrailcouncil.org/>



Finally, the Council thanks the following legislators for appearing at Council meetings in 2021:

State Senator	Tony Hwang	28th
State Senator	Henri Martin	31th
State Senator	Will Haskell	26th
State Representative	Christine Conley	40th
State Representative	Nicole Klarides	105th
State Representative	Roland Lemar	96th
State Representative	David Michel	146th
State Representative	Kara Rochelle	104th
State Representative	Brian Smith	48th
State Representative	Jonathan Steinberg	136th
State Representative	Mary Welander	104th



Governor Ned Lamont and the "Time for CT" Press Event

## **New Haven Line**

**2019 total ridership – 40,234,513**

**2019 YTD on-time performance – 97.0%**

**2020 total ridership – 11,545,691 (-68.7%)**

**2020 YTD on-time performance – 97.8%**

**2021 total ridership – 12,647,827 (11.2%)**

**2021 YTD on-time performance – 97.9%**

The New Haven Line experienced moderate ridership recovery in 2021 from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of 2021, ridership had returned to about 50-60% of pre-pandemic levels, although it remained sensitive to the impacts of waves of new variants (Delta and Omicron). Weekend ridership at large recovered faster than weekday ridership. In Spring of 2021, with CT and NY reopening, weekend ridership grew to around 60-70% of pre-pandemic levels. Although sensitive to variants, weekend ridership remained steadily stronger than weekday. This could have schedule implications in the desire and demand for services as remote work becomes a more permanent fixture of many large employers.

At the start of 2021, service levels were still significantly reduced compared to pre-pandemic levels. In June, Metro North began increasing trains operating on the main line. On August 29, 2021, service levels were increased to 82% of pre-pandemic levels and weekend service was returned to 100% of pre-pandemic levels. Direct service between New Canaan and Grand Central on the Hudson Line was also resumed. Fares remained off-peak all year.

The CCRC had extensive conversations with CDOT and Metro North about service level and schedule design. The primary historic weekday service goal was to move people in and out of New York City. Post-COVID, with increasing permanency of remote work and changes in real estate trends, there may be a need for more express service intra-state in Connecticut, rather than just focusing on moving people in and out of the city. Monitoring trends will be essential to meeting evolving commuter demands. CCRC will be looking to improve key performance indicators received from Metro North and CDOT in 2022.



Capital projects continued on the NHL, largely focused on repairing existing track conditions. Construction on the Walk Bridge over the Norwalk River began in 2021. Major milestones for the year include starting the CP243 Interlocking project, constructing new tracks and crossover on the NHL, as well as the installation of submarine cables necessary to the replacement project. The bridge is over 100 years old.

Commuters attended meetings throughout the year to express their experiences commuting. Comments largely surrounded the COVID-19 precautions and perceptions about enforcement. Riders also wanted service restored and more reliable and consistent performance.

CCRC is thankful to the Metro North and CDOT staff on the frontlines of the pandemic. Train Conductors were placed in very difficult positions in 2021, charged almost solely with enforcing the federal mask mandate on trains that was in effect all year. Despite a handful of inflammatory incidents, mask compliance was relatively high, especially during the weekday commutes. The NHL is a valuable alternative for the Connecticut community to the heavily trafficked and highly polluted I-95 corridor.

***New Canaan Branch:***

**2019 total ridership – 1,515,710**

**2019 YTD on-time performance – 94.4%**

**2020 total ridership – 443,617 (- 68.2%)**

**2020 YTD on-time performance – 97.6%**

**2021 total ridership – 357,504 (- 21.7%)**

**2021 YTD on-time performance – 97.6%**

The Covid pandemic and its negative impact on ridership continued for the New Canaan branch as it was one of the rail branch lines that saw lower returning ridership in 2021 than in 2020.

In August, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and state officials gathered at the New Canaan Train Station to celebrate the announcement that the New Canaan Line was returning to nearly full-service beginning Sunday, August 29. In addition, Catherine Rinaldi, president of Metro North, to announce that one-seat direct train service to Manhattan's Grand Central Station would return on the New Canaan train line.

This ideally would address 2 long standing concerns. New Canaan commuters have long complained about delays and note that while connecting trains are scheduled to arrive at the same time in Stamford for a transfer to the New Haven Line into Manhattan, those schedules were prone to delays. Additionally, commuters also complained of the inability to secure a seat upon transferring onto an already packed morning rush train at Stamford. In many cases, commuters have to stand which also provided a poor commuter experience.

Commissioner Joe Giulietti said of this return to service: “The New Canaan Line returning to full service is another positive step in the right direction in Connecticut’s recovery from the pandemic. As passengers continue to return to the rails in New Canaan and throughout Connecticut, I want them and others to know that the Connecticut Department of Transportation is working to meet their needs, connecting them to families, friends, and businesses faster, more efficiently, and more modernly. We are doing our part to improve the nation’s rail network for this generation and the next.”

(<https://www.ncadvertiser.com/news/article/Direct-rail-service-returns-to-New-Canaan-16442689.php#photo-21336149> )

As people continue to return work coupled with service returns and the direct express to Grand Central terminal reinstated, there is optimism that ridership will follow.



First Selectman Kevin Moynihan helped announce that one-seat train service is resuming to New Canaan train line

***Waterbury Branch:***

**2019 total ridership – 336,534**

**2019 YTD on-time performance – 90.2%**

**2020 total ridership – 127,635 (-58.7%)**

**2020 YTD on-time performance – 97.9%**

**2021 total ridership – 150,928 (18.2%)**

**2021 YTD on-time performance – 94.5%**

The Connecticut Commuter Rail Council held a Waterbury Branch based meeting on August 21, 2021 via Zoom. It was a well-attended meeting with Waterbury Branch commuters as well as local leaders and state legislators.

During this meeting, representatives from Metro North and the Connecticut Department of Transportation presented an outline and update on the passing siding and signalization project currently under construction on the Waterbury Branch line. This project was completed in in 2021 with the expectation that additional service will commence in January 2022.

This work calls for 4 fully signalized passing sidings along the branch that would allow for a potential increase in service along the branch. Currently, the Connecticut Department of Transportation is indicating that once this project is complete, they would like to add at minimum two additional peak trains in the morning and two additional peak trains for the evening commute thereby doubling branch peak service.

With a 45.8% returning ridership from pre Covid numbers, the Waterbury Branch ended the year with the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate of returning ridership. Metro North continued to bolster existing train service with bus service during some of the p.m. peak gaps. This has proven to be successful, and the buses are being utilized. This bodes well for future real service.

Additionally, the Shelton Derby station was recently awarded a 12.3 million dollar Raise Grant. The money will be used for a new, 200-foot, ADA compliant platform with built-in heaters to prevent icing, commuter canopies, parking and landscaping improvements, real-time information systems, ticketing kiosks, new parking lot with charging stations and pedestrian and bicycle networks that will better connect the train station to downtown Derby and Shelton. While this project still needs to be designed, it is more exciting news for the Waterbury branch. An article on the topic, can be found here:

<https://valley.newhavenindependent.org/article/12.6-million-grant-will-rehab-and-upgrade-derby-shelton-train-station> ).



Derby / Shelton Station

***Danbury Branch:***

**2019 total ridership - 724,630**

**2019 YTD on-time performance – 91.0%**

**2020 total ridership – 197,701 (-70.4%)**

**2020 YTD on-time performance – 93.9%**

**2021 total ridership – 139,662 (-29.4%)**

**2021 YTD on-time performance – 93.3%**

The Council did not hold any meetings on the Danbury Branch this year due to the pandemic and there is currently no representation on the Council. The Covid pandemic and its negative impact on ridership continued for the Danbury branch as it was as it was one of the rail branch lines that saw lower returning ridership in 2021 than in 2020.



There is also greater support to expand passenger service to Brookfield and New Milford and electrification on the Branch to South Norwalk. U.S. Senator Blumenthal recently visited the Branch and said it was more likely than other locations to receive federal money for infrastructure improvements because Danbury is “poised for progress”

(<https://www.newstimes.com/news/article/Lawmakers-want-CT-to-electrify-Danbury-rail-line-16636471.php> ).

And there is currently a proposal being studied to reopen the Maybrook Line from Danbury to Southeast to create a faster train to Grand Central.

Like the Waterbury Branch and Shore Line East, the Danbury Branch also needs new coaches and locomotives. While numerous commuters had the option of working remotely this year, there are still many workers that do not have that option. Many essential workers also rely on the Danbury Branch as their only means of transportation. If the Branch could provide a reliable, frequent service to Grand Central; Connecticut can reduce traffic congestion off Route 7, improve air quality, and support economic development.



Darien Platform

### ***Shore Line East:***

**2019 total ridership – 609,028**

**2019 YTD on-time performance – 93.3%**

**2020 total ridership – 151,648 (-75.1%)**

**2020 YTD on-time performance – 96.5%**

**2021 total ridership – 110,351 (-37.4%)**

**2021 YTD on-time performance – 96.1%**

Shore Line East (SLE) struggled to gain returning ridership in 2021, compared to the other rail lines in Connecticut and has the least returning ridership amongst all the various rail branches and lines in the State. The pandemic has had a particularly hard and enduring impact on SLE ridership, as many major employers in New Haven, including Yale University and Yale-New Haven Hospital, remain operating largely in a remote capacity. The schedule continues to remain significantly reduced and important services, like the THRU express trains that better connected SLE with the New Haven Line, continued to be completely suspended.

The Connecticut Commuter Rail Council and CDOT had many conversations throughout 2021 about service level provision on SLE. The challenge remains in providing service levels that meet ridership demands and resource constraints, yet current schedule design discourages increased ridership.

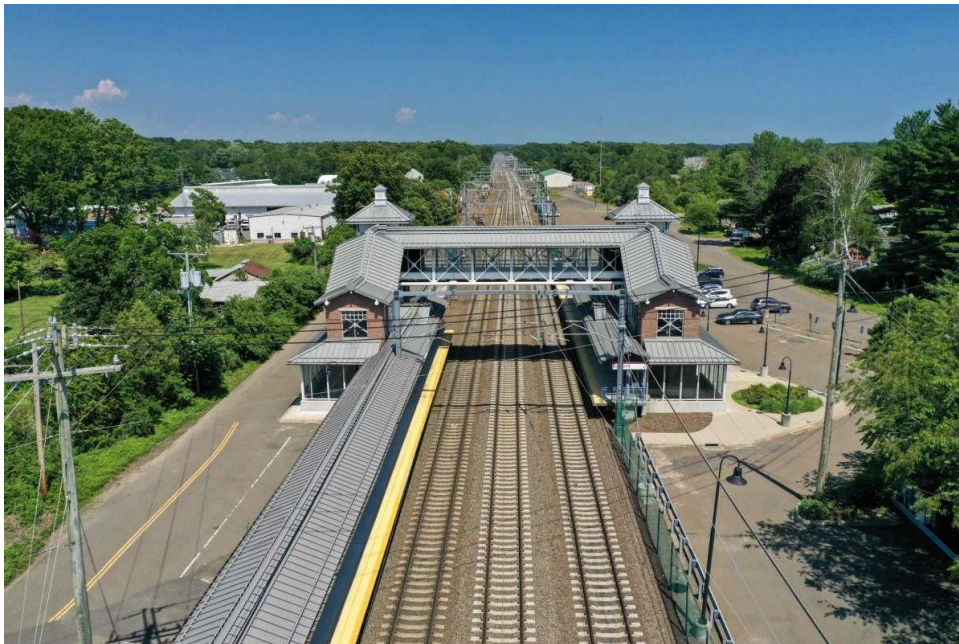
The SLE onboard staff provided a high quality, professional, and safe rider experience. The SLE onboard staff were helpful in showing riders how to use the eTix mobile app for SLE, which has been a huge improvement in rider experience. The interior of the existing fleet is outdated but clean.

HB5423 passed the Connecticut General Assembly in 2021, which directs CDOT to conduct a feasibility study and develop the resulting operational plan to extend SLE to Rhode Island and create a new branch line called the Norwich Branch Line, with both lines connecting at a new station in Groton. The CCRC supported this legislation because this could help spur economic development as major manufacturers in the region continue to project growth. It also could help SLE serve as a valuable alternative to the heavily trafficked and polluted I-95. CCRC is in regular contact with CDOT to monitor the status of this project.



CCRC heard concerns from riders in 2021 that primarily focused on the reduced schedule and COVID-19 precautions. CCRC areas of focus:

- Address returning ridership
- Improve schedule design and service provision
- Better connect SLE to the Hartford Line and NHL
- M-8 fleet upgrade on SLE
- Feasibility study for expansion
- Return of the THRU express trains



Aerial view Guilford

***Hartford Line:***

**2019 total ridership – 665,471**

**2019 YTD on-time performance – 90.7%**

**2020 total ridership – 264,192 (-60.3%)**

**2020 YTD on-time performance – 92.2%**

**2021 total ridership – 318,071 (-60.3%)**

**2021 YTD on-time performance – 92.1%**

At 47.7% the Hartford Line ended the year with the highest rate of returning ridership when compared to pre Covid numbers. The Connecticut Commuter Rail Council held a Waterbury Branch based meeting on January 20, 2021 via Zoom. It was a well-attended meeting with commuters, members of the legislature, Governor's office and the various service providers.

In July, CDOT restored service to the Hartford line and trains have returned to a full weekday schedule of 32 trains. When the pandemic struck in March, 2020, the number of trains was cut back to 10 on weekdays. Since July 2020, there have been 22 trains a day during the week, according to the state Department of Transportation.

During 2021, there has been growing talk about further taking advantage of the Hartford Line and a proposed Massachusetts rail network linking Springfield and Boston. A report, prepared for the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission suggests that the Hartford line could its ridership increase by 54% if direct service to the Hartford Line is included. (<https://ctmirror.org/2021/09/05/would-hartford-gain-from-a-boston-train-advocates-are-all-aboard/> )



## ***New Haven Union Station Transportation Center:***

*Please call 203-946-8930 or e-mail [fhoud@nhparking.com](mailto:fhoud@nhparking.com) with any issues you may have or if you would like a tour of the Transportation Center.*

### **UNION STATION PARTNERSHIP**



*Photo courtesy of Hearst communications*

On December 21, 2021 Mayor Justin Elicker and Joseph Giulietti, Commissioner, of the State Department of Transportation signed a 35 year lease for the Partnership Agreement for New Haven Union Station and the State Street Station in New Haven. Governor Ned Lamont, U.S. Senator Chris Murphy and U.S. Representative Rosa DeLauro were also in attendance.

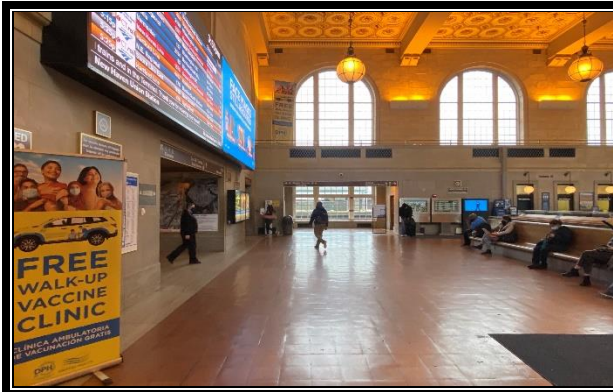
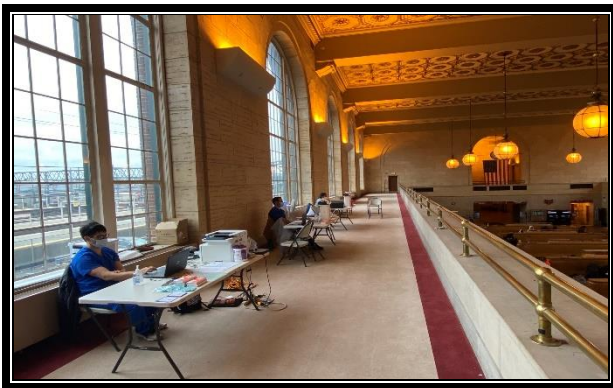
The partnership will provide many exciting opportunities for growth and development not only at the Transportation center but for the City of New Haven as well.

For more information and to watch our public information session from January 2022 on the redevelopment of the campus, please follow the project on the link here: <https://unionstationnewhaven.com>

## COVID 19 PANDEMIC IMPACT

Preventive measures were put in place by the New Haven Parking Authority to help stop the spread of COVID including the following: provided free mask distribution to the public; introduction and installation of hand sanitizers; and sanitization/deep cleaning of the building is taking place every six weeks to supplement the day-to-day maintenance activity.

Additionally, Griffin Health and DPH sponsored vaccine clinics for the convenience of the public and commuters on the balcony at Union Station. The clinics were well received and are continuing.



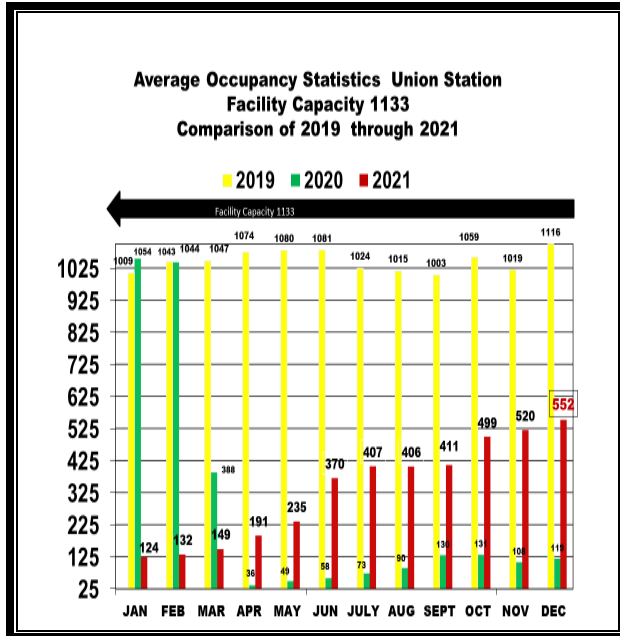
Challenges with occupancy in the garage presented with the start of the pandemic in March of 2020 continue. Average parking occupancy levels at the Transportation Center show a sharp drop starting in April 2020. A slight, steady increase in the return of parkers was seen in 2021. Significant increases have not been seen yet.



Foot traffic at the Transportation Center is increasing but is not corresponding to the number of parkers. Events resuming in New York are resulting in some return of rail patrons.

The valet amenity at the Transportation Center has been suspended until there is a significant increase in volumes.

Average occupancy remains at half the capacity of the garage.



When making a cumulative comparison of total cars parked. there is a 200% change for 2021/2022 compared to 2020/2021.

TOTAL CARS PARKED									
FY	Weekdays		COMPARISON BY MONTH				CUMULATIVE COMPARISON		
	2021/ 2022	2020/ 2021	2021/2022	% CHANGE BY MONTH	2020/2021	% CHANGE BY YEAR	2021/2022	2020/2021	% CHANGE
JUL	22	23	12,324	8%	4,058	204%	12,324	4,058	204%
AUG	22	21	12,131	-2%	4,429	174%	24,455	8,487	188%
SEP	22	22	12,103	-0%	5,100	137%	36,558	13,587	169%
OCT	21	22	14,847	23%	5,345	178%	51,405	18,932	172%
NOV	22	21	15,457	4%	4,212	267%	66,862	23,144	189%
DEC	23	23	15,412	-0%	4,321	257%	82,274	27,465	200%
JAN		21			4,411				31,876
FEB		20			4,509				36,385
MAR		23			5,662				42,047
APR		22			6,548				48,595
MAY		21			7,839				56,434
JUN		22			11,452				67,886
Total	132	261							

In 2021, New Haven Parking Authority successfully accomplished some concrete, waterproofing and drainage system repairs in the New Haven Union Station parking garage. Also, the decorative-colored concrete driveway and sidewalk in front of New Haven Union Station building were refreshed and repaired. There were also a number of repair projects in the underground pedestrian passageway at New Haven Union Station. These involved repair of the lighting system in the stairs to the platforms, as well as some floor tile repairs.

***Stamford Transportation Center:***

CDOT presented an update on the future Stamford Transportation Center. They will be holding the initial virtual public information meeting on March 7, 2022. They hope to have transformative visual concepts by the Summer of 2022 followed up by a second virtual public information meeting in the Fall of 2022. They hope to have the master plan complete by Winter 2022 or early 2023.

As part of that update, details for the 77.7-million-dollar parking garage were also provided. In June 2021, the State was given a notice to proceed with a summer 2023 completion date. The garage will have 934 vehicle spaces with covered lockable racks for 149 bicycles. The garage has a direct connection to platform at Track 5 with an enclosed pedestrian bridge, directly connected to the STC.

This project will also involve the upgrades to five elevators which includes replacement of critical components, increased performance and updated aesthetics. Additionally, there will be upgrades to 17 escalators which involves: the replacement of all mechanicals improved performance, efficiency and up to date safety features. The State was given a notice to proceed on December 2021 with a tentative completion of August 2024.





## ONGOING ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR THE COUNCIL IN 2020 AND BEYOND

### Returning Ridership

- As rail advocates, the CCRC remains concerned with returning ridership and the impact on service. We recognize that service levels are being adjusted based upon ridership levels, but we also hear from surveys and the commuting base that one of the main contributors for a return to riding is ensuring that there are commuter friendly service times. MTA projected returning ridership estimates: (<https://ctcommuterrailcouncil.org/mta-returning-ridership-projections/>).

### Financial Commitment for Ongoing Service

- The Connecticut Department of Transportation has indicated that they will need significant resources to bring the line up to a point of good working order. The signal systems from Norwalk to New Haven and on the New Canaan Line are designed for replacement and are just awaiting track time and construction funding. As a background, each year Metro North installs tens of thousands of ties, miles of replacement rail, thousands of bridge timbers, and surfaces about 50 miles of track.
- While the WALK Bridge is expected to begin construction, Both Cos Cob and Devon can be expected to cost about \$1B as they each have extensive approach spans making them much longer than WALK but

there is likely less peripheral construction. Saga Bridge in Westport is shorter, and CP 243 will aid in the construction rerouting here as well, so this bridge could be \$500M. To replace just the remaining moveable bridges would cost approximately \$3.5B.

- Ensuring that the CDOT has enough funding to maintain service levels will be critical.

### **Last Mile Connectivity and Bus/Shuttle Service Connections**

- Planning for the rebound means planning for more ways to get to the main line for both everyday commutes and trips involving recreation or life. Connecticut will bounce back due to its quality of life and education, and our location in the Northeast Corridor cannot be understated. In addition to access for parked vehicles, the council continues to prioritize last mile connectivity of our states' rail stations including public bus service, private employer shuttles, taxi/TNC pick up/drop off, biking, and walkability surrounding our train stations. This means we need to continually improve our transit systems to magnify each other and serve our residents seven days a week with strong spans of service and narrow headways to support density and growth along the transit system corridors.

### **UPass Expansion and Open Payment Systems**

- Continuing the trend in digital payment expansion for the overall transit picture moving forward needs continued work of simplification of various types of fare collections between transit modes and transit lines, including the main line and branches. The success of UPass with public universities can be expanded to create transit passes for private universities and larger corporations or cooperatives (like a business or property association or Transportation Demand Management).

### **Branch line Riders**

- After numerous discussions with CDOT and Amtrak, while the testing process for running the M8's on the SLE continues, there is no real answer whether the future coaches for the SLE will be M8's or the new coaches that were part of the August 2020 bond package. The Council believes CDOT should communicate the long term plans for equipment on the SLE.

- Danbury, Waterbury, Shoreline East customers all are subjected to the oldest cars of the fleet that often have mechanical difficulties or amenities not working properly within the coaches. While Shoreline East is currently scheduled to receive new rail cars, the bonding package for Waterbury rail cars was pulled at the last-minute from the Bond Commission meetings in 2020 and there appears that there no plans to upgrade the Waterbury or Danbury branch fleets.
- Shoreline East has not enjoyed the same schedule benefit as other rail lines and branches have. While the answer is that ridership needs to increase to justify added service, the CCRC believes they go hand in hand and increased service would attract riders.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE**

[Operations Reports from CDoT | Connecticut Commuter Rail Council](#)

[Past Annual Reports | Connecticut Commuter Rail Council](#)

#### **Contact us:**

Web: <http://ctcommuterrailcouncil.org/>

email: [ctrailcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:ctrailcouncil@gmail.com)

Twitter: [@CTRailCouncil](#)