



Connecticut DOT
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
ACTION PLAN

Annual Progress Report

June 2024

About the Progress Report

On June 26, 2023, CTDOT published the state's first-ever [Customer Experience \(CX\) Action Plan](#). The Plan highlights projects, programs, and initiatives led by the Bureau of Public Transportation that aim to improve the customer experience. It incorporated input from transit customers across Connecticut and from the state's service partners, stakeholders, and transportation leaders.

It has been one year since the release of the CX Action Plan, and we want to let you, our transit customers and vested stakeholders, know how we are making progress! In this document you can view the progress update for each action included in the original CX Action Plan, as well as several new actions.

Our goal is to deliver safe, equitable, affordable, frequent, and reliable services that are easy to understand, easy to use, and the travel mode of choice. Our success will be the result of our strong partnership with statewide bus, rail, and paratransit service providers and our commitment to continue to listen to you, our customers, and to respond to your feedback and suggestions.

Happy reading!

-The CTDOT Customer Experience Unit

Community Outreach



The CTDOT Customer Experience (CX) Unit held pop-up events during summer 2023 to share the completed CX Action Plan with transit customers.

Focusing on Customer Priorities

Our customers told us what is most important to them and what they need from the transit system. We listened and identified 3 priority focus areas.

Improved Service

Provide service that is reliable and schedules that meet the needs of as many customers as possible.



Schedule &
Frequency



Reliability

Easier to Use

Make it easier to plan trips and pay fares. Provide real-time schedule and service information in a variety of ways and locations – online, in stations, at stops, and on board transit vehicles.



Trip Planning



Fares

Enhanced Accessibility and Comfort

Ensure that stations and stops are accessible, have the services and security features customers need, are well-maintained, and provide clean and comfortable transit vehicles.



Stations & Stops



On Board

There were 26 actions identified in the CX Action Plan. This progress report provides updates to all 26 actions, including 3 new actions that are improving the customer experience.

Improved Service

Bus Service Improvements



The following bus service improvements are set to begin in August 2024:

- New CT *fastrak* Route 125 (Hartford-Berlin Turnpike)
- Changes on multiple CT *fastrak* routes to increase frequency during the weekdays
- New CT *transit* Route 262 will operate between New Haven and Milford

The following new routes began in March 2024:

- New CT *transit* route 511 (New Britain/Meriden)
- New CT *transit* Route 512 (New Britain/Berlin Turnpike)
- New CT *transit* Route 513 (New Britain-Cromwell)
- New CT *transit* Route 532 (Southington/Plainville)
- New CT *transit* Route 349 (Stamford)

Rail Service Improvements



\$5 million in funding has been secured for Shore Line East service improvements, which will help restore as many as four additional trains during AM and PM peak service.



Shore Line East train at Old Saybrook Station

ParkConneCT



ParkConneCT began its 4th summer season and is available from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.

Fixed-route service has been prioritized to continue the most popular routes serving waterfront parks such as Silver Sands and Hammonasset Beach State Parks.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) will be scheduling and marketing single day trips to select parks in collaboration with public groups. Visit [ParkConneCT | Connecticut State Parks and Forests \(ctparks.com\)](https://www.ct.gov/deep/depweb/ParkConneCT/ConnecticutStateParksandForests.aspx).

Improved Service

Microtransit Pilot



Microtransit service is an accessible, on-demand mode of transportation that allows customers to use a smartphone app or telephone number to request and schedule a ride within designated service areas.

CTDOT has funded nine new microtransit services in the state. Six of the services have launched this spring and the final three are set to launch in summer 2024.

- Norwalk Transit District - Wheels 2U
- Greater Hartford Transit District - GHTD Link
- Valley Transit District - VTD2GO
- Milford Transit District - Milford Micro
- River Valley Transit - XtraMile
- Southeast Area Transit District - HOP and NL Smart Ride
- Greater Bridgeport Transit - GBT connect
- City of Stamford - StamFORWARD
- City of New Haven - RideNewHaven

Visit [Microtransit Services \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/microtransit).



XtraMile microtransit vehicle providing service within the River Valley Transit District

Improved Service

Faster Train Speeds



The Track Improvement and Mobility Enhancement (TIME) program, which focuses on track and speed improvements on the New Haven Line, continues to progress. The TIME-1 project, which covers a 3-mile stretch between Bridgeport and Stratford on the New Haven Line, has passed 30% preliminary design and is advancing to final design.

On the New Canaan Line, project design for track improvements is underway. Travel capacity will be enhanced through new interlockings and sidings.



**Metro-North train
on the New
Haven Line**

On-Street Bus Rapid Transit



CTDOT is in the early stages of design of the new Move New Haven On-Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System.

The project will make bus service quicker and more reliable by dedicating certain roadway lanes for bus travel along the new BRT corridor. Transit signal priority (TSP) technologies will give longer green lights and shorter red lights for buses approaching intersections that need them.

The project will also include several on-street BRT enhanced bus stops and improve bicycle, pedestrian, and ADA infrastructure in the area among other improvements.

Improved Service - NEW ACTIONS

CDL Training Program

NEW!



The CTDOT Bureau of Public Transportation, in collaboration with the Bureau of Highway Operations, piloted its first Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Program to help the surrounding transit districts with workforce development.

A certified CTDOT employee will ensure that the candidates meet licensing requirements needed to take their CDL test. The implementation of this statewide CDL program will help with increasing staffing levels within the transit districts, reduce operator burnout, and provide the public with quality customer service.



Commercial Driver's License training led by CTDOT

Improved Service - COMPLETED

These actions were included in the original CX Action Plan and have been completed.

Bus Service Expansion Package

COMPLETED!

Route expansions and changes have gone into effect within the last year across many transit districts including Greater Bridgeport Transit, Valley Transit District, Southeast Area Transit District, Housatonic Area Regional Transit, River Valley Transit, Norwalk Transit District, Windham Region Transit District, as well as in the CT *transit* Waterbury, Meriden, New Britain/Bristol and Stamford Divisions.

These services will increase ridership levels across the various bus systems, increase economic opportunity and mobility in some of the most economically distressed parts of the state, while increasing transit access to some of the newest employment centers. Visit [Bus Service Expansions \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/bus).



Poster for the New Haven Line Super Express trains

Additional Northeast Regional Train Service

COMPLETED!

Two Amtrak Northeast Regional trains originating on the Hartford Line were added in June 2023.

Rail Service Improvements

COMPLETED!

Six new express trains were added to the New Haven Line and seven trains were added to the Waterbury Line on weekdays in July 2022.

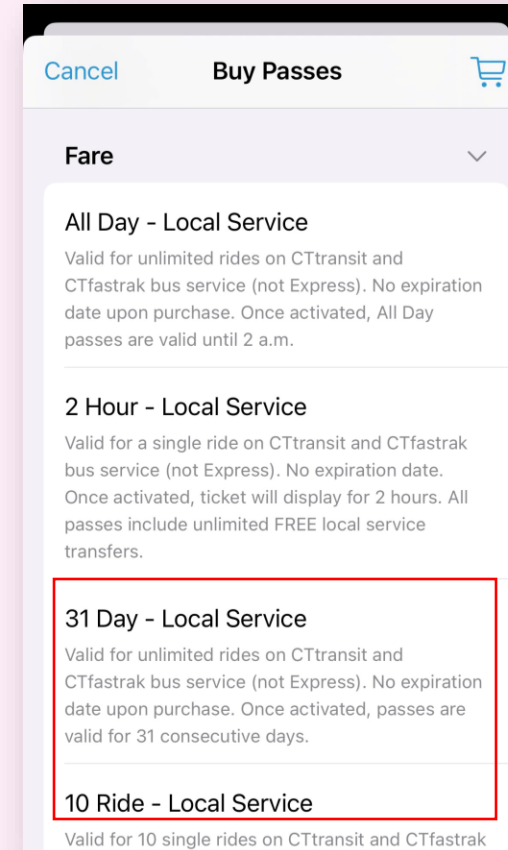
Mobile Ticketing for Buses



Over 78,000 existing customers have used Token Transit to ride *CTtransit* services between April 2023 and June 2024.

In September 2023, a local 31-day pass was added to the app and in December 2023, a local all-day pass and a 10-ride pass were added. *CTferry* passes are also now available in Token Transit.

Customers who ride in the following transit districts can also purchase bus passes using Token Transit: River Valley Transit, Southeast Area Transit District, Windham Region Transit District, and Norwalk Transit District.



***CTtransit* 31-day and 10-ride passes are now available in the Token Transit mobile app**



Social media promotion of
Transit Royale, sponsored by
CTDOT

Transit Royale



CTDOT extended its partnership with Transit app to offer Transit Royale to Connecticut residents, free of charge, until February 2025.

When CTDOT first sponsored Transit Royale in 2023, there were 39,500 unique monthly users of Transit app throughout the state. In June 2024, there are now over 85,000 transit customers using Transit app each month.

Rider Happiness Benchmark surveys are now being issued quarterly through Transit app, and all fixed-route bus services in the state are available for customers to view and trip plan in the app.

CTpassProgram



CTDOT is currently accepting applications for participation in the CTpassProgram on an ongoing basis.

Qualified applications are being approved for organizations to bulk purchase 31-day local bus passes for CT *transit* and CT *fastrak* services at a 10% discount on behalf of employees, students, or clients. Now, Executive branch State of CT employees are eligible to participate in the CTpassProgram.

For more information on the CTpass program please visit [CTpass Program \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/ctpass).

Unified Fare Project



The goal of the Unified Fare Project is to make transit fares in Connecticut simpler by identifying a unified statewide fare policy and structure.

A statewide working group was established in 2023 with participation from transit districts to help shape future proposed fare changes.

Recommendations for simpler and more coordinated bus fares are expected in 2024, which will be followed by public outreach to get input on the recommendations.



Official logo for the Tap & Ride pilot project

Unified Mobile App Solution & Open Payments



Through a USDOT Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) stage 1 grant, contactless payments onboard transit will be piloted on River Valley Transit and CT *transit* Meriden division buses in fall 2024.

Customers will have the ability to 'tap & ride', using their own debit/credit/prepaid card or mobile wallet to quickly purchase their bus fare upon boarding.

Transit customers who ride both River Valley Transit and CT *transit* Meriden Division fixed-route buses will be able to tap the same card across systems and pay no more than \$3.50 per day. For more information on the project visit [Tap & Ride \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/tapandride).

Rail Station Customer Service Initiatives



Design is underway for upgraded platform information displays, arrival and departure boards, and enhanced audio announcements at all Metro-North New Haven Line stations including the New Canaan, Danbury, and Waterbury Branch Lines. Surveys of existing conditions at all stations are complete.

On-Board Electronic Information Displays



On-board bus electronic information displays are coming with new CT *transit* buses. This technology will make essential customer information more accessible than ever before.

Display screens will provide real-time information and messages including stop identification and service alerts. These displays will be installed on all new CT *transit* buses.



New on-board displays will provide customers with essential information

Passenger Information Displays and Connectivity Initiative



Field surveys are underway to assess conditions at CT *rail* stations. The design team is coordinating with Amtrak to initiate improvements at shared stations along the Shore Line East and Hartford Line.

The following systems are being assessed during the conceptual design: Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS), electric vehicle charging, ticket vending machines, and wireless connectivity networks.

Easier to Use - COMPLETED

This action was included in the original CX Action Plan and has been completed.

Transit is a Trip Campaign

COMPLETED!

"Transit is a Trip" is a statewide marketing campaign focused on increasing transit ridership by promoting transit accessible destinations and offering trip planning. The campaign generated over 175,000 visits to the program website. Visit www.transitisatrip.com.



Watch the Transit is a Trip video series [here](#)



The experience is otherworldly at
The Connecticut
Science Center



Explore and enjoy open air
shopping and dining at
The Shops at Yale



Art and regional history are
on display at
Waterbury Mattatuck
Museum



Travel in style for a fun
adventure on
Essex Steam Train &
Riverboat



Eat, drink, shop
and be merry at
The SoNo Collection

Enhanced Accessibility and Comfort

Statewide Bus Stop Enhancement Program



The Statewide Bus Stop Enhancement Program will fund up to \$20 million of improvements over the next 4 years. Options for bus stop enhancements include:

- Shelters
- Seating
- Real-time arrival signage
- Solar lighting
- Trash receptacles
- ADA compliant features
- Bike racks

Over 50 locations have been chosen for enhancement within the next year. Bus stops are selected for improvements based on customer boarding volume and consideration is also given to stops that have less frequent bus service where customers might need to wait longer.



Shelter styles available through the Bus Stop Enhancement Program

Enhanced Accessibility and Comfort

New Rail Cars



CTDOT has selected a rail car manufacturer for the design and build of 60 new rail cars. The new cars will offer modern customer amenities, greater accessibility, and improved reliability.

Features include easy access for customers using mobility aids, convenient overhead luggage racks, foldable workstation tables, bicycle storage areas, reliable Wi-Fi connection, real-time information displays, power outlets and USB ports, and panoramic balcony style windows.

Delivery of the first cars is expected in 2026. The cars will be prioritized for use on the Hartford Line, as well as the branches of the New Haven Line.



Renderings of the new *CTrail* cars. Exterior of the new rail cars (left) and interior of the cars (below), equipped with ample bike racks.



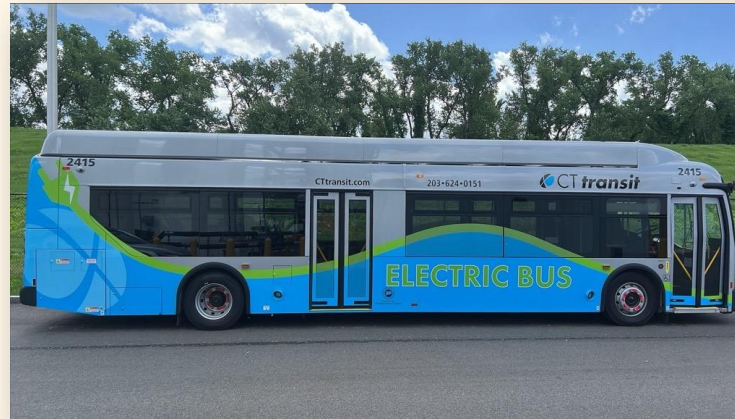
Enhanced Accessibility and Comfort

New Electric Buses with Customer-Picked Seats



A total of 50 brand new electric buses will be added to CT *transit* Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, and Waterbury Divisions, as well as River Valley Transit, Windham Region Transit District (UConn campus), and Milford Transit District. The buses will be delivered throughout summer 2024.

The new buses will feature customer-picked silica material seats, which are more comfortable and easier to keep clean. The buses will have USB 3.0 ports onboard and a new 'electric blue' exterior wrap with an electric plug decal, which will clearly show customers which buses are electric.



CT *transit* battery electric bus with 'electric blue' wrap (left) and new silica seats (below)



Enhanced Accessibility and Comfort



The new Stamford Transportation Center garage and pedestrian bridge

Major Rail Station Enhancements



The Stamford Transportation Center (STC) Master Plan was released in February 2024, which proposes transformative improvements to modernize the STC for all station users. Visit <https://www.stcmasterplan.com>.

The new Stamford Transportation Center (STC) Parking Garage is now open with over 900 parking spaces, electric vehicle charging stations, bicycle parking spaces, e-bike charging stations, and a pedestrian bridge connecting the new garage to the station. The old STC garage is being demolished, opening opportunities for new Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in its footprint.

At New Haven Union Station (NHUS), a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was released to seek project concepts for a TOD of the property known as the east surface lot. Interior improvements are also planned for the historic NHUS.

Enhanced Accessibility and Comfort

Rail Station ADA Accessibility Improvements



Design for upgrades to the Ansonia, Seymour, Derby/Shelton, and Beacon Falls stations is scheduled to be completed in 2025. Construction at these stations will commence following the completion of design.

Construction for ADA improvements at Naugatuck station is anticipated to begin in 2025.

Stratford station is also currently under early design for upgrades that include two elevators to access the platform from Main Street and ADA accessible access to both platforms.

Platform replacements are underway at Darien station, which include new ramps, new railings, and elevator upgrades.

New Train Stations



Construction continues at the Windsor Locks station in a new downtown location.

Construction to add the new Enfield station along the Hartford Line is planned to begin in 2025.



Digital rendering of the new Windsor Locks station

Enhanced Wireless Connectivity Initiative



CTDOT is working to enhance the wireless connectivity of passenger cars on its rail network. The network coverage survey and technology study have been concluded.

Coordination has begun with rail service providers to explore cellular network connectivity upgrades.

Enhanced Accessibility and Comfort - COMPLETED

These actions were included in the original CX Action Plan and have been completed.

M8 Electric Trains

COMPLETED!

The M8 electric trains now run on Shore Line East, in addition to the New Haven Line. They produce no carbon emissions and include additional amenities for customers, such as electrical outlets at each seat, brighter interior spaces, updated restrooms, higher back seats, and improved luggage racks.

New Rail Station Boarding Platforms

COMPLETED!

The Clinton station platform opened in April 2022. While the new Merritt 7 station platform has been open since June 2023, the new pedestrian overpass was opened in early 2024.



The updated Merritt 7 station

Enhanced Accessibility and Comfort - NEW ACTIONS

CTrail and CTfastrak Security Program

NEW!



CTDOT has executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CT State Police that provides four dedicated state troopers for this program. Two of the troopers focus on CTfastrak services, and two focus on CTrail Hartford Line services. All four of the troopers are trained and prepared to support either assignment as needed.

The mission of the CTrail and CTfastrak Security Program is to provide a secure, safe, and clean public transportation network that will enhance and encourage the use of public transit.

Statewide Transit Customer Code of Conduct

NEW!



CTDOT, in partnership with bus service providers throughout the state, is establishing a Transit Customer Code of Conduct on all fixed-route and paratransit bus services which will be posted on board buses.

Together we can create a safe and welcoming environment for customers and employees on all bus and paratransit services in the State of Connecticut.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Improved Service

**Comprehensive Statewide
Service Analysis**

**ADA Paratransit/Mobility
Accessibility Roadmap**

Easier to Use

**Customer Awareness and
Education**

**Improving Transit Website
Experience**

Enhanced Accessibility & Comfort

**Continuous Evaluation of the
Customer Experience**



**Operator Recruitment
Support and Coordination**



**CX Training and
Assessment**



Areas of Opportunity identify potential actions that could be explored to make transit a more reliable and efficient experience for everyone.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

Continuous Evaluation of the Customer Experience



To get regular, first-hand information about conditions on our transit system, CTDOT has created a "Mystery Rider" program. CTDOT staff ride transit regularly to get an in-depth look at how the system is operating. These insights and data are used to develop projects or programs to address cleanliness and safety issues, and other operational improvements.

Operator Recruitment Support and Coordination



Public transit employees and operators are vital to a better public transportation experience for everyone. CTDOT wants to help and support service providers to recruit and retain operators and transit staff. The following have been identified as ways for CTDOT to support these goals:

- Promote careers in public transportation
- Help to develop the workforce with a statewide CDL training program for transit operators
- Facilitate recruitment coordination among the service providers
- Explore leadership training programs
- Express appreciation for operators and front-line employees on a statewide level

CX Training and Assessment



Your bus operator is the first person you see every time you ride public transit. A better employee experience improves the customer experience.

CTDOT aims to make sure public transit employees are getting the tools they need to deliver a positive customer experience. Working in partnership with bus service providers as well as bus operators, a stakeholder group has been created to coordinate this effort.

AWARDS



APTA AdWheel Grand Award 2023
“Best Marketing and Communications to Highlight Transit Needs/Funding”



WTS CT 2022 Innovative Project of the Year
“Innovative Transportation Solutions Award”



Transportation Research Board 16th Annual Competition and Call, Communicating Concepts With the Public
“Honorable Mention”



The CX Action Plan won numerous awards including the 2023 APTA AdWheel Grand Award, WTS CT 2022 Innovative Project of the Year, and Honorable Mention at the Transportation Research Board’s 16th Annual Competition and Call, Communicating Concepts with the Public.

Let's Stay Connected!

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