

VIA EMAIL AND USPS FIRST CLASS MAIL

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Hartford Line Comments
Bureau of Public Transportation
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With this letter we wish to submit the following comments regarding the CTrail Hartford Line Proposed Fares and Service

1. Proposed Fares

Generally speaking, we believe that the proposed fares are reasonable and that proposed fare structure is well thought out and fair.

With that said, the proposed fare structure would not appear to provide for a unified rail/local bus ticketing option. We suggest that CTDOT make it possible for users to purchase a single ticket that would allow for travel via public transportation (e.g. a CTtransit bus, a Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) bus, and/or a CTfastrak bus) at one or both ends of a journey on the CTrail Hartford Line. In today's world it should not be necessary to purchase multiple tickets for a single public transit journey.

We also ask that CTDOT make it possible for CTrail Hartford Line tickets to be purchased from a smartphone or mobile device at some stage in the not too distant future.

2. Proposed Schedule

The proposed CTrail Hartford Line schedule (eff. May 2018) is a significant improvement over the level of service that Amtrak and Peter Pan Bus Lines has offered on this corridor in the recent past.

We are concerned though that the proposed weekday schedule does not include any service that would allow someone in Connecticut to commute to Springfield and start work between 8 am and 9 am (the normal start time for many

businesses.) The only morning train to Springfield — timed for commuters — arrives at 6.20 am which is simply too early for most people.

We believe that this omission needs to be corrected in the May 2018 schedule.

3. Parking at Springfield Union Station

The current cost to park at the new Union Station Parking Garage in Springfield is \$20/day or \$95/month and we understand that the day-rate may be reduced to \$15 in January 2018. We believe that these parking rates will discourage many people from using the passenger rail services operated by CTDOT and Amtrak out of the Springfield station.

In August 2017 we met with the General Manager of Springfield Union Station and during this meeting we discussed our concerns regarding the parking rates at the Union Station Parking Garage.

We ask that CTDOT work with the Springfield Redevelopment Authority (the owner of the garage) and the Springfield Parking Authority (the operator of the garage) to find a solution to this problem.

We would hope that some way can be found so that rail and bus passengers can park at this facility and be charged rates similar to what we understand CTDOT intends to charge at most CTrail stations in Connecticut — i.e., \$2/day or \$20/month, with free parking on weekends and federal holidays.

If this issue cannot be resolved then we suspect that many residents of western Massachusetts will simply drive to the Windsor Locks station to catch a Hartford Line train rather than park at the new garage at Springfield Union Station.

4. Connection to Bradley International Airport

As you may be aware, there is currently no scheduled transportation (e.g. PVTA bus or Peter Pan Bus) between Springfield Union Station and Bradley International Airport.

It would appear that the proposed May 2018 service does not include a shuttle bus connection between Windsor Locks station and Bradley International Airport.

We believe that such a connection should be offered when the CTrail Hartford Line service launches in May 2018 so that travelers from western Massachusetts have a means to reach Bradley Airport from Springfield Union Station. If a full-

schedule connection cannot be offered then we would suggest that a connection be provided with a limited number of trains in the morning and the evening.

5. Employee Benefit Transit Program

We encourage you to explore working with the largest employers in the Pioneer Valley region of western Massachusetts (e.g., Baystate Health, MassMutual, MGM Springfield, and UMass) to establish an employee transportation benefit program.

Employers would purchase blocks of transit passes for travel on CTrail Hartford line trains (and also possibly PVRTA buses). This could guarantee a revenue stream at the start of the service. The offering could also apply to large Connecticut employers, especially in the Hartford area.

We thank you for your consideration of this public input to the process.

Sincerely,

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