

October 25, 2022

David Elder, Assistant Planning Director
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
P.O. Box 317546
Newington, CT 06131-7546

RE: CRCOG Feedback on Draft 2022-2026 Connecticut State Rail Plan

Dear Mr. Elder,

We applaud the Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) update to the State Rail Plan as a vision for the future of freight and passenger rail in Connecticut. We also appreciate the opportunity given for review of and comment on the draft of this plan. The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) staff has solicited internal and Transportation Committee feedback on the draft 2022-2026 Connecticut State Rail Plan, and our comments are provided below:

- Major on-alignment capital expenses for the Hartford Line (including all stations in the CRCOG region) are included in Appendix E; however, details on timeframes are not included. CRCOG encourages the Department to complete the design and construction of the stations in West Hartford, Newington, and Windsor – as well as full buildouts in Windsor Locks and Enfield – as expeditiously as possible.
- We look forward to the results of the electrification study, including assessment of the potential for electrification of the Hartford Line. Electrification has the potential to provide better air quality, shorter travel times, and equipment standardization on all CTrail lines. We hope to see this study completed soon.
- The procurement of new Dual-Mode locomotives in the future will help to provide Hartford Line users a one-seat ride to Southern Connecticut and New York, offer lower emissions from the diesel mode than the current diesel power fleet, and offer a failsafe in case of loss of electric power on the New Haven Line. We applaud the inclusion of this vehicle technology in CTDOT's plans for the rail system.
- Safety improvements along the Hartford Line, such as at-grade crossing improvements or elimination, can provide benefits beyond safety. Additional benefits, such as allowing towns to apply for quiet zone approval and future higher speed rail operations beyond 79 miles per hour, should be highlighted as well.
- The US Department of Transportation (USDOT) is focused on the consideration of equity in transportation improvements and programs. Within the plan, it would

be beneficial to highlight the equity benefits and the mitigation of potential equity burdens that could result from the envisioned enhanced rail program.

- There is a lack of discussion related to first- and last-mile connections and related infrastructure, including micromobility. Even if it is not appropriate for these to be a main focus of the document, it seems they deserve more attention, as the ease with which people can get to and from passenger rail stations plays a role in the degree to which people utilize rail service.
- We appreciate CTDOT's references to CRCOG's East-West Rail Improvement Economic Impact Study. We hope to see the Department's continued collaboration with the Massachusetts DOT and other stakeholders to reinstate a one-seat rail connection between Hartford and Boston.
- We also appreciate the reference to the continued work being undertaken as part of the Greater Hartford Mobility Study. We look forward to continuing our coordination with CTDOT to understand the opportunities for improved rail service and infrastructure in and around Hartford.
- The text regarding Hartford Union Station needs to be updated (page H-10):
 - The Major Hubs section (H.3) is missing a heading for Hartford Union Station. There is text discussing this station, but there is no heading.
 - Language about Superpedestrian's Link Scooters needs to be updated.
 - Reference to the Star Shuttle needs to be updated to the dash Shuttle (<https://www.cttransit.com/services/hartford-dash-shuttle>).
 - Reference to the "New Britain-Hartford Busway (Busway)" needs to be updated to "CTfastrak".
 - Peter Pan also operates at Union Station. Only Greyhound is referenced for intercity bus service.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns. We look forward to your responses to and incorporation of CRCOG's feedback.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

CC: CRCOG Policy Board
CRCOG Transportation Committee
Robert Aloise, CRCOG Director of Planning
Cara Radzins, CRCOG Transportation Deputy
Christopher Henchey, CRCOG Transportation Planner
Grayson Wright, CTDOT Intergovernmental Affairs Unit