

Questions for Connecticut Commuter Rail Council Nominee

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Connecticut Commuter Rail Council (CGS §§ [13b-212b](#) & [13b-212c](#))

The 15-member council studies and investigates all aspects of the daily operation of commuter rail lines in the state, monitors their performance, and recommends changes to improve their efficiency and quality of service. It may request and receive assistance and data from any department, agency, or political subdivision of the state to properly carry out its duties.

The council must work with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to advocate for commuter rail line customers and recommend ways to improve the lines. It must annually report its findings and recommendations to the governor, legislature, DOT commissioner, New York Metro North Rail Commuter Council, and Management Advisory Board and Office of the Inspector General of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in New York.

Questions

1. What is your general assessment of the service on Metro North's branch lines? How can the service be improved?
2. What issues may be hampering the development of better service on Metro North's branch lines? Should the Danbury line be extended to New Milford?
3. DOT has proposed new parking garages near stations in New Haven and Stamford. Some have taken issue with the size or design of these projects. What are your thoughts?
4. Connecticut's contractual arrangement with Metro North apparently leaves the state with few options for redress. In past years, several legislators have said the state should consider seeking another entity to operate the rail service. Do you support such an idea? Why or why not? Short of seeking another operator, what steps could the state take to ensure Metro North is held accountable?
5. Metro North is a subsidiary of the MTA, a New York authority. Connecticut does not have a representative on the MTA board. Should it have one? Are there other ways to influence the operation of Metro North? If so, what are they?
6. Overcrowding of the Hartford Line's Amtrak-operated afternoon trains has been an issue recently. To address this situation, DOT [announced](#) last week that it is working with Amtrak to limit advance ticket sales through Amtrak's reservation system. What do you think of this change? What more can be done to improve service and limit overcrowding on the Hartford Line?
7. According to a January 22, 2018 *Hartford Courant* [article](#), last year the state delayed construction of planned stations in North Haven, West Hartford, Newington, and Enfield, as well as replacement stations in Windsor and Windsor Locks, because of funding issues. What is the current status of these projects?
8. In his recent State of the State Address, Governor Lamont said that he will focus on Connecticut's transportation infrastructure and proposed a 30/30/30 plan. Under the proposal, it would take 30 minutes to travel from Hartford to New Haven, 30 minutes from New Haven to Stamford, and 30 minutes from Stamford to Manhattan. What are your thoughts on this proposal?

9. Many experts, including the Federal Transit Administration, indicate that transit-oriented development provides many benefits, including increased ridership and associated revenue gains for transit systems, economic returns to surrounding landowners and businesses, and neighborhood revitalization. What types of transit-oriented development near existing and new rail stations do you think would attract new riders and have the greatest benefit for current riders? What can the council do to encourage these developments?
10. Do you take commuter rail often yourself? If yes, how do you think being a customer has helped, or will help, you in your role on the rail council?

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