

Questions for the 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 Connecticut 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 of the Office of the Inspector General of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in New York.

Questions for Nominee

1. What is your general assessment of the service on the rail lines in Connecticut? What issues may be hampering the development of better service? How can service be improved?
2. Do you take the commuter rail often yourself? If so, how do you think being a customer has, or will, help you in your role on the rail council?
3. You are being appointed as the only rail council member who is a chief elected official. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages to being an official in a group that is otherwise composed of public members? How do you plan to overcome any challenges?

4. Sections 8-10 of [sSB 904](#), favorably reported by the Transportation Committee, modifies the current composition of the Commuter Rail Council to include representation by bus users and renames it the Connecticut Public Transportation Council. Among other changes, it eliminates the legislative approval process for member appointments and requires the chair to notify the appointing authority within 10 days of a vacancy. Do you support adding bus users to the council? Do you think streamlining appointments and establishing a timely notification process for vacancies will help the council maintain an active membership roster?
5. [SB 1079](#), *An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council*, requires DOT to restore Shore Line East service to the same level that existed prior to the pandemic and purchase new rail cars for the Waterbury and Danbury branches of the New Haven line. While this bill was not voted out of committee, these proposals, along with others, were included in [SB 1078](#), favorably reported by the Transportation Committee. Are plans to expand these services a good investment this year, and if so, why?
6. In its [2021-2025 Rail Plan Recommendations](#), the Council suggests that its priority projects could be funded by pursuing federal funding available via the Build Back Better program. What rail projects should be given top priority for federal funds?
7. 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? What should the state do?
8. Metro North is a subsidiary of the MTA, a New York authority. Without a representative on the [MTA board](#), how can Connecticut influence the operation of Metro North? Can you cite any specific examples where we have successfully advocated for a change that was implemented?

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