



2011 Annual Report

CT METRO-NORTH COMMUTER RAIL COUNCIL

OUR MANDATE

To be the eyes, ears and voice of our fellow commuters on Metro-North and Shore Line East railroads. We are your advocates for ever-improved rail service. Appointed by the Governor and legislative leaders, members serve four-year terms without compensation. We meet monthly with officials from Metro-North and the CT Dept of Transportation to address complaints, raise suggestions and share rider feedback. We operate on a budget of zero dollars.

MEMBERS

Tim Beeble, Bethel, *Secretary*
Jim Cameron, Darien, *Chairman*
Rodney Chabot, New Canaan, *Past Chairman*
Roger J. Cirella, Ansonia
Laura Cordes, New London
Terri Cronin, Norwalk, *Vice Chairman*
Mitchell Fuchs, Norwalk
John Hartwell, Westport
Bob Jelley, Guilford
Jeffrey Maron, Stamford
Mark Maruszewski, Darien
Sue Prosi, Stratford
Luke Schnirring, Norwalk

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JOIN OUR EMAIL ALERT LIST

To learn more about the Council's work on your behalf, visit our website or join our E-Mail Alert list. Just send your name, email and home rail station to CTRailCommuterCouncil@gmail.com

News Highlights of the Council's Advocacy for Commuters in 2011

January

- Winter storms cripple railroad. Half of all rail cars out of service. MNR goes to reduced timetable for one month. No train service on Waterbury or Danbury branch lines for weeks as diesel equipment is sent to mainline.

February

- Commuter Council hosts "Winter Crisis" meeting in Stamford with officials, railroad, CDOT and irate passengers.

March

- First new M8 cars go into service. Danbury line washed out for ten days by flooding.

April

- Kawasaki suspends manufacture of M8 cars in Lincoln NE due to production error.

June

- Council honored by CT Legislature with citations on 25th anniversary of its creation.

July

- Extreme heat causes downed wires, stranding hundreds of passengers on train near Westport, who are eventually rescued by first responders.

August

- CDOT / MNR public info session on July stranding incident.
- Council begins drafting "Passenger Bill of Rights."
- Council passes resolution opposing Gov. Malloy's proposed 16% fare increase.
- Tropical Storm Irene causes first-ever pre-emptive shut down of railroad.

September

- Stamford station garage operator, Republic, warned by CDOT for closing garage and diverting cars to nearby, more expensive parking lot which they also operate.
- MNR announces test of "Quiet Cars" on Hudson & Harlem Lines. CDOT proposes more robust trials in CT later in the year.

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News Highlights of the Council's Advocacy for Commuters in 2011

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October

- Aging railroad bridge in Norwalk stuck open for 3+ hours, disrupting service.
- Freak fall snow storm downs trees, power lines curtailing rail service. Danbury trains cancelled 4 days with no alternative busing.
- Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey results show sharp drop in New Haven line rider satisfaction.

November

- MNR warns of potential problems this winter due to aging fleet of cars and releases winter contingency plans which include reduced service.

December

- New "Fairfield Metro" station opens with 1400 additional parking spaces.
- Stamford receives \$10.5 million Tiger III federal grant for station improvements.
- Council approves final wording of "Passenger Pledge" endorsed by MNR & CDOT.
- MNR takes delivery of 60th M8 car.
- CDOT announces "Quiet Car" trials to start January 2012.
- Fare hike of 5.25% to take effect 1/1/12, first phase of 15.25% fare hike over three years.

Ongoing Issues of Concern for the Council in 2012

Communications

Biggest single issue the Council deals with month to month, especially when service is disrupted. Metro-North and CDOT need faster, more detailed communication with riders on trains, at stations and using all electronic media.

New M8 Deliveries

Already more than a year late in delivery, the Council is carefully monitoring construction, delivery and testing of new M8 rail cars.

Ticket Refunds

The Council is opposed to MNR's new policy that one-way tickets are valid for only 14 days and ten-trip tickets expire after six months, half of their old validity period. The Council has also expressed concern over the railroad's new policy of charging \$10 to refund valid tickets.

Conductors

The Council receives regular complaints about rude conductors and shares these with Metro-North. The railroad promises retraining of all on-board personnel and the Council will monitor this process.

Stamford Transportation Center

Improvements to the existing facility to enhance safety and operations, along with progress on replacement or rehabilitation of the parking structure are needed with transparency to the public, commuters, and elected officials.

Station Parking

For more than a decade The Council has pushed for expanded, affordable parking at stations to eliminate 5+ year waiting list for permits.