



BUS SERVICE PLAN March 2010

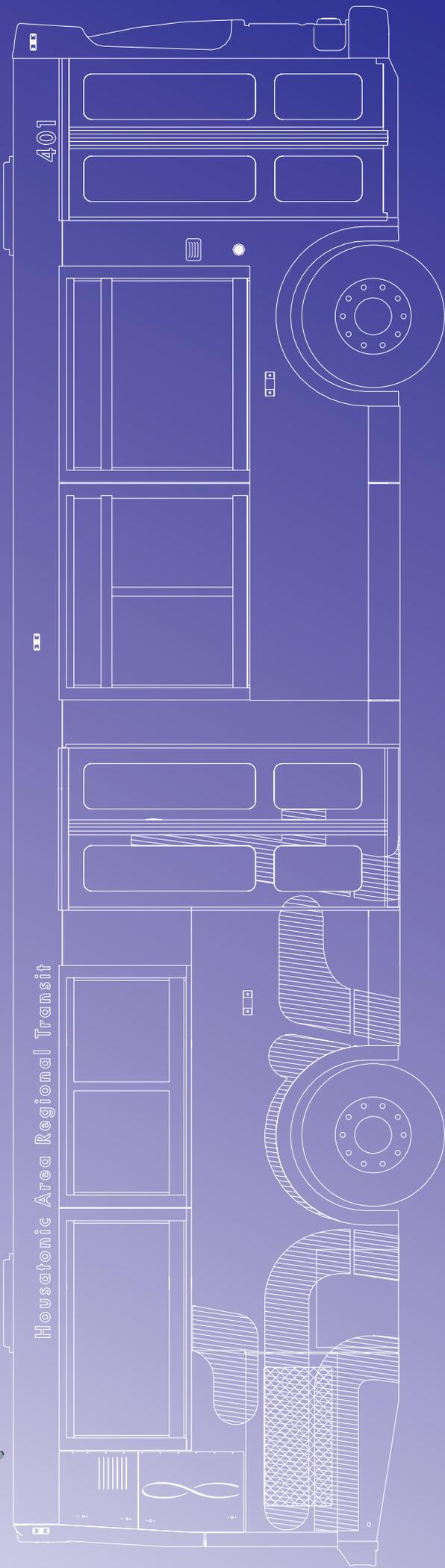
Prepared for HVCEO by:
Housatonic Area Regional Transit

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Bus Service Plan

March 2010

This document was prepared in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Connecticut Department of Transportation or the US Department of Transportation.

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1. TRANSIT EXPANSION BY MUNICIPALITY

This section provides a general overview to the HART system and details planned improvements by municipality for fixed route bus, dial-a-ride and rail transit.

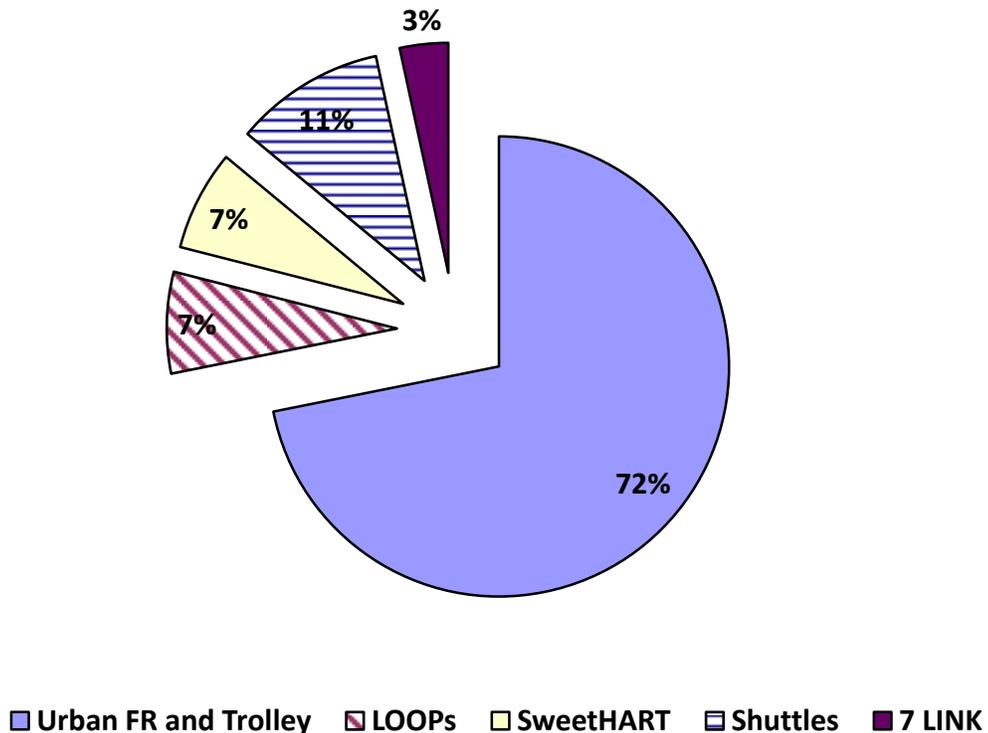
INTRODUCTION

The Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) was created by two municipalities as the Danbury-Bethel Transit District in 1972. Taking its present name in 1979, HART functions as the authority responsible for overseeing efficient public bus transit operations in the HVCEO region and promoting their careful and steady incremental growth.

HART has eight municipal members; Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, and Ridgefield. The Transit District is governed by a Board of Directors with at least one representative from each municipality. Policy decisions are made by the HART Board of Directors and implemented by the HART management staff.

HART operates several types of bus services as shown below:

HART Bus Ridership by Service as Percent of Total

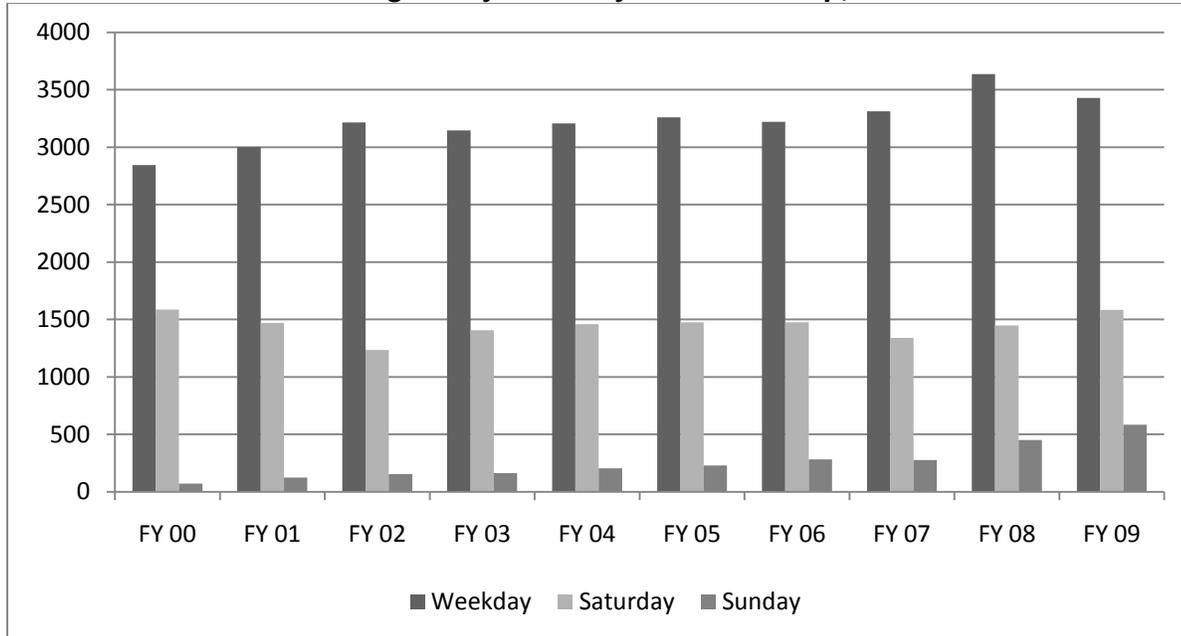


Almost 1 million riders used the HART bus system in FY 2009.

Fixed route service, which operates according to a published timetable, is available to the general public on 15 routes. Fixed routes are further broken down into urban fixed route, i.e., local bus and trolley services (8 routes), commuter shuttles and interregional routes (4) and Evening, Sunday and Holiday “LOOP” routes (3).

Paratransit (demand-responsive, door-to-door) service, known as SweetHART, is available in eight communities. Service policies and availability vary by municipality. A SweetHART Comprehensive Operational Analysis was completed in 2008 and is also available for review.

Average Daily HART System Ridership, FY 00 – FY 09



System ridership in FY 09 was just under 3500 trips on weekdays, over 1500 per Saturday and over 500 on Sundays.

Seniors age 60 or older or persons of any age with disabilities may access SweetHART in Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield, New Fairfield, Newtown, Ridgefield and Roxbury. In New Milford, service is limited to those with a qualifying disability.

TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES BY MUNICIPALITY

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN BETHEL

Bethel Fixed Route HART Bus

- Add bus shelters along Route 302 and in the central business district where appropriate and justified by ridership.
- Extend the weekday service span for the 5 Bethel Center and 2 Stony Hill Routes from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. and implement service on Sunday between 8 am and 7 pm. Improve headways from 60 minutes to 30 minutes weekdays between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Split the 2 Stony Hill Route into two routes to allow for bi-directional service to major employment on Newtown Road in Danbury, and expansion of service area to Newtown.

Bethel SweetHART Bus

- Provide Bethel's seniors and disabled with additional weekday SweetHART service by extending the service day from the current end at 4:45 p.m. to 6 p.m. Add a second bus in the morning peak period between 8 and 10 a.m. to reduce competition for appointment times when demand is strongest.
- Long term, establish new regional SweetHART service that would serve all towns in a more efficient manner than the current town by town approach.

Bethel Commuter Rail

- The current ConnDOT study is will develop recommended options to improve the existing Danbury Branch Line between Danbury and Norwalk. The study also will develop a plan to resume regular passenger service north of Bethel to New Milford which ceased in 1971. Improvements will increase service frequency on the Branch Line from the current 11 round trips per week day/six per Sunday; expand peak period, through train and reverse commute rail service.
- Expand parking supply at the ConnDOT Bethel station, which is severely overcrowded. Study the feasibility of a second platform at the station to facilitate boarding access. Implementation of transit oriented development on Durant Avenue is an additional area of study.
- Provide shuttle bus service to Bethel Station from remote park and ride lots after phase two Danbury Branch Line expansion.

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN BRIDGEWATER

Bridgewater Town Dial-A-Ride

- Bridgewater provides a town operated dial-a-ride service for seniors and persons with disabilities with a single bus on a variable schedule, with most service provided on Tuesday and Thursday.

The Town is outside of the HART service area, but adjacent communities receive comparable SweetHART dial-a-ride service in addition to HART fixed route service. The goal is to integrate the Bridgewater dial-a-ride to the extent possible with the surrounding regional transportation services provided by HART.

Long term, establish new regional SweetHART service that would serve all towns in a more efficient manner than the current town by town approach

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN BROOKFIELD

Brookfield Fixed Route HART Bus

- Goals include extending the weekday service span on the 7 New Milford Route (which serves Brookfield via Route 7) from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., and the provision of service with 30 minute headways between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. On weekends, extending the Saturday service span from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. and implementation of new Sunday service hourly between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. on the route are planned.
- Modify the 4 Brookfield Route to operate between Danbury and Brookfield hourly via Danbury Hospital. This route currently operates weekdays 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., and on Sunday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., leaving Danbury via Osborne Street, Germantown, and Federal Road, and terminating at the Regional YMCA. Hours on this route should be extended to match the rest of the urban fixed route as described above.

Brookfield SweetHART Bus

- Provide Brookfield's seniors and disabled with additional weekday SweetHART dial-a-ride service by extending the service day from the current end at 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Add a second bus during peak travel times between 8 and 10 a.m. to better serve the needs of riders.
- For the long term, reduce costs by establishing a new regional SweetHART service that would serve Brookfield and nearby towns in a more efficient manner than the present town by town approach.

Brookfield Commuter Rail

- The current ConnDOT study of the Danbury Branch Line will provide recommendations for reestablishment of passenger rail between Danbury and New Milford. Long term, a new rail station may be located in Brookfield to allow for service north to New Milford, and south to Danbury and Norwalk. The existing historic station stop on Route 25 near the intersection with Route 7 is one possibility for the new Brookfield station. A station stop at 92 Pocono Road, opposite the Brookfield Fire Station, is also under consideration.

As the study nears completion, the selection of a location or decision not to have a station in Brookfield will be finalized. Any new station should be integrated with HART services and, if appropriate, pedestrian access plans within Brookfield Village.

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN DANBURY

Danbury Fixed Route HART Bus

- Danbury is the locus of fixed route operations for the region. The main HART bus station or Pulse Point is located on Kennedy Avenue in Danbury. It is comprised of 4 bus bays and a small building with a ticket agent. The majority of transit rides on the system pass through this location.

Development plans adjacent to the Pulse Point have led to a discussion of restructure of the traffic flow and intersections near the facility. As nearby traffic flow improvements are made, it is important that operations at this regional hub are not damaged.

- All seven urban fixed routes serve Danbury. Long term goals for the urban fixed route system include extending the weekday service span from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., extend the Saturday service span from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., implementation of Sunday service hourly between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., and provide service with 30 minute headways between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- To simplify routes and provide more direct service to Danbury Hospital, remove the Hospital from the 1 Medical Center Route and place it in the 4 Brookfield Route. Expand the service hours of the Brookfield Route, currently 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday to match the rest of the fixed route system.
- Split the 2 Stony Hill Route into two routes to allow for bi-directional service to major employment on Newtown Road in Danbury, and expansion of service to Bridgeport via Bethel and Newtown.

- The Danbury Fair Mall is the most significant transit destination in the area. Plans are to operate the 6 Mall Route with 30 minute headways throughout the day (current service is 30 minutes from 6-9 a.m. and from 3-6 p.m., and 60 minutes during the midday), or create a second route with more direct service to the Danbury Fair Mall from the Danbury central business district.



Danbury SweetHART Bus

- Danbury's SweetHART ridership is the largest in the HART service area, exceeding 80 passengers per day. A goal is to provide Danbury's seniors and disabled with additional weekday SweetHART service by providing more buses during peak travel times between 8 and 10 a.m.
- For the long term, reduce costs by establishing a new regional SweetHART service that would serve Danbury and nearby towns in a more efficient manner than the existing town by town approach.

Danbury Commuter Rail

- The current ConnDOT study will develop recommended options to improve the existing Danbury Branch Line between Danbury and Norwalk. The study also will develop a plan to resume regular passenger service north of Danbury to New Milford, which ceased in 1971. Improvements will increase service frequency on the Branch Line from the current 11 round trips per week day/six per Sunday and expand peak period, through train and reverse commute rail service.
- As part of the resumption of passenger service to New Milford, create a second Danbury station stop near the Brookfield line. Locations for this stop are under evaluation as part of the current DOT study, with suggested locations within the Berkshire Industrial park, or opposite the existing White Turkey Extension park and ride lot.

A shuttle service to the Danbury North Station from remote lots may be warranted after the implementation of expanded rail service to New Milford.

- A shuttle/circulator bus service to the Downtown Danbury rail station that provides a direct connection to the HART Pulse Point and Peter Pan bus stop is suggested after the initial expansion of service to New Milford.

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN NEW FAIRFIELD

New Fairfield Fixed Route HART Bus

- The existing New Fairfield-Southeast Shuttle operates during the weekday peak commute, with a significant gap in the midday. At present, there is no service available between 7:45 a.m. and 5:50 p.m. Reducing the size of the midday gap is a goal for the service.
- Long term, Implement a bus route between Danbury and New Fairfield via Route 37 serving the North Street Shopping Center, Federal Correctional Institution, Stetson Place in Danbury, and the Town Center and Ball Pond areas of New Fairfield.

New Fairfield SweetHART Bus

- Provide New Fairfield's seniors and disabled persons with additional weekday SweetHART service by extending the service day from the current end at 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Operate a second bus to provide additional service during peak travel periods each weekday during heavy travel times from 9 to 11 a.m. and from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.
- For the long term, reduce costs by establishing a new regional SweetHART service that would serve New Fairfield and nearby towns in a more efficient manner than the town by town approach at present.

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN NEW MILFORD

New Milford Fixed Route HART Bus

- Add trips between New Milford and Danbury for the 6:30, 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. pulse times to provide more regular service between the municipalities and facilitate transfers to early trains leaving Danbury Station. Current funding allows for only limited morning peak service between New Milford and Danbury and creates a confusing schedule.
- Long term goals for the 7 New Milford Route include expansion of the weekday service span from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., extending the Saturday service span from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., implementation of Sunday service hourly between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., and provide service with 30 minute headways between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

New Milford Town Dial-A-Ride

- The town operates two buses in a senior/disabled dial-a-ride, Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. New Milford would benefit from an extension of service later in the day until 6 p.m. On weekends, no Saturday service is provided. New Saturday service between 9 and 4 p.m. with a single vehicle, and a similar schedule on Sunday would better serve this population.

- For the long term, reduce costs by establishing a new regional SweetHART service that would serve Danbury and nearby towns in a more efficient manner than the existing town by town approach.

New Milford Commuter Rail

- The current ConnDOT Danbury Branch Line study will develop recommended options to improve the existing Danbury Branch Line between Danbury and Norwalk. The study also will detail a plan to resume regular passenger service north of Danbury to New Milford, which ceased in 1971.

With resumption of passenger train to New Milford, DOT will develop a recommended location for a New Milford station stop. Potential locations include north of the historic station building on Railroad Street, a site on Pickett District Road opposite Dodd Road, and on Grove Street off Anderson Avenue.

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN NEWTOWN

Newtown Fixed Route HART Bus

- Create a new Danbury-Bridgeport bus route serving Newtown via Routes 6 and 25. The Bridgeport to Danbury service would provide connections for people working and living on either end of the route and local service to points along the corridor at retail, office and manufacturing locations. The bus could also act as a shuttle from the park and ride lot at the junction with Route 111 in Trumbull to the MTA Metro-North Railroad's New Haven Line station in Bridgeport.

Current proposals are for a three bus service during the weekday peak travel period. The route would be operated jointly by the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority and the HART system. Bus fares would be integrated with the two systems.

- Enhancements to the existing Peter Pan bus schedule would provide three additional a.m. round trips and four additional p.m. round trips between Danbury and Waterbury Monday through Friday. An additional route stop in the I-84 Exit 10 area of Newtown (the location of an historic intercity bus stop) would be added on these trips. This location would also serve as a transfer point to the planned Danbury-Bridgeport service.
- As part of the resumption of passenger service to New Milford, a second Danbury station stop near the Brookfield Line is planned. Locations for this stop are being evaluated as part of the current DOT study, with suggested locations within the Berkshire Industrial park, or opposite the existing White Turkey Extension park and ride lot.

Rail user demographics suggest a peak period rail feeder shuttle from the Exit 10 or 11 of I-84 areas of Newtown to this new station may be an appropriate option.

Newtown SweetHART Bus

- For the long term, reduce costs by establishing a new regional SweetHART service that would serve Newtown and nearby towns in a more efficient manner than the town by town approach at present.

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN REDDING

Redding Fixed Route HART Bus

- Redding is served by the Danbury-Norwalk Route 7 LINK bus, which travels the length of the Route 7 corridor between Danbury and Norwalk. The current service provides 4 morning and 4 evening round trips with a significant gap in the midday. The goal is to provide buses hourly throughout the weekday.
- With the redevelopment of the Georgetown wire mill, add a deviation to the Danbury-Norwalk bus route to directly serve the new multimodal transportation center planned there.

Redding Town Dial-A-Ride

- Redding provides a Town operated dial-a-ride service for seniors and persons with disabilities with a single bus Monday through Thursday.

Adjacent communities receive comparable SweetHART dial-a-ride service in addition to HART fixed route service. The goal is to integrate the Redding dial-a-ride to the extent possible with the regional transportation services provided by HART.

Long term, establish new regional SweetHART service that would serve all towns in a more efficient manner than the current town by town approach

Redding Commuter Rail

- In coordination with the private redevelopment of the vacant wire mill complex in Georgetown, construct a new rail passenger station and adjacent transportation center on the Wilton - Redding Town Line.
- Expand peak period, through train and reverse-commute rail service and extend rail service north from Georgetown and West Redding Stations past Danbury to New Milford.
- Support the construction of a multi-modal transportation center in the Georgetown village area, as part of the redevelopment of that area which is immediately adjacent to Route 7. The multi-modal center will be located on the Wilton - Redding Town Line and include pedestrian and bicycle access, bus and rail transit services, and parking.

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN RIDGEFIELD

Ridgefield Fixed Route HART Bus

- Ridgefield is served by the Danbury-Norwalk Route 7 LINK bus, which travels the length of the Route 7 corridor between Danbury and Norwalk. The current service provides 4 morning and 4 evening round trips with a significant gap in the midday. The goal is to fill this gap and provide buses hourly throughout the weekday.
- Determine if there is a market for expanding the Ridgefield to Katonah, NY commuter shuttle service to the midday hours, as no service is provided at present between 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Expanding the Katonah Shuttle is complicated by a parking shortage along the route. Additional parking locations are thus a high priority, and may be necessary even without major expansion.

- Day-long service on the shuttle provides an ancillary benefit to travel between Danbury and Ridgefield. The current Ridgefield-Katonah schedule allows for a limited direct service between the two municipalities as buses leave and return from the HART facility in Danbury. Additional buses on the shuttle route will provide more opportunities for transit connections between the central business districts of Ridgefield and Danbury.

Ridgefield SweetHART Bus

- Provide a second bus during the peak morning and afternoon period Monday Through Friday to increase the service span to 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. from 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. and provide better coverage for senior and disabled riders. Provide Saturday Service between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- For the long term, reduce costs by establishing a new regional SweetHART service that would serve Ridgefield and nearby towns in a more efficient manner than the town by town approach at present.

Ridgefield Commuter Rail

- The current ConnDOT Danbury Branch Line study will develop recommended options to improve passenger rail between Danbury and Norwalk. The study also will develop a plan to resume regular passenger service north of Danbury to New Milford, which ceased in 1971. Improvements will increase service frequency on the Branch Line from the current 11 round trips per week day/six per Sunday and expand peak period, through train and reverse commute rail service.

- As part of a comprehensive municipal improvement plan for the Branchville Village section of Ridgefield, the Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission developed a concept plan to enhance the parking facilities at the ConnDOT Branchville station. In its 2002 Branchville Village Plan, the Commission suggests the construction of a decked parking structure, designed with an attractive facade reminiscent of an historic mill building, to augment parking supply at the Station.

If warranted, implement a subscription shuttle bus to the Branchville Station after the Phase Two Danbury Branch expansion to further ease parking supply and congestion, and investigate the possibility for shuttles to employment from the station location.

FUTURE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS IN SHERMAN

Sherman Town Dial-A-Ride

- Sherman provides a dial-a-ride bus service for seniors and persons with disabilities between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday – Friday with a single small bus. The service is coordinated with the local FISH program, which provides volunteer transportation for medical purposes.

A second accessible vehicle to better serve disabled riders during the week would be a useful addition to the program. The implementation of service on Saturday and Sunday is a further goal.

- Long term, coordinate operation of the Town provided service with regional service provided by HART. The First Selectman stated in 10/2007 that "while Sherman is meeting its transportation needs adequately at the present time, we believe that the need for a connection with HART will be essential in the near future as our community ages."

FUTURE REGIONAL TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

Interregional HART Bus

- Current HART Harlem Line Shuttle buses are timed to meet peak period trains during the weekday. There are limited opportunities to make rail-bus connections during the off peak at Brewster Station, and none at Katonah or Ridgefield.

Provide midday buses on Danbury-Brewster, Ridgefield-Katonah and New-Fairfield Southeast Shuttle services timed to meet MTA Metro-North Railroad Harlem Line arrivals and departures.

- The Danbury-Norwalk Route 7 LINK is a regional bus route between Danbury and Norwalk serving employments sites and retail centers in the Route 7 corridor. The route provides 4 round trips during the morning and evening weekday, with a significant midday gap where no buses operate.

Service should be provided throughout the course of the weekday on this route.

- Create a new Danbury-Bridgeport bus route serving Newtown via Routes 6 and 25. The Bridgeport to Danbury service would provide trips for people working and living on either end of the route and provide local service to points along the corridor at retail, office and manufacturing locations. The service could also act as a shuttle from the park and ride lot at the junction with Route 111 in Trumbull to the MTA Metro-North Railroad's New Haven Line station in Bridgeport.

Current proposals are for a three bus service during the weekday peak travel period. The service would be operated jointly by the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority and the HART system.

Interregional Peter Pan Bus

- Peter Pan bus operates a New York to Hartford route with stops in Danbury, Southbury and Waterbury. The company provides seven daily trips Monday-Thursday, and Saturday from Hartford to Danbury, and eight on Fridays and Sundays. From Danbury to Hartford, seven daily trips are provided Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with an eighth on Friday and Sunday.

Between New York City and Danbury, eight trips are provided in each direction Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with an extra bus on Friday and Sunday.

Proposals call for additional buses on the Danbury-Hartford segment of Peter Pan's service to improve connectivity for commuters between Danbury and Waterbury.

- Restore a stop in the Church Hill Road area of Newtown on the Danbury-Hartford run to allow for express bus connections to Newtown. This stop location could also be served by a future Danbury-Bridgeport bus route.
- Create a single intercity bus/local bus discount pass option, analogous to the MTA Metro-North Railroad UniTicket. This would facilitate commuter travel between the intercity buses operated by Peter Pan and local bus operations in Greater Danbury and elsewhere.

Danbury Branch Line Commuter Rail

- The Danbury Branch Line is a 23.6 mile single track, non-electrified rail line running between Danbury and Norwalk. The line has passing sidings in Branchville, Wilton and Norwalk and stations in Danbury, Bethel, Redding (West Redding, a new station is planned for Georgetown), Ridgefield (Branchville), two in Wilton (Cannondale and Wilton), and two in Norwalk (Merritt 7 and South Norwalk).

Current rail service provides for 11 round trips during the weekday and six on Saturdays. The Region has long advocated for improvements to the line,

originally constructed 1852. The line has an antiquated signal system, finally scheduled for an upgrade by 2011 after decades of delay.

- The ongoing study of improvement of the line by ConnDOT will develop detailed recommendations to provide more reverse commute trips and shorten headways.
- Passenger service north of Danbury ceased in 1971. HVCEO supports restoration of passenger rail approximately 13 miles along the Berkshire Line to New Milford.

As part of the extension to New Milford, additional station stops in Danbury in the vicinity of Berkshire Corporate Park, and in Brookfield may be instituted. Extension to New Milford and the evaluation of additional stops, as well as the final location of the New Milford station stop, will be determined by the ConnDOT study.

2. FIXED ROUTE BUS CONDITIONS AND GOALS

The following section provides an overview of the existing conditions of fixed route service characteristics, fare structure, ridership, performance indicators, equipment, facilities, passenger amenities and future goals.

EXISTING CONDITIONS – HART FIXED ROUTE SERVICES

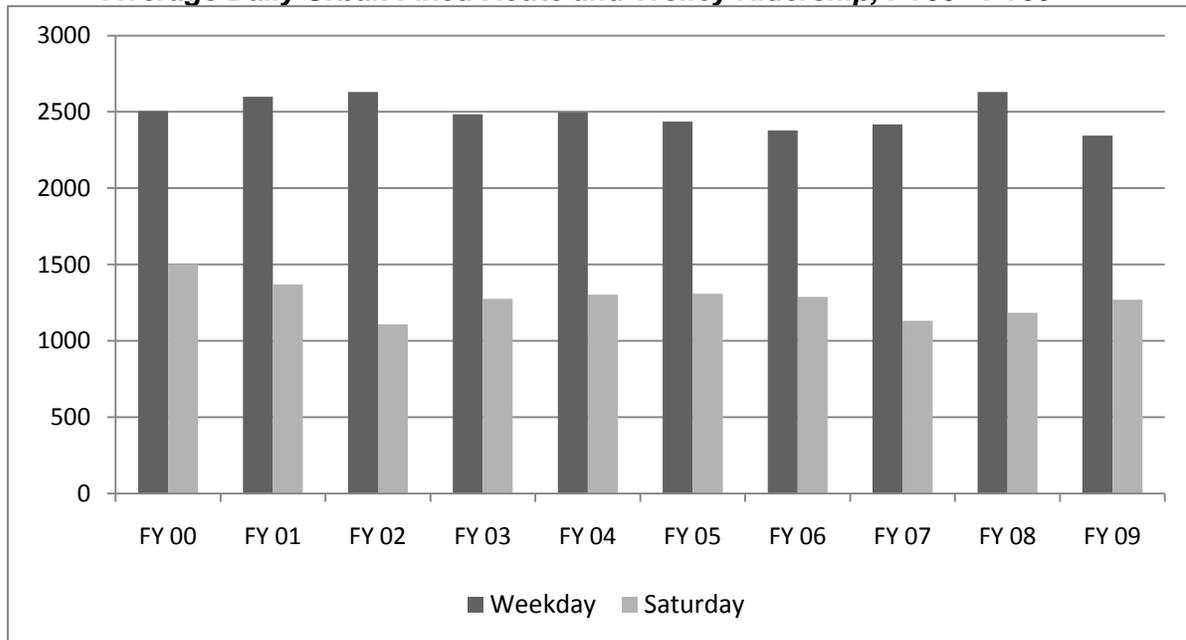
URBAN FIXED ROUTE AND TROLLEY

The majority of HART's bus services are provided to the municipalities of Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield, and New Milford through the urban fixed route program. This urban fixed route service is primarily radial in nature with seven routes extending outward from the Central Business District of Danbury.

Much of HART's urban fixed route service is operated within the City of Danbury. Buses are scheduled to serve traffic generators such as major employers, shopping centers, medical centers, schools, the Central Business District and elderly and low income housing areas.

Most major arterials in the City of Danbury are served including Main Street, North Street, Padanaram Road, White Street, Federal Road, Newtown Road, South Street, Park Avenue, Lake Avenue, Route 7 and Mill Plain Road.

Average Daily Urban Fixed Route and Trolley Ridership, FY00 - FY09



Over the past ten years, ridership held steady on the urban fixed route program, averaging over 2400 trips per weekday and 1270 trips per Saturday. The bulk of HART riders use urban fixed route buses.

The urban fixed route bus system operates in a timed-transfer “pulse” mode with all routes meeting at the main HART bus station, or Pulse Point, in downtown Danbury at regular intervals throughout each day. This routing structure allows passengers to easily transfer from one route to another at the same place without long waits. Routes are interlined or paired together to allow a moderate proportion of passengers to travel from one route to another without physically transferring between buses.

Bus frequencies of 60 minutes are provided on all routes Monday through Saturday with 30 minute frequencies provided during the morning and afternoon peak periods (6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) Monday through Friday.

Departure times from the Pulse Point are scheduled on the hour throughout the day and additionally on the half hour during peak periods. The span of service is 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Saturday span of service is 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. No urban fixed service is provided evenings, Sundays or on major holidays.

The service frequency and route of the CityCenter Trolley is integrated with the urban fixed route system to afford half hour service to major trip generators throughout the course of the day. The route includes the CityCenter Danbury Dining & Entertainment District, Western Connecticut State University Midtown Campus, Roger's Park, Danbury Fair Mall and North Street Shopping Center. The service uses a specialized replica trolley vehicle.

The Trolley operates Wednesday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Passengers may transfer between the Trolley and other services for free.

The urban fixed route program averages 2400 passengers per weekday and 1200 per Saturday.

LOOP ROUTES

HART operates its LOOP routes in Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury and New Milford. The LOOPS are designed to complement the urban fixed route system by providing service to major employment and low income housing after the close of the service day.

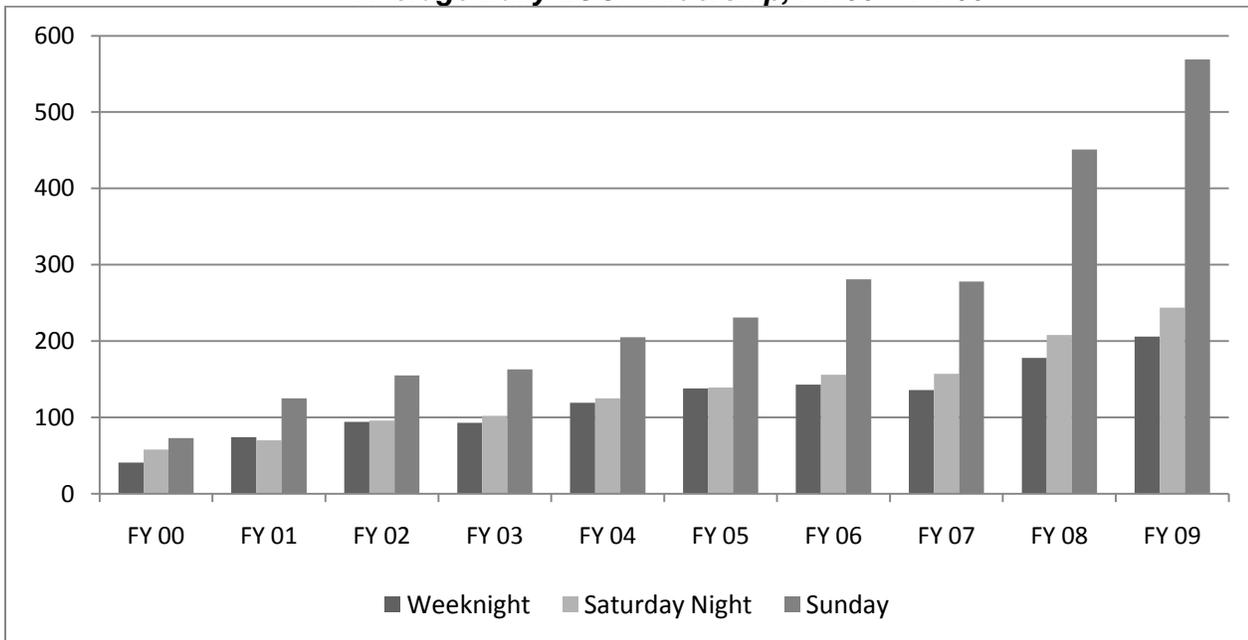
Three coordinated routes comprise a scaled down version of the urban fixed route system, with hourly headways and a timed transfer at the HART Pulse Point.

The routes are coordinated [through the regional \(Danbury, Waterbury and Torrington\) JobLinks jobs access program](#). However, there are no special eligibility requirements and service is open to the general public.

LOOP services are provided in Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield and New Milford on weeknights from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m., Saturdays 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. and Sundays and holidays (New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and day after Thanksgiving) from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Together, the LOOP routes average 200 trips per weeknight, 240 trips per Saturday night, 450 trips per holiday and 560 passengers per Sunday.

Average Daily LOOP Ridership, FY 00 – FY 09



LOOP ridership has grown quickly over the past ten years. Weeknight ridership was up over 400% over the period, Saturday night ridership increased by more than 300% and Sunday ridership increased by over 600%.

HARLEM LINE SHUTTLES

Three shuttles provide service between park and ride lots in Connecticut and train stations in New York State on the [MTA Metro-North Railroad Harlem Line](#) Monday-Friday. The shuttles are designed to meet morning southbound departures and afternoon and evening northbound arrivals to and from Grand Central Terminal. Metro-North provides a guaranteed ride home program to shuttle users that purchase their combined rail-bus UniTicket. Together, the three shuttles average 470 trips per weekday.

The **Danbury-Brewster Shuttle** meets nine morning departures between 5:55 a.m. and 8:31 a.m. and 14 arrivals between 4:00 and 9:10 p.m. Four morning arrivals and five evening departures allow for reverse commute trips. Midday, when the shuttle does not operate, the 3 Mill Plain urban fixed route bus provides hourly service between the HART Pulse Point and Brewster Station.

Vehicles serve park and ride lots off I-84 Exits 2, 1 and 7 and travel locally down Route 6 to the Village of Brewster. Flag stops are permitted between the New York State line and the train station. Several trips provide connections to the HART Pulse Point and the Danbury Fair Mall. Passengers wishing to transfer to the PART (Putnam County Rapid Transit) bus system may do so in Brewster by presenting a HART or PART pass or transfer.

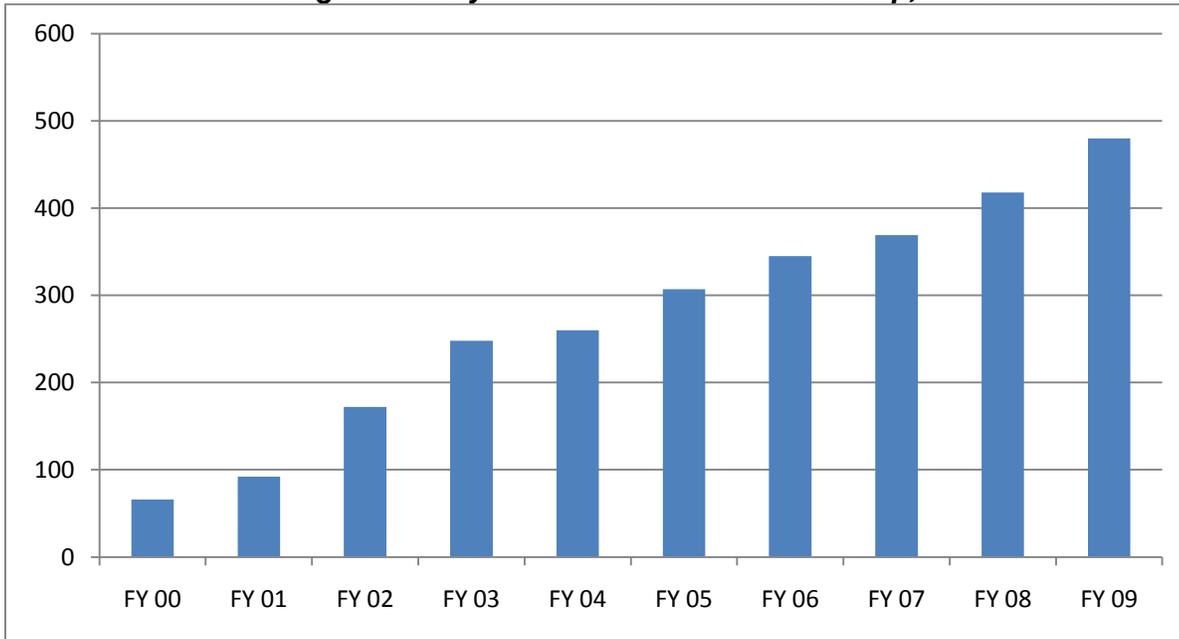
The **Ridgefield-Katonah Shuttle** meets seven morning southbound train departures between 6:20 and 8:30 a.m. and nine northbound evening arrivals between 4:54 and 8:24 p.m. One morning arrival and three evening departures provide some opportunity for reverse commutes.

Shuttle runs originate at the Jessie Lee Memorial Methodist Church or Bark Park lots in Ridgefield and follow Route 35 westerly to New York State. In the Town of Lewisboro, NY,

buses make a stop at the South Salem Municipal lot on Spring Street, and then continue on Route 35 to Katonah Station via Route 22 and Jay Street.

Passengers may transfer between the HART and Bee-Line (Westchester County) bus systems in Katonah by presenting a transfer from either system.

Average Weekday Harlem Line Shuttle Ridership, FY 00 – FY 09



Over the past ten years, ridership on the Harlem Line shuttle services grew from 66 to 480 passenger trips per day; an increase of 627%.

The **New Fairfield–Southeast Shuttle** is operated by HART between the Southeast train station and New Fairfield. Vehicles stop at park and ride lots in New Fairfield at Company A Firehouse on Ball Pond Road and Ball Pond Firehouse on Fairfield Drive. The bus enters New York at the hamlet of Putnam Lake, makes a third stop at the Temple Beth Elohim parking lot in Brewster, then follows Route 312 to the Southeast Station.

HART meets five southbound trains between 6:13 and 7:51 a.m. and eight northbound trains between 5:47 and 8:47 p.m. No midday bus service is provided

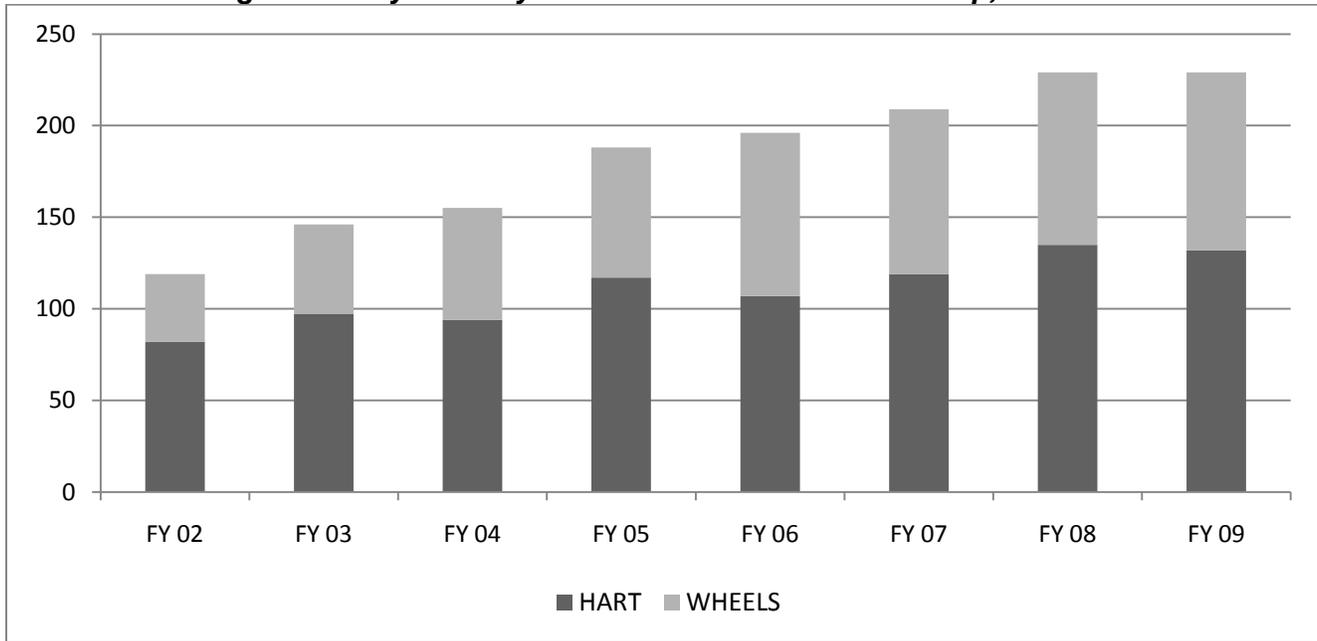
DANBURY-NORWALK ROUTE 7 LINK

The Danbury-Norwalk Route 7 Link provides service to employment along the Route 7 corridor and the downtowns of Danbury and Norwalk. Buses originate and terminate at the HART and WHEELS (Norwalk Transit District) pulse points. Locations served include Cartus, Branchville Station, Wilton Center, Redding, Merritt Seven and 10/20 Westport Road.

The LINK provides hourly peak period service Monday-Friday between 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. HART and WHEELS run the service jointly, each operating 50% of the service.

Passengers may transfer between the WHEELS or HART systems at either terminal or to and from connecting Coastal Link or CT TRANSIT buses in Norwalk. Intersystem transfers are free.

Average Weekday Danbury-Norwalk Route 7 LINK Ridership, FY 02 - FY 09



Daily ridership on the Route 7 LINK has increased by 92% since service inception.

Total 7 LINK ridership averages 230 trips per day with approximately 58% of the riders carried on the HART-operated portion of the service.

FIXED ROUTE FARE STRUCTURE

The fixed route fare structure was simplified when rates were increased in 2004, and fare zones were eliminated. For the convenience of the public, HART accepts transfers or passes from five different transit systems and HART transfers are, in turn, accepted on these systems. The system fare structure and policies are outlined below.

Cash Fares

Fixed route services have three fare categories: full fare (or adult) passengers pay \$1.25, students (1st - 12th grade) pay \$0.90 and seniors age 60 or older and persons with disabilities pay \$0.60. Children under age six ride free.

The trolley service's fare structure is a base 50 cents for any single trip. Other than free service for children under six, no fare classes exist.

Fare Payment Policy

Passengers are required to pay a cash fare, or to present a valid pass or transfer on boarding. Drivers carry no cash or change.

Pre-Paid Tickets and Passes

HART offers multi-ride pass options which provide the convenience of fare prepayment and cost savings for the passenger.

Bye-passes, 10 ride punch passes, provide an eight to 12 percent discount off of cash payments depending on fare class. They are the most popular pre-paid fare option. Drivers punch a ride off each pass as it is presented. Approximately 290 Bye Passes, accounting for 2,900 trips, are sold each month.

A monthly unlimited ride pass, known as a Fast Pass, is available for those who travel frequently. A passenger traveling 40 times in a month using a Fast Pass will begin to save relative to the cash fare. About 100 Fast Passes, accounting for 4,000 trips, are sold each month.

A single-day unlimited ride pass is available for purchase on the trolley for \$1.00. This pass allows the passenger to board or disembark the vehicle as many times as he or she wishes throughout a single day with no additional charge.

Individual ride tickets are sold to non-profit agencies to provide transportation to their clientele. No discounts are given for the purchase of these tickets.

Other Valid Fare Media

HART honors MTA Metro-North Railroad UniTickets, a bus/rail pass which offers a coordinated fare option to passengers transferring between buses and trains. UniTickets are sold by Metro-North for weekly or monthly travel and are accepted on all fixed route services with the exception of the CityCenter Trolley. Approximately 58% of shuttle riders purchase UniTickets.

HART has agreements with the New York counties of Westchester and Putnam to allow free transfers between bus systems at the Katonah and Brewster train stations. Passengers may board using the other systems' transfers at these locations.

HART transfers are accepted on WHEELS buses in Norwalk, and WHEELS transfers are accepted in Danbury. Users of the 7 Link service may board using any valid HART or Norwalk Transit District fare media. Free transfers between HART buses and Coastal LINK or CT TRANSIT buses may also be made in Norwalk.

TransitChek is accepted as payment for discount fare media. TransitChek is a federally approved tax-deductible program that allows employers to provide vouchers to cover the cost of commuting to work by public transit.

Statewide bus passes issued for Medicaid transportation are accepted by HART.

ANNUAL RIDERSHIP HISTORY

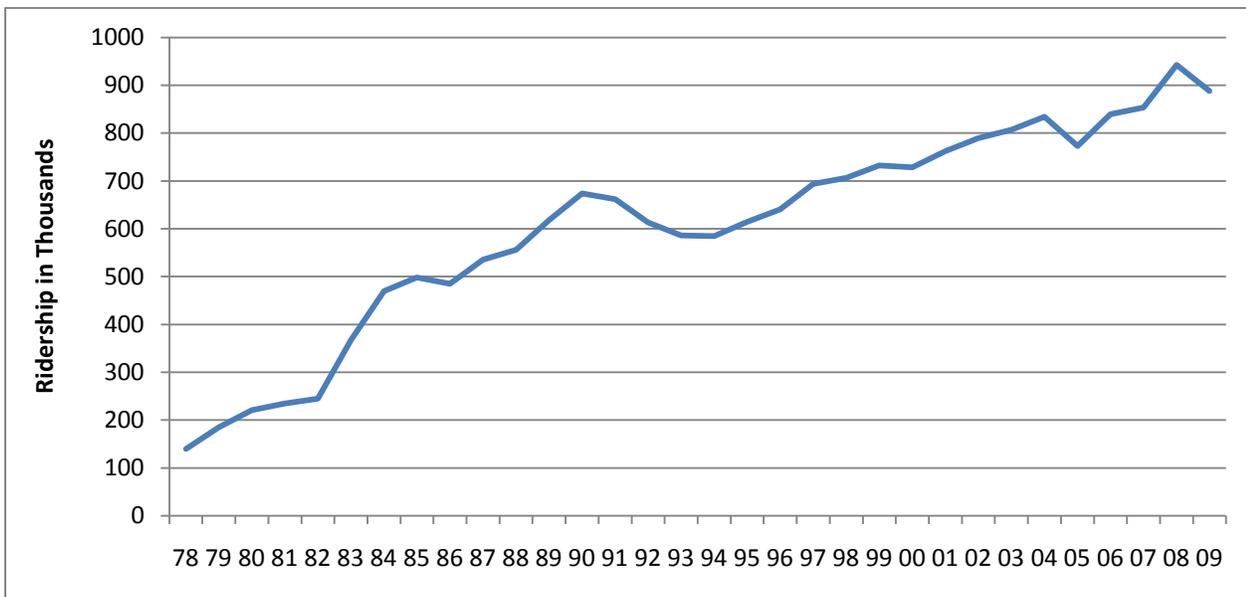
Over the 31 year period since the initiation of HART bus services, only a few years showed decreases in ridership. The year 1986, when the Pulse Point was moved, experienced a decrease of 3% compared to the year before.

Decreases were also experienced for fiscal years 1991 through 1994. Ridership decreased by 13 percent to 584,404 from 1990 through 1994, a period which included a recession, two fare increases and the loss of funding for the Ridgefield fixed-route service. These losses were quickly turned around in 1997, when 693,725 annual trips were carried.

A portion of the increase that year resulted from the start of the Danbury CityCenter Trolley. Ridership trends were generally positive through 2008 with a drop between FY 2004 and FY 2005, following a fare increase.

Most recently, ridership between the 2008 and 2009 years dropped 6% with the economic downturn, and after a record high FY 2008 ridership year (over 940,000 trips on fixed route and one million system wide) induced by high fuel prices.

HART Total Annual Fixed Route Ridership, FY 78 – FY 09



Annual ridership on the HART fixed route system rose from less than 140,000 trips in 1978 to more than 888,000 trips in 2009.

NATIONAL FIXED ROUTE PERFORMANCE COMPARISON

Eight similar transit systems were selected nationally in order to contrast HART and its service performance to others. This peer group was objectively chosen by consultants for the Connecticut DOT Statewide Bus System Study of 2000 as similar sized systems to HART serving approximately the same population size.

The group includes Montachusett (MA), Cape Cod (MA), Muskegon (MI), Rochester (MN), Missoula (MT), Manchester (NH), Cleveland (OH) and Westmoreland County, PA. The table updates the peer comparison as selected for the statewide study, using data from the 2007 National Transit Database report (the most recent available).

National Fixed Route System Peer Analysis

System	Ridership	Operating Cost	Annual Hours	Cost/pass.	Cost/hour	Cost/mi.	Pass/hr.	Pass/mi.
HART	853,361	\$3,743,252	56,390	\$4.39	\$66.38	\$4.27	15.13	0.97
Fitchburg, MA	637,173	\$4,789,337	68,322	\$7.52	\$70.10	\$5.80	9.33	0.77
Cape Cod, MA	419,249	\$4,357,614	80,649	\$10.39	\$54.03	\$4.56	5.20	0.44
Muskegon, MI	515,162	\$2,255,032	31,550	\$4.38	\$71.47	\$5.26	16.33	1.20
Rochester, MN	1,545,364	\$3,837,139	60,659	\$2.48	\$63.26	\$4.19	25.48	1.69
Missoula, MT	735,243	\$2,786,551	39,506	\$3.79	\$70.53	\$4.67	18.61	1.23
Manchester, NH	456,166	\$2,716,831	38,668	\$5.96	\$70.26	\$5.64	11.80	0.95
Cleveland, OH	616,656	\$4,353,291	47,046	\$7.06	\$92.53	\$5.26	13.11	0.74
Westmoreland, PA	366,369	\$3,738,553	40,601	\$10.20	\$92.08	\$4.66	9.02	0.46
MEAN	682,749	\$3,619,733	51,488	\$6.24	\$72.29	\$4.92	13.78	0.94

HART compared well in the ridership category, with the second highest ridership total out of the systems selected. The mean ridership of this peer group was 682,749. HART reported a ridership of 853,361 for 2007, which is 25% above average. In terms of productivity measured as passengers per hour, HART is 10% better at 15.13 pass/hr than the mean of 13.78. System productivity within the peer group ranged between 5.2 (Cape Cod) and 25.48 (Rochester, MN) passengers per hour.

When comparing HART to Rochester, MN, the transit system that had the highest ridership total, HART had the lower operating cost of the two for 2007 by nearly \$94,000.

When looking at financial efficiency, actual dollar cost per service hour and mile, HART ranked as the third lowest cost per hour in 2007 at \$66.38, above only Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, MA (\$54.03) and Rochester, MN (\$63.26). LAKETRAN in Cleveland, Ohio (\$92.53) and Westmoreland County, PA (\$92.08) had the highest per-hour costs.

HART also ranked as the second lowest cost per mile in 2007 at \$4.27, above only Rochester, MN (\$4.19). Montachusett Regional Transit Authority in Fitchburg, MA (\$5.80) and Manchester Transit Authority, NH (\$5.64) had the highest per-mile costs.

Finally, operating cost per passenger is a measure of cost effectiveness. In 2007, HART services cost \$4.39 per passenger trip. This cost is 30% lower than the peer group mean. The highest cost per passenger reported in 2007 was \$10.39 for Cape Cod, MA and the lowest was \$2.48 in Rochester, MN. HART had the fourth lowest cost per passenger out of the peer group.

**FIXED ROUTE PERFORMANCE COMPARISON
IN THE CONNECTICUT-NEW YORK REGION**

For comparison purposes closer to home, eight other transit systems, seven in Connecticut and one in New York, were selected to contrast HART's performance compared to others in the region. These include the Greater Bridgeport, Waterbury, Norwalk, Middletown, Milford, Stamford, Norwich and Putnam County, New York transit systems.

There is a wide variety of service provision and population in these communities. In most cases, the group shares little in common outside of geography. The Norwich system (Southeast Area Transit or SEAT) is most similar to HART in this group. SEAT runs nearly the same number of vehicles in maximum service in a region of almost identical square mileage.

Regional Fixed Route System Peer Analysis

System	Ridership	Operating Cost	Annual Hours	Cost/pass.	Cost/hour	Cost/mi.	Pass/hr.	Pass/mi.
HART	853,361	\$3,743,252	56,390	\$4.39	\$66.38	\$4.27	15.13	0.97
Bridgeport	5,086,455	\$13,524,673	164,779	\$2.66	\$82.08	\$6.98	30.87	2.62
Waterbury	1,822,136	\$6,191,072	73,066	\$3.40	\$84.73	\$6.82	24.94	2.01
Norwalk	1,840,648	\$6,949,994	87,895	\$3.78	\$79.07	\$6.51	20.94	1.72
Middletown	365,621	\$2,042,021	30,713	\$5.59	\$66.49	\$4.22	11.90	0.76
Milford	336,511	\$1,096,803	18,341	\$3.26	\$59.80	\$4.25	18.35	1.30
Stamford	2,893,579	\$9,682,276	119,250	\$3.35	\$81.19	\$7.56	24.28	2.26
Norwich	1,060,976	\$4,345,652	62,551	\$4.10	\$69.47	\$4.57	16.96	1.11
Putnam Co., NY	151,054	\$1,480,263	18,820	\$9.80	\$78.65	\$3.78	8.03	0.39
MEAN	1,601,149	\$5,450,667	70,201	\$4.48	\$74.21	\$5.44	19.04	1.46

When compared to the regional group, HART reported below the mean for ridership and productivity for fiscal year 2007. Again, note that three of the systems serve large urban areas and operate in cities far more densely populated than the Housatonic Region. At 56,390 hours, HART provides 20% below the group mean of 70,201 annual service hours.

In general, a system's ridership and hourly costs increase and its operating speed decreases with the population of the city. More densely-populated cities provide a larger ridership base and productivity, but urban travel is slower than suburban and rural travel.

Driver wages and administrative salaries tend to be higher in larger transit systems. This explains why Greater Bridgeport and CT TRANSITs Stamford division, though generating the greatest ridership, have high costs per hour and per mile.

HART ranked the second lowest overall among regional peers for cost per hour (\$66.38) and third lowest for cost per mile (\$4.27) for the service efficiency category. Among the transit systems listed, cost per hour varied between \$59.80 (Milford) to \$84.73 (Waterbury).

VEHICLES

HART operates a fleet of accessible vehicles on its fixed routes including:

- Ten 2001 Orion V 35-foot transit coaches
- One 2003 Orion VII 35-Foot transit coach
- Ten 2008 35-foot Gillig low floor transit coaches
- Three 1995 35-foot RTS transit coaches
- Two 2001 40-foot New FlyerD40LF transit coaches
- Five 2006 StarTrans Supreme body on chassis buses
- Five 2003 El Dorado Aerotech body on chassis buses
- Five 2007 StarTrans Supreme body on chassis buses
- One 1996 Cable Car Concepts Minitrolley
- One 2003 DuponTrolley Frontenac trolley

Transit coaches are used on urban fixed routes, Route 7 LINK and some Danbury-Brewster Shuttle runs. Light duty body-on-chassis buses are used on LOOP and shuttle routes. Trolley vehicles are used exclusively on the trolley route.

All vehicles are equipped with modern features and amenities. These include wheelchair lifts or ramps, climate control, tinted windows, camera systems and two-way radios. Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology is slated for installation on all vehicles by spring of 2010.

Transit coaches have kneeling features, electronic registering fareboxes, bike racks and electronic destination signs.

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS FACILITY

In October, 1992, HART completed the \$1.9 million purchase of its present bus maintenance/operations facility at 62 Federal Road in Danbury. In August 1996, HART began a rehabilitation and expansion project to include covered indoor storage space for all vehicles, a bus wash, and office space sufficient to locate all HART staff under one roof. The expansion and renovation of the facility was an \$8.2 million project funded by the Federal Transit Administration and the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

All HART administrative offices were moved to the Federal Road location in January of 1998.

TRANSFER POINT

Construction of HART's Downtown Danbury Pulse Point was completed in 1994. The Pulse Point is located on public right-of-way along Kennedy Avenue west of Main Street. The location serves as the hub of the fixed route bus system and is within a short walking distance (about one block) from the Central Business District and directly opposite the Peter Pan/Bonanza intercity bus terminal on Elm Street.

The facility includes a 450 square foot ticket sales building, a large canopied waiting area for passengers, shelters and benches, recessed loading bays for up to 10 buses, ornamental street lighting and fencing, sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalk, information displays, and landscaping.

PASSENGER WAITING SHELTERS

HART maintains passenger shelters at 11 locations in addition to the Pulse Point. Shelters are located on Main Street in Danbury in front of the Danbury Public Library and Kimberly Place Apartments; a shelter is located at Glen Apartments on Memorial Drive; shelters are located on Wooster Street in front of Wooster Manor and Crosby Manor apartment complexes; and one is located on the grounds of Bishop Curtis Homes in Bethel and Brooks Quarry in Brookfield. HART replaced ConnDOT shelters at the exit 2 and 1 of I-84 park and ride lots and installed a third at the Federal Road (Danbury) park and ride lot for users of its Danbury-Brewster Shuttle service.

BUS STOP SIGNS

In 1993, HART installed approximately 450 bus stop signs in Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury and New Milford. The signs were installed as part of a comprehensive effort to better manage passenger boarding and alighting activity on the fixed route system.

Distance between stops is generally 1/8 mile but varies depending on street configuration and the degree of urbanization. Bus stop locations are subject to approval by the State Traffic Commission and municipal authorities.

The signs are trimmed in red with blue lettering and feature the HART logo, information telephone number, "no parking" symbol, and disabled access symbol. Signs in the Danbury central business district on the CityCenter Trolley route display a bus and trolley silhouette.

HART is undertaking a complete review and replacement program of bus stop signs during FY 2010. All stop locations will be reviewed and replacement signs installed as necessary.

GOALS FOR HART FIXED ROUTE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 1: TO EXPAND EVENING AND SUNDAY SERVICE TO COVER THE ENTIRE URBAN FIXED ROUTE SERVICE AREA

The Connecticut State Wide Bus study of 2000 noted that when compared to similar systems across the country, HART provides approximately one third less service per capita than average. Among other service enhancements the study recommended the following for the HART system:

- Hourly service on all routes Weekday and Saturday between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- Hourly Sunday service on all routes except route 7 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The foremost request from passengers for improvement is almost universally service expansion into the evenings and on Sunday. Beginning in 1998, plans were laid to allow for limited evening and Sunday bus service. Through the JobLinks program, HART worked with a host of other agencies to bring these services to the region. Three evening/Sunday routes are currently in operation, supported by a combination of State DOT and Department of Social Services (DSS) dollars and some limited federal funds.

Monthly ridership on the evening service exceeds 2000 trips per bus route. The service, due to funding constraints, consists of three LOOP routes that serve most of the major trip generators in Greater Danbury. However, the LOOPS still do not serve all locations served by urban fixed route buses and route structure makes some trips lengthy.

HART's goal is to provide extended hours to all of the urban fixed route service area until 10:30 p.m. weeknights and Saturday nights and from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday. The evening LOOP services operate during this period and have proven the ability to generate ridership.

Employer and rider surveys indicate that 9 p.m. is too early to end the service day for second shift employees. Sunday services also require an earlier start for employment trips.

GOAL 2: TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND INTERREGIONAL BUS SERVICES

HART operates a single interregional bus route, the Danbury - Norwalk Route 7 LINK, jointly with the Norwalk Transit District. The service has operated since 2002, and consistently generates ridership of over 230 daily trips. The current service level is limited to weekdays only, with a significant service gap in the midday when no buses run.

A [2007 planning study](#) entitled *Expanding Bus Transit to Bridgeport and Waterbury* examined the potential of an additional interregional route between Danbury and Bridgeport, which would include the towns of Newtown, Monroe and Trumbull. Following the example of the Route 7 LINK, the service as proposed would be operated by HART in conjunction with Greater

Bridgeport Transit. This route would restore a public transit connection between the Housatonic and Greater Bridgeport regions lost in the early 1970's.

HART goal is to provide buses throughout the weekday on the Danbury-Norwalk LINK, and initiate a comparable service between Danbury, Newtown and Bridgeport via the Route 25 corridor.

GOAL 3: TO PROVIDE HALF HOUR SERVICE FREQUENCY ON ALL URBAN FIXED ROUTES DURING MIDDAY HOURS

The HART urban fixed route service operates every 30 minutes during the peak travel periods of 6 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. Buses in the midday (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) operate hourly.

The trolley operates Wednesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Major locations served include Danbury Hospital, Danbury Fair Mall, WCSU, Wooster Manor, and the Danbury Central Business District. The route is coordinated with the urban fixed route system to allow for a better service frequency during the midday to these high traffic locations. Funding is insufficient, however, for the trolley to operate more than three days per week.

Proposals made to ConnDOT via the federally mandated Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Planning (LOCHSTP) process would allow for 30 minute frequencies to major trip generators five days per week.

HART's interim goal is to provide improved midday service frequencies beginning with routes like the Trolley, but with the end goal to have 30 minute frequencies throughout the day on each of the 7 urban fixed routes.

GOAL 4: TO EXPAND RAIL FEEDER EXPRESS BUS SERVICES

HART operates three peak-period interstate shuttle services between points in Connecticut timed to the Harlem Line of MTA-Metro-North Railroad in New York State. Danbury-Brewster has operated the longest (since 1998).

Midday service to Brewster is provided via the 3 Mill Plain bus to provide at least some connection to the rail station during the midday, but this service is not timed to train arrivals and departures. The remaining rail feeder shuttles, Ridgefield-Katonah and New Fairfield-Southeast, have no service in the midday.

Closing the midday gap in service is a long term goal for all three services. A second goal is the development of additional parking locations along the shuttle routes. Danbury-Brewster and New Fairfield-Southeast both have adequate parking capacity, but commuter parking for users of Ridgefield-Katonah has been difficult to secure.

Shuttle services to stations on the Danbury Branch Line may be warranted as improvements are made to the rail line. Preliminary assessments of shuttle services are already completed for the Danbury Branch stations of Bethel, Branchville, Danbury and West Redding. These services could be funded as pilots through the Federal CMAQ program.

GOAL 5: TO DEVELOP EMPLOYER-BASED BUS TRANSIT SERVICE

The provision of employer subsidized transit services by HART has several benefits. First, the environmental and public safety benefits from the reduction of single occupant auto use and associated reduced congestion and fuel use. Secondly, HART benefits by spreading its overhead and indirect costs over additional programs thus helping to minimize cost increases to the public sector. Lastly, the entire Region benefits through the expansion of public transportation at no cost to the public sector.

Services geared to employers require innovation or flexibility not typical of traditional fixed route transit. Operation of such services, however, is not new in this Region:

- HART operated peak-period shuttles to major worksites along Old Ridgebury Road and Shelter Rock Road prior to the 1990 service upgrade.
- Before the creation of the Route 7 LINK, Danbury-Ridgefield bus service was partially subsidized by Ullman Devices, an employer on Route 7 near the Danbury/Ridgefield line.
- Limited service for Stop and Shop in Ridgefield ran as an adjunct to the Ridgefield LOOP program in early 2001.
- Incidental service was provided for a series of training sessions at Cendant Mobility (now Cartus).

Opportunities may exist for shuttle service from rail stations on the Danbury Branch Line to employment, should rail service be expanded according to plan. HART already examined this in some detail in a 2000 study of potential transit services to the Branch Line. Other opportunities exist between the Harlem Line and employment locations in The Reserve in western Danbury.

HART's goal is to identify new service opportunities and develop innovative funding options for private-sector participants. In this manner, employers can choose the options that best meet their needs.

3. DEMAND RESPONSE BUS CONDITIONS AND GOALS

The following section provides an overview of the existing conditions of the SweetHART demand response service. This section describes service characteristics, fare structure, and ridership, provides comparisons to other systems and describes current regional paratransit coordination efforts and goals.

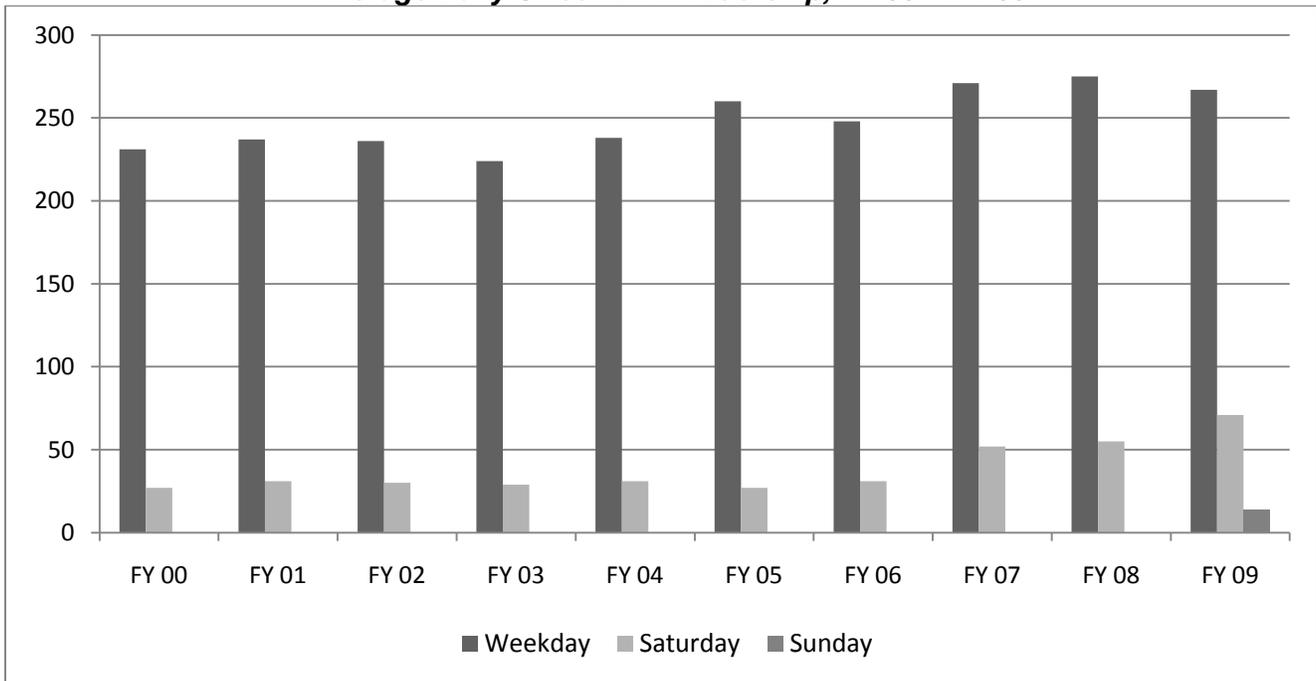
SweetHART service differs from fixed route in that routes vary from day to day depending upon the daily riders and demand for specific origins and destinations. Trips to medical appointments, therapy, work, senior centers and shopping are the most popular.

EXISTING CONDITIONS – SWEETHART DEMAND RESPONSE

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

HART provides demand response bus service to seniors aged 60 or older and persons with disabilities of any age through its SweetHART system. Door-to-door service is provided by SweetHART whereby passengers are picked up, usually at their homes, and taken to their destinations. Drivers assist passengers from the door of their pick-up point to the door of their destination on request. All SweetHART vehicles are wheelchair-accessible.

Average Daily SweetHART Ridership, FY 00 – FY 09



SweetHART ridership grew by 16% on weekdays and over 160% on Saturdays over the past ten years. Sunday ADA SweetHART service began in FY 2009.

There are two components to SweetHART, each with differing eligibility requirements. The programs are integrated operationally to the extent possible.

SweetHART dial-a-ride service is provided for seniors age 60 or older, or persons with any mobility disability. This service can be accessed in Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield, New Fairfield, Newtown, Ridgefield and Roxbury.

The majority of trips on SweetHART, approximately 90%, are made through the dial-a-ride component. Local investment is substantial and municipalities have a high degree of involvement in the provision of service. Policies and vehicle coverage vary by community.

ADA eligible SweetHART service is state funded to comply with federal regulations. The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) mandated that persons with disabilities unable to use fixed route buses be provided "complementary paratransit" service for their trips, assuming they meet the ADA-eligible definition.

For a trip to be considered ADA SweetHART eligible, both the origin and destination must be within 3/4 mile of a fixed route and the individual must be unable to use fixed route service due to a physical or cognitive impairment.

Other factors can make a trip ADA-eligible, i.e., if a wheelchair lift cannot be safely deployed at a stop, if a common wheelchair cannot be accommodated by the fixed route bus wheelchair lift, or if the interaction of the person's disability and architectural or environmental barriers prevents him or her from traveling to or from a bus stop.

ADA-eligible trips take priority on SweetHART over all other trips. The service is available where urban fixed route and LOOP services operate in Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield and New Milford.

SweetHART Hours of Operation

Municipality	Monday-Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Bethel	6:55 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.*	8:15 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.**	9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.**
Brookfield	8:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.*	8:15 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.**	9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.**
Danbury	6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.*	8:15 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.**	9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.**
New Fairfield	7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	8:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Not Available
New Milford	6:00 a.m. – 10:45 pm**	8:00 a.m. - 10:45 p.m.**	9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.**
Newtown	7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	8:15 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.	Not Available
Ridgefield	8:45 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.	Not Available	Not Available
Roxbury	9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (W)	Not Available	Not Available

*Service available for ADA trips from 6 a.m. to 10:45 p.m.

**ADA service only.

To use SweetHART, passengers must complete an eligibility application. The service is operated on a reservation basis whereby pickup requests must be phoned in by the passenger to the SweetHART scheduler. Most trips are reserved at least 24 hours in advance. There are limited provisions for same day rides.

Span of service varies. In the case of SweetHART dial-a-ride, service span depends on the number of vehicles available in any one municipality during a given part of each day. Where demand is higher, local governments have made the decision to fund more than one vehicle in that town or city. In the municipalities that have more than one vehicle available, the starting times of each vehicle are staggered to extend the span of service during the weekday or overlapped to provide more coverage when needed.

ADA SweetHART operates during the same service span as the HART fixed route system. ADA eligible Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield and New Milford passengers can access paratransit service weeknights, on Saturdays or on Sundays.

SweetHART dial-a-ride is generally available any weekday, except in Roxbury, where buses only run on Wednesday. Saturday service is available in New Fairfield and Newtown to all registered riders. Intratown service (within the borders of a particular town) is provided to each municipality in its service area, usually without restrictions.

Intertown service is provided between Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield, and New Milford for ADA-eligible passengers as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For passengers whose trips are not covered under ADA rules, intertown service policies vary by municipality. In general, service is available between contiguous towns if schedules permit. Many municipalities allow for service to non-adjacent towns for travel to major medical, rehab or shopping facilities. Others have policies that restrict the availability of intertown service in favor of local trips.

FARE STRUCTURE

A single one-way intratown trip on the SweetHART dial-a-ride service is 60 cents. Fares are an additional 15 cents for trips to another municipality.

All ADA-eligible trips are \$1.25, the same as the fixed route base fare (the state requires that ADA fares be at least equivalent to the fixed route base fare; most systems in Connecticut charge double the fixed route fare). Transfers to other buses are free. Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) for persons who are disabled and need assistance may ride free. Companions who are not PCAs pay the same fare as the passenger they accompany. Exact change is required for all fares.

Passengers may make two same day trip requests per month, based on availability. Fares for same day trips are \$3.

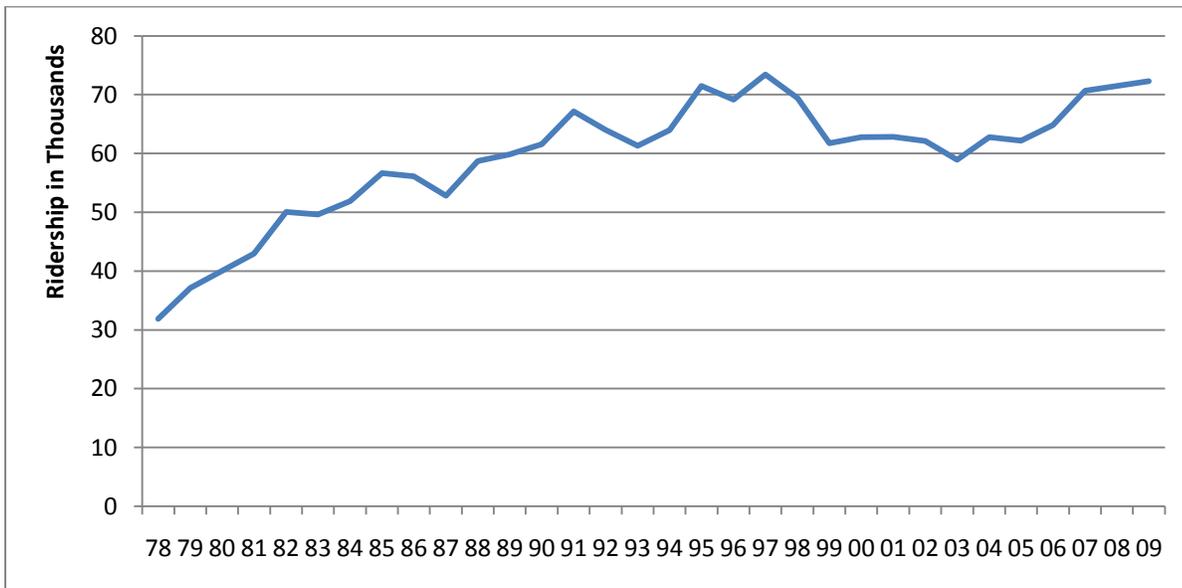
SweetHART provides one prepayment option, a ten-ride punch pass. Like the fixed route punch-pass, this pass is called a "Bye-Pass". Local passes can be purchased for \$5.50, Intertown passes are \$7, and ADA passes are \$11. Approximately 320 SweetHART Bye-Passes are sold per month.

ANNUAL RIDERSHIP HISTORY

SweetHART carried just over 30,000 trips annually in 1978, the first year of service. More towns joined the system through the late eighties/early nineties, and ridership doubled. From 1990 to 2006, hours of service remained fairly constant and ridership fluctuated between roughly 60 and 70 thousand annual trips.

Beginning in 2007, the state of Connecticut began the provision of funds to municipalities to operate dial-a-ride service, which allowed for a modest expansion in service. This new funding helped generate consistent annual ridership numbers of just over 70,000, about 250-270 trips per weekday, for the past three years.

HART Total Annual SweetHART Ridership, FY 78 – FY 09



Rider demographics and trip patterns have changed dramatically over the years and affected the number of rides provided. Trip length has increased substantially along with the number of trips made by wheelchair-bound passengers. If the amount of service remains constant, fewer riders can be accommodated as trip length grows. Additional time is also required to load and unload wheelchairs.

A second significant trend is growth in ridership of disabled workers on the SweetHART system relative to senior citizens. Seniors took the majority of trips until the early 1990's and the passage of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA opened up opportunities for access and employment for disabled persons, and these individuals have made more and more use of SweetHART. Seniors are living healthier and driving their own vehicles longer than in the past, which may be another factor in the demographic shift in the service.

Senior riders tend to ride over a limited term of years, after which they cease using the service. This may be reflected in the boom and bust pattern observed in the ridership data over the past 20 years.

Absent any service additions, disabled workers are likely to continue to consume a larger share of trips supplied by SweetHART in the next few years. Over time, the growing population of seniors may reverse this trend.

NATIONAL DEMAND RESPONSE SYSTEM COMPARISON

System comparisons are difficult for dial-a-ride as there is so much variability in provision of service among and between providers. The national peer group was originally chosen by consultants for the Connecticut DOT Statewide Bus System Study as similar-sized fixed route systems to HART serving approximately the same population size. The group includes Montachusett (MA), Cape Cod (MA), Muskegon (MI), Rochester (MN), Missoula (MT), Manchester (NH), Cleveland (OH) and Westmoreland County, PA. The table uses data from the 2007 National Transit Database report for demand response.

SweetHART National System Peer Analysis

System	Ridership	Operating Cost	Annual Hours	Cost/pass.	Cost/hour	Cost/mi.	Pass/hr.	Pass/mi.
HART	70,685	\$1,656,772	30,619	\$23.44	\$54.11	\$3.97	2.31	0.17
Fitchburg, MA	378,586	\$4,884,105	120,729	\$12.90	\$40.46	\$3.70	3.14	0.29
Cape Cod, MA	359,181	\$6,262,482	131,032	\$17.44	\$47.79	\$2.51	2.74	0.14
Muskegon, MI	14,215	\$397,381	8,520	\$27.96	\$46.64	\$3.16	1.67	0.11
Rochester, MN	37,941	\$621,976	12,211	\$16.39	\$50.94	\$3.53	3.11	0.22
Missoula, MT	21,891	\$499,120	10,984	\$22.80	\$45.44	\$4.11	1.99	0.18
Manchester, NH	11,688	\$434,186	6,758	\$37.15	\$64.25	\$11.96	1.73	0.16
Cleveland, OH	346,236	\$7,745,491	137,554	\$22.37	\$56.31	\$3.02	2.52	0.14
Westmoreland, PA	4,754	\$195,010	1,867	\$41.02	\$104.45	\$4.42	2.55	0.11
MEAN	138,353	\$2,521,836	51,142	\$24.89	\$56.71	\$4.49	2.42	0.17

There is a much greater range of service provision among these peers than appears on the fixed route side, with ridership ranging from 4,754 in Westmoreland, PA to over 370,000 in Fitchburg, MA.

While an ADA paratransit system is required where fixed route is provided, a given fixed route operator does not necessarily run the ADA paratransit component in their community. Further, non ADA dial-a-ride operations are largely dependent on local investment.

HART operates 40% less service than the group mean of 51,142 hours at a cost 34% lower than average. HART’s cost per passenger, cost per hour, passengers per hour and passengers per mile are within 7% of the mean. HART’s cost per mile is 12% lower than the group mean.

Variation in productivity (passengers per hour) is very small among all systems regardless of investment, ranging between 1.73 to 3.14 passengers per hour. The nature of demand-response service limits the number of passengers that can be carried per vehicle.

DEMAND RESPONSE COMPARISON IN THE CONNECTICUT- NEW YORK REGION

The variation between regional peers is lower than the variation between peers selected nationally by fixed route service area and population. This is opposite to what is seen when peer analysis is undertaken for fixed route service.

Among regional providers, HART operates at a cost of 21% below the mean and provides 19% fewer hours than average among the systems shown. HART provides service at the third lowest cost per hour and with the third highest passengers per hour among the group. The range in productivity is even less among regional peers than nationally; between 1.30 and 2.74 passengers per hour.

Norwich, which is most similar to HART when considering fixed route operations, operates only a small paratransit service. CT TRANSIT’s fixed route operations in Stamford, New Haven and Hartford, rely on regional transit districts to coordinate the ADA paratransit or dial-a-ride services in their service area, and do not provide any demand response service.

Bridgeport’s and Danbury’s paratransit systems are most similar among this group (and are least similar in terms of fixed route operations). Bridgeport operates about 1700 fewer annual hours than HART with 11% more annual passengers, but at an additional annual cost of over \$310 thousand.

SweetHART Regional System Peer Analysis

System	Ridership	Operating Cost	Annual Hours	Cost/pass.	Cost/hour	Cost/mi.	Pass/hr.	Pass/mi.
HART	70,685	\$1,656,772	30,619	\$23.44	\$54.11	\$3.97	2.31	0.17
Bridgeport	79,436	\$1,970,110	28,925	\$24.80	\$68.11	\$4.70	2.75	0.19
Waterbury	92,827	\$2,622,808	47,849	\$28.25	\$54.81	\$4.38	1.94	0.15
Norwalk	86,023	\$2,850,167	49,152	\$33.13	\$57.99	\$6.90	1.75	0.19
Middletown	26,369	\$396,145	12,901	\$15.02	\$30.71	\$3.00	2.04	0.19
Milford	60,441	\$1,078,841	22,432	\$17.85	\$48.09	\$3.20	2.69	0.18
New Haven	288,129	\$7,654,498	138,338	\$26.57	\$55.33	\$4.53	2.08	0.17
Norwich	2,716	\$115,928	2,091	\$42.68	\$55.44	\$3.46	1.30	0.08
Putnam Co., NY	13,441	\$457,958	7,151	\$34.07	\$64.04	\$3.91	1.88	0.11
MEAN	80,007	\$2,089,247	37,718	\$27.31	\$54.29	\$4.23	2.08	0.16

VEHICLES

HART operates twenty-two 2006 and 2007 model year Star-trans Body on Chassis buses in SweetHART service. These buses are purchased with a range of seating plans to accommodate eight to 14 ambulatory passengers. The eight seat buses have three wheelchair positions; all other configurations allow for two wheelchairs. The different configurations are deployed based on operational needs.

All buses are equipped with sliding tinted windows, ADA complaint wheelchair lifts and securement systems, climate control, security cameras and AVL tracking systems.

REGIONAL PARATRANSIT COORDINATION

During the past five years, HART participated in a number of efforts toward the coordination of paratransit services within the Housatonic Valley Region.

- HART manages the Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (LOCHSTP) process for the Region. LOCHSTP is a required program under federal SAFTEA-LU transportation legislation. It brings together public participation and members of social service and public and private transportation providers to develop plans to serve unmet travel needs, improve the quality and accessibility of services, and eliminate duplicative services through coordination. The regional LOCHSTP process prioritizes funding proposals under the Federal New Freedoms program for service improvement to persons with disabilities. These regional proposals are in turn prioritized at the state level by ConnDOT for funding.
- HART coordinates the submission of regional applications and reporting for state 13b-38bb municipal dial-a-ride funds. The municipal dial-a-ride program is available to all municipalities through ConnDOT. HART coordinates the application and quarterly reporting process to the state for municipalities where it provides SweetHART. Until Redding acquired its own vehicle, HART provided accessible transportation for the town under this program. Also as part of this program, HART passes through funds to the New Milford office (and, formerly, the Danbury office) of the American Red Cross, which provides transportation for medical appointments in New Milford.
- HART holds regular paratransit advisory committee meetings. This group, made up of senior center directors, municipal agents and social service agency personnel, advises HART on a variety of service and planning issues related to the provision of SweetHART. The group includes organizations such as the Town of New Milford and Ability Beyond Disability that operate their own dial-a-ride programs.
- HART is responsible for the solicitation and review of federal section 5310 van grants for the Housatonic Region. This program provides grants-in-aid to municipalities and non-profit organizations for the purchase of accessible vehicles for senior and disabled transportation. HART provides support to prospective grantees during the application process.

Grant submissions are prioritized by HART based on ConnDOT's scoring criteria, and then recommended for endorsement by HVCEO. Successful applicants in recent years have included the Towns of New Milford, Redding and Sherman, City of Danbury and Ability Beyond Disability.

- Maintenance and fueling agreements have been executed with EDUCATION CONNECTION (a non-profit paratransit service for special-needs children) with an office in Danbury, and Henry Abbott Vocational Technical School, also in Danbury. Twelve of EDUCATION CONNECTION's 52 vehicles are regularly fueled and maintained by HART. However, any of these 52 vehicles may receive service, particularly major repairs, from HART from time to time. A similar

agreement is in place between HART and Henry Abbott Tech to maintain six small buses.

The primary benefit of such service agreements is that non-profit agencies such as EDUCATION CONNECTION can take advantage of the service and maintenance expertise available from HART at a reasonable cost. Further, qualified non-profit agencies can take advantage of HART's tax exemption on fuel thus saving even more. HART benefits from the agreements by earning revenues that can cover indirect costs incurred by the transit district and can qualify as match for federal grants.

DEMAND RESPONSE (SWEETHART) BUS SYSTEM GOALS

GOAL 1: TO SECURE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE OPERATION OF EXISTING SERVICES AND THEIR EXPANSION

The SweetHART program has enjoyed consistent funding from local and federal sources with some new funds coming in at the state level in the past few years. These funding sources, however, are constrained, and place limits on how much service can be provided. At this point, demand outstrips capacity.

The senior and disabled population in the Housatonic Region is expected to grow by about 10,000 people by 2015, according to the State Office of Policy and Management. As this cohort grows, the rest of the population may grow as well. If the population within the Region's urbanized area exceeds 200 thousand, HART could lose access to federal operating funds. Federal funds support roughly 40% of the service provision and their loss would be a significant setback to the SweetHART program.

On the positive side, the State of Connecticut began support of municipal dial-a-ride programs with the implementation of the 13b-38bb program. The Federal New Freedoms program may be another avenue for operational funding.

Ideally, additional SweetHART service should move towards regionalism, rather than allocating vehicles by municipality. Regional services would have greater flexibility in meeting ridership demands throughout the service area. Scheduling on regional vehicles is also more efficient because they can transport passengers that may be at common origins or in close proximity but have different towns of residence.

GOAL 2: TO IMPROVE COORDINATION AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SWEETHART PROGRAM

HART constantly reviews the provision of service to increase productivity levels. Technology has provided some opportunity for improved coordination – automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems are now installed on all SweetHART vehicles, and scheduling software is highly sophisticated, allowing for a high degree of automation in the trip scheduling process.

Spurred by the 2008 SweetHART Operational Analysis, internal discussions led to the implementation of modifications to scheduling procedures to limit call waiting time and increase system productivity in summer 2009.

Other changes to the reservation system included the implementation of standing booking requests, which eliminate the need for a call for regularly scheduled trips, allowance of same day trips, and limitation on the allowance for unscheduled return or “will-call” trips.

The results of the modifications will be closely monitored to see if further changes are in order.

GOAL 3: CONTINUED COMPLIANCE WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE AS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The ADA imposed a number of legal requirements on transit systems across the nation. Full compliance with the transit related provisions was mandated by January 1997. Six paratransit service criteria are identified by ADA for compliance including: fares, trip purposes, response times, capacity constraints, service area and comparable days and hours of service. These criteria were set to make this type of paratransit service as comparable as possible to fixed route services.

HART achieved full compliance with the six ADA service criteria in January, 1996. Since FY 1994, an annual apportionment from the State Department of Transportation has allowed for the provision of complementary ADA paratransit service. HART’s fleet is currently 100% accessible with ADA compliant lifts.

HART's goal is to maintain compliance with ADA regulations moving forward. As the disabled community has become accustomed to using HART services and workplaces have become accessible, more trips are being made. It may be necessary for HART to seek other funding sources if demand for ADA trips outstrips available funds in order to remain in compliance.

GOAL 4: TO PROVIDE A WELL BALANCED RIDER EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

HART seeks to address two areas within this goal. First, to increase awareness of the availability of the SweetHART program to eligible residents. Second, to provide better communication with existing riders so that they can make the most of the service that is provided.

HART makes an effort to create open lines of communication with the riders through public meetings at different senior centers in the area.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) could also be utilized to improve communication with riders. Currently 20% of SweetHART riders use email on a regular basis. As time progresses, it is likely that these numbers will increase.

Email could be a useful tool in communicating holiday schedules or the news that a snow route is in effect to persons able to access a computer or cell phone. This could cut down on the number of information seeking phone calls to the scheduling office and allow for greater efficiency.

HART anticipates funds to produce a guidebook for dial-a-ride services in the Region that would detail the variations in SweetHART service by municipality as well as non-HART operated dial a ride programs.

4. MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT COORDINATION

Intercity bus service between Danbury and other cities and regions is provided by private, for-profit carriers. This section provides information on the two carriers providing scheduled inter-regional service in Danbury, and multimodal goals for the region.

INVENTORY OF INTERCITY BUS SERVICES

PETER PAN BUS LINES

Intercity bus service is provided between New York City, Danbury and Hartford by Peter Pan Bus Lines. [Peter Pan Bus Lines](#) is the largest privately owned intercity bus company in the nation. The company operates 400 buses which serve more than 100 cities in the northeast and Mid-Atlantic States. Peter Pan and Greyhound have a joint venture called BOLT Bus that provides a highly discounted bus service. BOLT Buses travel between New York City and Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC, and Baltimore.

Peter Pan operates large, over the road coach buses. The vehicles, typical for those used in long distance bus service, are equipped with high backed seats and amenities including television, Wi-Fi, and lavatories.

The company provides seven daily trips Monday-Thursday, and Sunday Saturday from Hartford to Danbury, and eight on Fridays and Sundays. From Danbury to Hartford, seven daily trips are provided Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with an eighth on Friday and Sunday.

Between New York City and Danbury, eight trips are provided in each direction Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with an extra bus on Friday and Sunday.

Other stops made on the Hartford to New York line allow trips between Danbury, Southbury, Waterbury, and Farmington. A stop in Newtown on Church Hill Road off Exit 10 of I-84 was discontinued many years ago but is proposed for reinstatement as part of regional transportation plans.

This line also provides part-time service between Danbury, Manchester, Willimantic, Danielson, and Providence, Rhode Island. Connections to other intercity services are possible through any other carrier serving the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City, the South Station Bus terminal in Boston, or Union Station in Hartford.

Fare Structure

Peter Pan riders pay a distance-based fare structure depending on origin and destination. Fares between Danbury and New York City are \$20 one way, \$37 per round trip. Fares between Danbury and Waterbury are \$13 one way, \$25 round trip. Discount books of 10 or 20 tickets are available for commuters. Other fare savings programs are established for students, children, military personnel and seniors.

CONNECTICUT LIMO

[Connecticut Limo](#) is a private, for-profit carrier providing scheduled intercity bus service between 18 major cities in the southwestern quarter of Connecticut and southern New York to airports in the New York Metropolitan Area. Most stops are located at hotels or existing transit terminals.

Connecticut Limo stops at the Danbury Maron hotel on Lake Avenue seven times per day and provides service to Kennedy and LaGuardia Airports according to a scheduled timetable. With the exception of service to Bradley Airport (not available from the Housatonic Region), all service provided by Connecticut Limousine is interstate.

The company has multiple stops in Connecticut and New York where passenger's board for travel to the airports, but no service is provided between pick up locations.

Fare Structure

Regular one way fares to JFK or LaGuardia from Danbury are \$79, Round trip fares are \$154.

Connecticut Limo provides a host of promotional round trip fares for its passengers. Companions ride at 50% of the cost of the regular fare when accompanied by a full fare paying passenger. Children under 14 ride free when accompanied by an adult (limit of 2 children; children 2 and under ride free even if one way trip). Other discounts apply to seniors age 65 or older, students and online reservations.

MULTI-MODAL COORDINATION GOALS

GOAL 1: TO IMPROVE THE CONNECTIVITY OF HART SERVICES WITH OTHER TRANSPORTATION MODES IN THE REGION

The decentralized nature of the Housatonic Valley Region means that many wishing to use public transportation must travel between modes. Minimizing the barriers between modes in terms of fares, schedules and ease of transfer makes such travel more convenient, and increases the likelihood of traveler's leaving their cars and using public transportation.

HART has made connectivity with other systems a major focus in the last ten years, and was recognized for this with a national award by the Community Transportation Association of America in 2009.

Rail shuttle services timed to meet trains for commuters have been instituted at the Brewster, Southeast and Katonah Stations of the MTA Metro-North Railroad's Harlem Line.

In conjunction with the implementation of these services, transfer agreements were established with connecting systems to allow for continuous trips between systems without the need for additional fares.

A general goal for all these connecting routes is to reduce the midday gap in service. These bus routes were conceived as peak period only commuter shuttles. The Danbury-Brewster Shuttle, operating since 1998, operates some level of service throughout the day. Ridgefield-Katonah service ceases at approximately 8:24 a.m., with no service until approximately 5 p.m.

New Fairfield-Southeast Shuttle operates until about 7:43 a.m., and service resumes in the evening at roughly 5:50 p.m.

As expansion plans on the Danbury Branch Line move forward, HART will continue to monitor them and the need for connecting bus services to new and existing Branch Line stations.

HART looks to adopt a standard fare and pass structure used at other systems as electronic fare collection becomes the norm. The goal is not to create a unique fare structure when this new technology becomes available.

GOAL 2: TO IMPROVE MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIONS TO NEARBY MAJOR URBAN CENTERS IN CONNECTICUT

In 2002, HART and the Norwalk Transit District began operation of the Danbury-Norwalk Route 7 LINK. The service operates Between Norwalk and Danbury, with connections to the major bus transfer station in both cities, as well as to the Danbury Branch Line in Branchville and Merritt 7.

HART completed the report "[Expanding Bus Transit to Bridgeport and Waterbury](#)" in 2007 that proposed the addition of service to Peter Pan's service between Danbury and Waterbury, including a stop in Newtown.

The study proposed the restoration of public transit between Danbury and Bridgeport that would link the two bus systems, and provide a direct connection to the railroad station in Bridgeport on the New Haven Line. This service would be operated like the Norwalk LINK service, with the Greater Bridgeport Transit and HART systems running the route together.

The study proposed the creation of a unified intercity bus/local bus fare media to allow for easier transfers between the Peter Pan intercity service and local systems in Waterbury and Danbury.

A state subsidy for additional Peter Pan trips to provide better connectivity between the cities of Waterbury and Danbury was also recommended. A stop in Newtown could create a linkage between the proposed Danbury-Bridgeport and Danbury-Waterbury services.

GOAL 3: TO INSTALL BICYCLE RACKS AT HART FACILITIES AND KEY STOPS

HART has installed [Sportworks](#) Bicycle racks on its fixed route transit vehicles. Installation began in 2001, and 90% of HART transit buses are now equipped with bicycle racks. HART developed some simple informational materials on using the racks to explain the use of the devices to riders. There are no special fees to use the rack systems.

To further encourage use of bicycles, HART will complete an analysis and implement where feasible the installation of stationary bike racks/storage at the HART Pulse Point, HART operations facility and other key stops.

GOAL 4: IMPROVE BUS STOP SIGNAGE AND INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

A public accustomed to convenient high-quality information available through the internet, television and print media has little patience for calling multiple transit authorities for transit information and poorly marked transit locations. HART's goal is to enhance multi-modal travel through better public information.

The states of New York and Connecticut have a long term project to develop an internet-based system called [trips123](#) to provide point to point customized information for users of transportation in the New York metropolitan area. Google Transit provides a trip planner that is in use in the New York City region, although it is not yet active for destinations in Connecticut.

Although these systems are only partially operational in the Housatonic Region, HART is supportive of this long term effort to provide web-based trip information.

Websites have been developed by both the states of New York and Connecticut - [CTrides](#) and [NYrides.com](#) - to provide travel information across jurisdictions and modes. HART has participated in and will continue to support these efforts.

On the ground, HART's goal is to complete replacement of downed bus stop signs annually, and install displays with route specific information at key stops.

5. HART ADMINISTRATION AND CAPITAL PLAN

HART ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

HART was organized as a public transit district under the provisions of Chapter 103a of Connecticut General Statutes. HART's roots go back to 1972, when the Danbury-Bethel Transit District was established by public referendum to restore bus service in Danbury and Bethel.

The region was without local bus transit service since 1967, when the ABC Bus Company which replaced the Candlewood Bus Company only a few months before, ceased operations. The first local bus transit operator in the area, Danbury Power & Transportation Company, operated bus services in Danbury and Bethel from 1926 to 1965.

From 1973 to 1977 the Danbury-Bethel Transit District operated four fixed routes with 90 minute frequencies. The transit district was then directly administered by HVCEO staff.

A Transit Development Program (TDP) study in 1977 formed the basis to improve frequencies that year to 45 minutes and the development of an elderly/handicapped demand response system, implemented in 1982.

In 1979 after the addition of municipal members, the transit district became known as HART and shortly thereafter hired a part time Executive Director to oversee operations.

In 1982, HART was staffed separately from the HVCEO and hired a full time Executive Director to assume responsibility for day-to-day operations of the district. New fixed route vehicles were acquired and the fixed route structure was expanded to seven routes as recommended by the 1977 TDP.

Through the years, six other towns joined the now eight member transit district. HART is governed by a Board of Directors with one or two representatives (based on population) from each of the member municipalities appointed by the Mayor or First Selectman. The primary function of the Board of Directors is policy decision-making for the transit district.

HART is staffed by 98 full and part time employees including 68 drivers, 2 schedulers, 6 mechanics, 4 service persons, 1 facilities maintenance person, 10 administrative/office employees, 5 operations supervisors, 1 training supervisor, and 1 customer service representative. Drivers and schedulers are organized under Local 1622 of the [Amalgamated Transit Union](#).

For more information about the background of the district, [a comprehensive History of Public Transit in Greater Danbury](#) is located on the HVCEO website.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION GOALS

On a broad level, HART established a mission statement for the transit district several years ago that serves to focus all goals. That mission is "To serve the mobility needs of the residents of the Housatonic Region in a safe, reliable, clean, effective and efficient manner, consistent with the fiscal framework outlined by Federal, State and Local governments."

GOAL 1: TO SEEK ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES AND EXAMINE INTERNAL PROCESSES FOR COST SAVINGS

A current great need in the organization is the ability to maintain service levels in a climate of reduced transit funding. As far back as 1997, HART completed a HVCEO sponsored alternative transit financing study. The study examined current alternative financing practices at HART, statewide and nationally.

HART has historically looked to new and alternate funding sources including maintenance contracts with on-profit organizations, vehicle advertising, and sale of surplus equipment. Federal rules regarding competition with the private sector, such as those that govern charter bus work, can make this difficult. However, HART is committed to continue to work in this area within FTA guidelines.

Most recently, HART has broadened its funding base to include new programs under the Governor's Initiative and anticipates funding for projects under the federal New Freedoms program.

Internally, HART has a process of identifying more cost effective ways of doing business throughout the operational structure of the agency. This includes everything from small procurements to restructuring run assignments and administrative positions. Admin staff has decreased to nine full time and one part time position from a high of 15 full time positions in the early 1990's. During the same period, service increased from seven to 15 bus routes.

HART's goal is to develop alternative revenue sources and continue the evaluation of internal processes for cost savings.

GOAL 2: TO CONTINUE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HART SYSTEM SAFETY AND SECURITY PLAN

The System Safety and Security Plan is a regulatory component instituted by FTA after the events of September 11. Plans were mandated for the larger transit systems and strongly suggested for systems the size of HART. Regulations require HART to report safety and security statistics to FTA on a monthly basis.

This plan is now actively implemented. Exercises are completed on a regular basis with emergency responders such as City of Danbury and Town of Brookfield police. The plan includes an emergency response plan that addresses the role of HART for emergency evacuations and major incident support.

HART provides support for actual emergencies in the City of Danbury about twice per year. Events including extreme temperatures, fires, bomb threats and storms have required the commitment of HART resources.

HART is an active participant in the development and implementation of regional transportation plans for Region 5 of the Department of Homeland Security (DEMHS). The transportation support function, known as Regional Emergency Support Function -1, develops and implements a system of resources and response capabilities that facilitate communication and coordination among regional jurisdictions and agencies concerning transportation issues and activities during a major disaster in the Region.

GOAL 3: TO FURTHER DEVELOP OPERATIONAL SERVICE STANDARDS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Standards were developed in 1994 for on-time performance, mileage intervals between road calls and preventive accidents, vehicle cleanliness, vehicle climate control operability, repair and cleaning of passenger shelters, cost recovery of service, passengers carried per hour and passengers carried per mile, and travel time on both fixed route and SweetHART.

These standards are now monitored by operations and service development staff, and with the assistance of “mystery riders” provided by outside contractors, on-board camera systems and automatic vehicle location systems.

GOAL 4: TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A WELL-BALANCED TRAINING PROGRAM FOR DRIVERS, MECHANICS, SCHEDULERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

HART has an ongoing training program and employs an in-house training supervisor. This training program includes elements such as wheelchair lift and securement procedures; emergency accident procedures; sexual harassment; substance abuse training; sensitivity to the needs of seniors and disabled persons; customer service training; on-time performance training; winter weather driving techniques and stress management.

Other training elements include a 20 day new hire training program and a retraining element for drivers in need of additional safety instruction due to accidents or other reasons.

Regular training through outside organizations includes telephone courtesies; paratransit scheduling software; drug and alcohol testing procedures, Employee Assistance Program and training modules for mechanics on vehicle subsystems.

HARTs goal is to continue internal training, and seek outside support where necessary and financially feasible for external training opportunities for the various employees of the agency.

GOAL 5: TO PROVIDE FOR A CONTINUING AND COMPREHENSIVE TRANSIT PLANNING PROCESS

HART staff has completed numerous planning studies examining many diverse transit-related issues in the Housatonic Valley Region. These projects are developed in cooperation with HVCEO staff at least annually, and are primarily funded through the HVCEO. The studies have paved the way for the improvement of existing services and the creation of new ones.

Recent planning work includes:

- Fixed Route Efficiency Study (2005)
- Harlem Line Shuttle Bus Study (2006)
- Expanding Bus Transit to Bridgeport and Waterbury (2007)
- History of Bus Transit in the Housatonic Valley Region (2007)
- SweetHART Comprehensive Operational Analysis (2008)

HART Staff also serves as the coordinating entity for the regional Locally Coordinated Human Services transportation Plan (LOCHSTP), assists HVCEO in the provision of the Section 5310 van grant program, state dial a ride grants, translation services, access to jobs transportation,

and serves on advisory committees for regional studies such as the Danbury Branch Line Electrification Study.

FTA encourages close collaboration between MPO's and transit districts and HART's goal is to continue this positive relationship with HVCEO. HVCEO is also enthused about maintaining the relationship.

GOAL 6: CONTINUE A MARKET RESEARCH PROGRAM TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC TARGET MARKETS AND USER NEEDS

The 1995 Market Research Study was the first formal step in identifying target markets, with income, auto ownership, and level of education identified as primary differentials between those who do and do not use transit. By continuing to develop an accurate profile of HART's current and potential consumer base, management can make better and more informed decisions on the strategies to employ in its marketing plans.

HART instituted several follow-up surveys over the past five years, notably that undertaken for the 2008 SweetHART Comprehensive Operational Analysis.

During the initial phase of the implementation of job access LOOP routes, HART surveyed passengers, potential users and employers to help determine the best application of these new services. Follow up surveys are implemented annually.

HART has employed surveys as a standard methodology with respect to development of connecting services to the MTA Metro-North Railroad, most recently in the Harlem Line Shuttle study of 2006. HART has also made use of demographic and preference data generated by Metro-North and ConnDOT to gauge awareness and plan and implement bus-rail shuttle services.

HART FIVE YEAR CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

1: REPLACE 32 BODY-ON-CHASSIS LIGHT DUTY BUSES

HART operates a fleet of 35 small light duty buses, presently ranging in age from one to six years old. HART's goal is to plan for scheduled replacement of each small bus after five years of use to ensure efficient operation service. Small buses may occasionally be retained beyond the five year replacement cycle depending on service needs.

Twelve Startrans Supreme buses are due for replacement in 2011; 11 are scheduled for replacement in 2012 and nine in 2013. HART will replace these vehicles through the federal Section 5307 grant process.

2: REPLACE TEN 35' HEAVY DUTY TRANSIT BUSES

HART operates 27 heavy duty transit buses including ten 2007 Gillig 35-foot buses, ten 2000 Orion V thirty-five-foot buses, One 2003 Orion VII 35' bus and two 2000 40' New Flyer low floor transit buses. Three 1995 RTS vehicles replaced in 2000 remain on the roster and are used as spares.

The newer Gillig vehicles are used throughout a typical service day on runs that extend from 6:00 a.m. to 6:40 p.m. The Orion vehicles are used on split runs that operate primarily in the

morning and afternoon peak periods. New Flyer buses are used exclusively for regional service to Norwalk.

HART's goal is to provide for scheduled replacement of the Orion V buses after they reach 12 years of age in FY 2012. Replacement vehicles will all be fully accessible to persons with disabilities and will include wheelchair ramps and tiedowns. Other standard equipment will be specified for replacements including radios, electronic fareboxes, camera systems, air conditioning, kneeling feature, and electronic destination signs.

All bus replacements will be funded through the Section 5307 grant process.

3: FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

The rehabilitation and expansion of the HART Operations center, located on 62 Federal Road in Danbury was completed in 1998. Normal wear and tear requires a continued program of maintenance, which HART has in place.

Midway through the next five years, it is anticipated that the Pulse Point facility will require more substantial rehabilitation. Masonry and concrete work may be required and modification for the installation of bicycle parking could be included.

HART's goal is to complete a needs assessment for major facility repairs and upgrades and complete the schedule of improvements. Funds for these capital improvements will be provided through the Section 5307 program.

4: PURCHASE AND INSTALL BUS STOP SIGNS AND PASSENGER SHELTERS

As recommended in the 1986, 1990 and 1993 TDP's, HART established signed bus stops throughout the fixed route system in FY 1994. Each location was identified by an aluminum sign mounted on a U-channel sign post. HART purchased all equipment and contracted for sign installation. Replacement of damaged signs and other ongoing maintenance have been performed in-house and with the aid of contractors. Road widening projects on Route 7 in Brookfield and New Milford and Route 6 in Danbury are requiring larger-scale replacement and may require purchase of additional stock.

Shelter repair is also an ongoing expense as units age, are vandalized and eventually require replacement.

All capital and installation costs will be funded from federal and state grants.

5: PROVIDE FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF SMALL CAPITAL EQUIPMENT

A number of small capital purchases over the next five years including maintenance equipment, office equipment, and bus support equipment are programmed over the next five years.

Maintenance's capital needs include supervisor vehicles, service vehicles, radio transmitters and repeaters, facility state of good repair, and engine and transmission rebuilds for the Gillig fixed route buses.

Office equipment is comprised of computer hardware and software, copiers and other office support equipment.

Bus support equipment needs include replacement of fixed route and paratransit bus communications equipment.

HART's goal is to provide for the regular replacement of various small capital equipment items as they reach the end of their useful lives.

The cost of these replacements will be borne by the Section 5307 capital program.

6. APPENDIX

USEFUL TRANSIT RELATED WEB LINKS

1000 FRIENDS OF CONNECTICUT

www.1000friends-ct.org/

1000 Friends of Connecticut is a statewide organization whose mission is to promote and shape growth to ensure a prosperous economy, a healthy natural environment, and distinctive, integrated and attractive communities while promoting opportunities in education, housing, transportation, and employment for ourselves and future generations.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

www.ctaa.org

CTAA is a national, professional membership association of organizations and individuals committed to removing barriers to isolation and to improving mobility for all people. CTAA conducts research, provides technical assistance, offers educational programs and serves as an advocate in order to make coordinated community transportation available, affordable and accessible.

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION

www.cact.info

The Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT) provides a statewide forum for the exchange of public transportation information; advocates for public transportation and public transportation customers at the local, state, and federal levels; provides training and technical assistance to members; serves as a vehicle for the collection and exchange of information of public transportation interest; and encourages the efficient and effective use of all available public transportation vehicles.

CONNECTICUT CITIZENS TRANSPORTATION LOBBY

www.ct-ctl.org

The Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby is a group of concerned citizens working to improve transportation in Connecticut. With both long and short range goals, they work on all facets of the problem including rail, bus, highway and Long Island Sound barge traffic.

CONNECTICUT COMMUTER SERVICES

www.ctrides.com

The Connecticut bus and rail transportation system consists of two commuter rail lines, three branch lines, eight CTTRANSIT bus divisions, and fourteen active transit districts. Complementary paratransit services, mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) are provided in all areas with fixed route services.

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
BUREAU OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=1386&dotPNavCtr=%7C&q=259356

The Bureau is responsible for overall coordination of bus and rail transit as well as ridesharing in the state. The mission of the DOT is to provide a safe, efficient and cost-effective transportation system that meets the mobility needs of its users.

DOT directly funds the majority of the bus and rail passenger services through private operators and transit districts and provides the local match for most capital equipment. The Office of Rail is responsible for the management of the New Haven Line and Shoreline East.

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=2314&q=259240

The commission advises and assists the DOT commissioner, the Governor and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly on the planning, development and maintenance of adequate rail, bus and motor carrier facilities and rail, bus and other public transportation services, including services for seniors and disabled users. The commission holds public hearings annually throughout the State to evaluate the adequacy of rail, bus, motor carrier and other public transportation facilities and produces an annual report with recommendations for improvement.

CONNECTICUT RAIL COMMUTER COUNCIL

www.trainweb.org/ct

The Connecticut Rail Commuter Council acts as a liaison between riders and ConnDOT, Metro-North, and Shore Line East railroads and advises the legislature regarding commuter issues. Members are appointed by the state legislature and must be rail users.

CONNECTICUT TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY BOARD

http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=3005&Q=385366&opmNav_GID=1810

In 2001, Public Act 01-5 of the June Special Session "An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Transportation Strategy Board" was passed by the Connecticut General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Rowland. The Act created a fifteen member permanent Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board (TSB). The TSB makes recommendations on the provision of all modes of transportation to the Governor and General Assembly.

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)

www.fta.dot.gov

FTA is responsible for regulation and oversight of public transportation nationally. The agency provides grants and cooperative agreements for operation of transit services and for the purchase of capital equipment. The New England regional office of FTA is located in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

JOBLINKS

www.joblinksct.com

JobLinks is Northwest Connecticut's transportation network offering both new and enhanced bus routes in Greater Waterbury, the Housatonic Valley region, and Torrington. The program makes it possible for people to get to jobs in areas that were

not served by public transportation. JobLinks provides specific bus routes, and has improved existing services by extending hours or making some routes longer.

Other services are offered to help people get to work, such as gas cards, Car based Solutions – (which helps eligible commuters pay for repairs and fees), evening reservation, and childcare reservation services.

KENNEDY CENTER MOBILITY SERVICES PROGRAM

www.thekennedycenterinc.org/services-participating/mobility.php

The Kennedy Center is a not-for-profit rehabilitation agency supporting more than 1,500 children and adults with disabilities with vocational, residential, educational, therapeutic, social and recreational programs throughout the State of Connecticut.

The mobility services program offers free travel training for persons with disabilities as well as training and educational programs related to the mobility of disabled persons and public transit. HART provides office space for the Housatonic Region travel training staff.

METROPOOL

www.metropool.com

MetroPool is a private, non-profit corporation whose primary function is to improve commuter mobility in southwestern Connecticut and the lower Hudson Valley region of New York. MetroPool works with employers, commuters, transit agencies and municipalities, as well as the states of Connecticut and New York, to promote carpooling, vanpooling, train, bus, bicycling, walking, telecommuting, and alternative work hour programs. MetroPool is based in Stamford, with a satellite office for the Housatonic Region located in the HART operations facility.

MTA METRO-NORTH RAILROAD

www.mta.info/mnr/index.html

Metro-North Commuter Railroad operates rail service between New York City and Connecticut and the lower Hudson Valley of New York. Two rail lines, the Danbury Branch of the New Haven Line and the Harlem Line in nearby New York State are accessible to residents of the Housatonic Region.

NURIDE

www.nuride.com

NuRide is an online community where members are rewarded for using alternative forms of transportation such as carpooling, vanpooling, biking, walking, telecommuting or public transit. NuRide is free to join and free to use and is supported by sponsors who reward NuRide members with product discounts and coupons for their alternate commute.

NYRIDES

www.nyrides.com

The NY Rides website provides information, maps and links to transportation services including bus, rail, vanpooling, carpooling and ferries in New York's lower Hudson Valley region.

PERMANENT CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE MTA (PCAC)

www.pcac.org

The Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee is the coordinating body and funding mechanism for the three riders councils created by the New York State Legislature in 1981: the Long Island Rail Road Commuters Council (LIRRCC); the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC); and the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC). The councils were created to give users of MTA subway, bus, and commuter rail services a say in the formulation and implementation of MTA policy and to hold the MTA Board and management accountable to riders.

TELECOMMUTE CONNECTICUT

www.telecommutect.org

Telecommute Connecticut! is a state-wide initiative providing free assistance to employers in the development and implementation of telecommuting as a worksite alternative.

TRANSIT FOR CONNECTICUT

ctenvironment.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=246&Itemid=52

Transit for Connecticut is coordinated by the New Haven-based Connecticut Fund for the Environment. The coalition, formed in 2007, has taken a leadership role in organizing and mobilizing groups and individuals in the state in support of expanded bus transit. The Transit for Connecticut Coalition has grown to 30 business, social service, environmental, transportation, planning and civic organizations dedicated to increasing the awareness of the benefits of bus transit and advocating for increased funding for bus transit.

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN

www.tstc.org

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is an alliance of public interest, transit advocacy, planning and environmental organizations working to reverse deepening automobile dependence and sprawl development in the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut metropolitan region.