

Service and Fare Equity Analysis Executive Summary

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Title VI Circular 4702.1B, Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) conducts a Service and Fare Equity (SAFE) Analysis any time fare changes or major service changes are proposed to ensure that changes do not unfairly impact minority and low-income populations, as defined by the FTA Title VI Circular. CTDOT also analyzes temporary service changes under COVID emergency conditions that are expected to have a duration of over twelve months, and temporary fare changes expected to have a duration over six months. CTDOT has committed to assessing the results of those service and fare changes that were enacted in Spring 2020 in response to reduced demand for transit service during the pandemic.

CTDOT is also analyzing proposed service changes to *CTtransit* bus service, minor fare changes on two *CTtransit* Express bus routes, and a proposal to eliminate the Metro-North Railroad (Metro-North) Mail and Ride Program.

Equity Analysis Methodology

The CTDOT FTA Title VI Program outlines the agency's Major Service Change, Disparate Impact, and Disproportionate Burden policies, as well as the way in which CTDOT conducts SAFE Analyses. Rail major service and fare changes, and proposed bus major service and fare changes were analyzed to determine if there are disparate impacts to minority populations, or disproportionate burdens to low income populations.

Connecticut Rail System Changes

Due to COVID-19 service changes to trains on the New Haven Line, New Canaan Branch, Danbury Branch, Waterbury Branch, Shore Line East, and Hartford Line were previously implemented on an emergency basis. Metro-North implemented a modified weekend service schedule operating seven days a week in response to the pandemic. Weekend service does not have peak service periods therefore peak fares were no longer offered. The Mail & Ride Program, which provides a 2% discount for people who purchase monthly Metro-North passes and monthly MTA passes by mail, is proposed for elimination in order to promote the use of mobile no-touch fare media.

Proposed Hartford Express Bus System Changes

The purpose of the proposed Hartford Express Bus system changes is to offer a slate of sensible, efficient measures that would allow the express bus network to adapt to lower ridership demand as a result of the COVID pandemic, while maintaining critical links between communities and providing a framework to rebuild ridership post-pandemic. In addition, fare changes are proposed to two Hartford Express Bus routes: Route 912 and Route 950.

- On Route 912, it is proposed to rescind a fare policy exception on reverse commute trips (a policy left over from a former Jobs Access Program). Reverse-commute trips on Route 912 will no longer charge a local fare (\$1.75), but instead will charge a distance-based express fare.

- On Route 950, during the midday *CTrail* Hartford Line tickets (except the 10-trip pass) would be cross-honored.

Proposed New Haven Bus System Changes

The proposed changes to the New Haven Bus system include an increase in span of service on a number of routes designed to meet the transportation needs of workers who work beyond the normal 8 AM-5 PM schedule. In addition, this proposed change will also improve access to transit for individuals to connect across the Greater New Haven Region, spread load capacities and establish a supportive transit system for existing high ridership lines.

Service and Fare Analyses – Findings and Alternatives

Rail System Findings

Analyses of the rail major service changes or fare changes are presented as follows:

1. New Haven Line main line – A disproportionate burden was identified as a result of a reduction in off-peak weekday eastbound service on the New Haven Line main line due to a reduction in State Street Station Stops operated by Metro-North. However, since the Hartford Line and Shore Line East provide connecting service between New Haven Union Station and State Street Station, the burden is offset by the additional service options provided by the connecting operators.
2. Danbury Branch – No disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens were identified.
3. Shore Line East - A disproportionate burden was identified as a result of reduced weekend westbound service headways to New Haven. This is largely due to infrastructure limitations at Clinton and Madison stations.
4. Fare Changes – No disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens were identified.

Rail System Mitigation Alternatives

For both the New Haven main line and the Shore Line East, the project team identified three alternatives for mitigation:

- A. Monitor Ridership – Adjust service according to observable ridership changes.
- B. Remediation – Adjust to remove the quantified burden. In both cases, this would be accomplished by:
 - a. New Haven Line main line - adding a single State Street Station stop on the eastbound off-peak.
 - b. Shore Line East – extending train 3610/3637 to New London weekends.
- C. Restore former service levels – a gradual restoration plan may accomplish this staging in pace with service demand.

Bus System Findings

1. Proposed service changes to 13 Hartford routes and one New Haven bus route result in disparate impacts.
2. The proposed service changes on one route, Asylum Hill Shuttle, resulted in a disproportionate burden.
3. For the proposed fare changes on Routes 912 and 950, there is no finding of disparate impact or disproportionate burden.

Bus System Mitigation Alternatives

For bus routes where either route modifications or eliminations are proposed, replacement service provided by existing bus routes is proposed.

For bus routes where headways are widened or span of service is decreased, the rationale for these proposed changes is because current ridership levels do not warrant the level of service provided today.