CT fastrak

CTfastrak Year One Report

May 16, 2016

Connecticut Department of Transportation

Bureau of Public Transportation

www.ctfastrak.com

Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to present this report celebrating the completion of the first year of operations of CT*fastrak*. CT*fastrak* was launched on March 28, 2015. This first in the state Bus Rapid Transit system introduced an entirely new level of service and technology for transit customers in Connecticut.

Featuring a regional network of service utilizing a 9.4 mile dedicated bus only roadway, distinctive stations, branded buses, new technologies, and most of all, a significant improvement in frequent, reliable bus service, CT*fastrak* is changing the landscape of public transportation in Connecticut.

CT*fastrak* is state-of-the-art and user-friendly, integrating technology with transportation to provide on-the-go trip planning and real-time bus information using Transit App or Google Transit. Innovations will continue with a new fare collection system, including fare payment by smartcards and mobile phones in the coming year.

CT*fastrak* has also improved connectivity among the many transportation services in the state. This includes new connections with the CT*rail* Waterbury Branch, connections with Amtrak and intercity bus service in Hartford, and connections with the CT*rail* Hartford Line which is scheduled to open for service in January 2018.

By opening up new access to jobs, healthcare and shopping, while saving previous transit customers significant travel time by offering direct and frequent travel, and attracting a significant number of new customers, CT*fastrak* has delivered on its promises.

Thank you for your support and patronage of the system in our first year of operation. We look forward to many more years of improving service, increasing ridership, and serving our customers.

James Redeker
Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Transportation

What is CT*fastrak*?

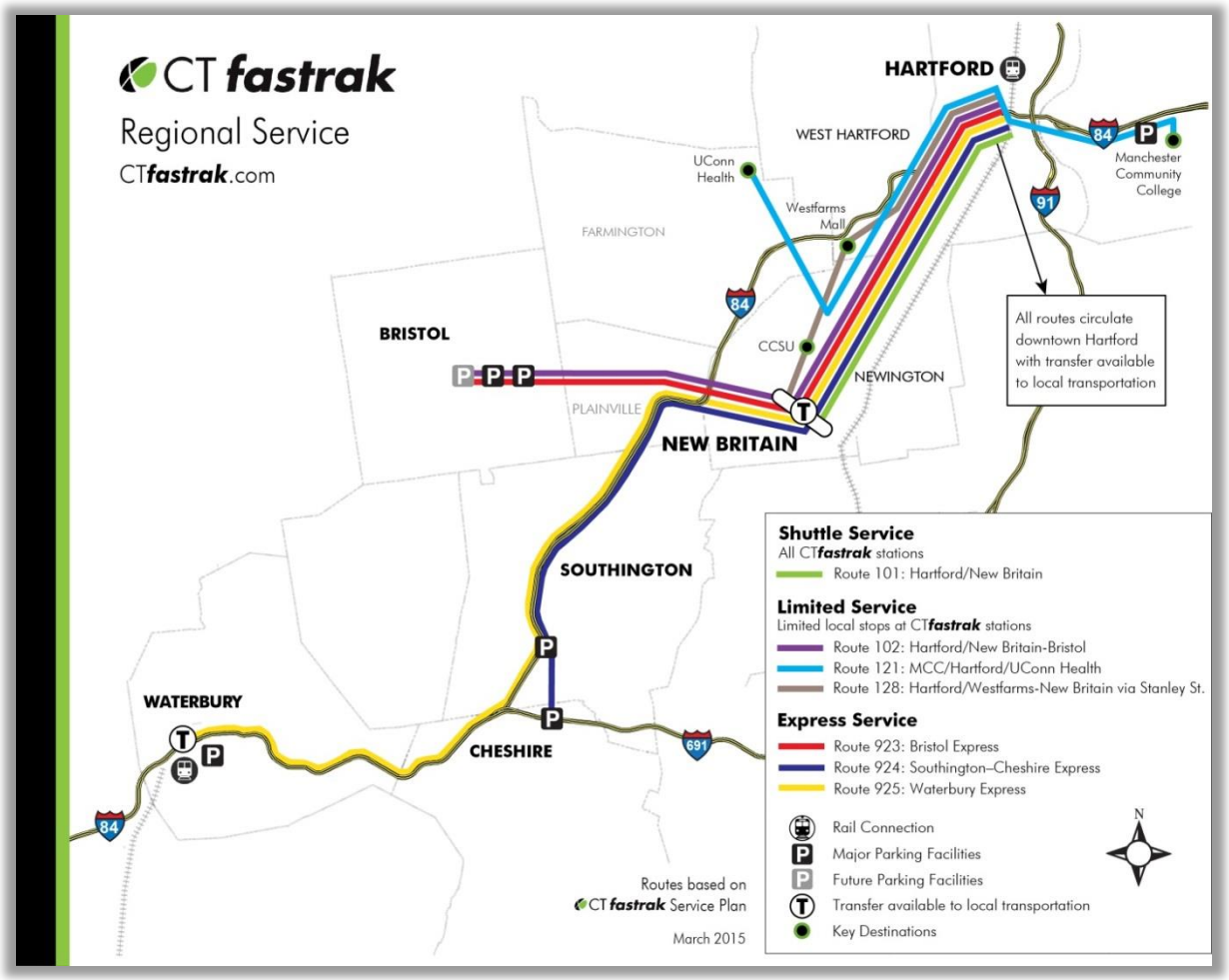
CT*fastrak* is Connecticut's first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. It is a system of routes that utilize a bus-only roadway for all or a portion of the trip.

CT*fastrak* routes are integrated with the CT*transit* system, making it easy to connect, transfer and pay a fare.

There are different types of routes and services available. The Route 101, a basic "subway style" route, travels between Hartford and New Britain and stops at each of the ten stations. Express routes access the bus-only roadway at Downtown New Britain station and travel beyond New Britain to Bristol, Southington, Cheshire, and Waterbury. Circulator routes use the bus-only roadway for a portion of their trip, exiting the bus-only roadway at certain locations to provide direct service to destinations in central Connecticut like UConn Health, Westfarms Mall, and Manchester Community College. All routes on the bus-only roadway circulate through the downtown Hartford area to provide access to popular destinations.

Connector routes link stations with other destinations like St. Francis and Hartford Hospitals, West Hartford Center, Copaco Shopping Center in Bloomfield, and Newington Center.

For more information on CT*fastrak* please visit: www.ctfastrak.com



System Performance and Customer Satisfaction

RIDERSHIP

The most obvious and understandable performance measure for transit services is ridership. Service plans for CT*fastrak* were developed during the planning phase. Ultimately, ridership estimates for the year 2030 were developed as a requirement for federal funding. The "travel model" assessed the differences between transit usage of the existing system in the corridor and the impact on ridership of a new fixed guideway transit service that offered more reliable travel times and permanent and highly visible stations. The ridership estimate produced by the travel model for CT*fastrak* was 16,308 passenger trips on an average weekday by the year 2030.

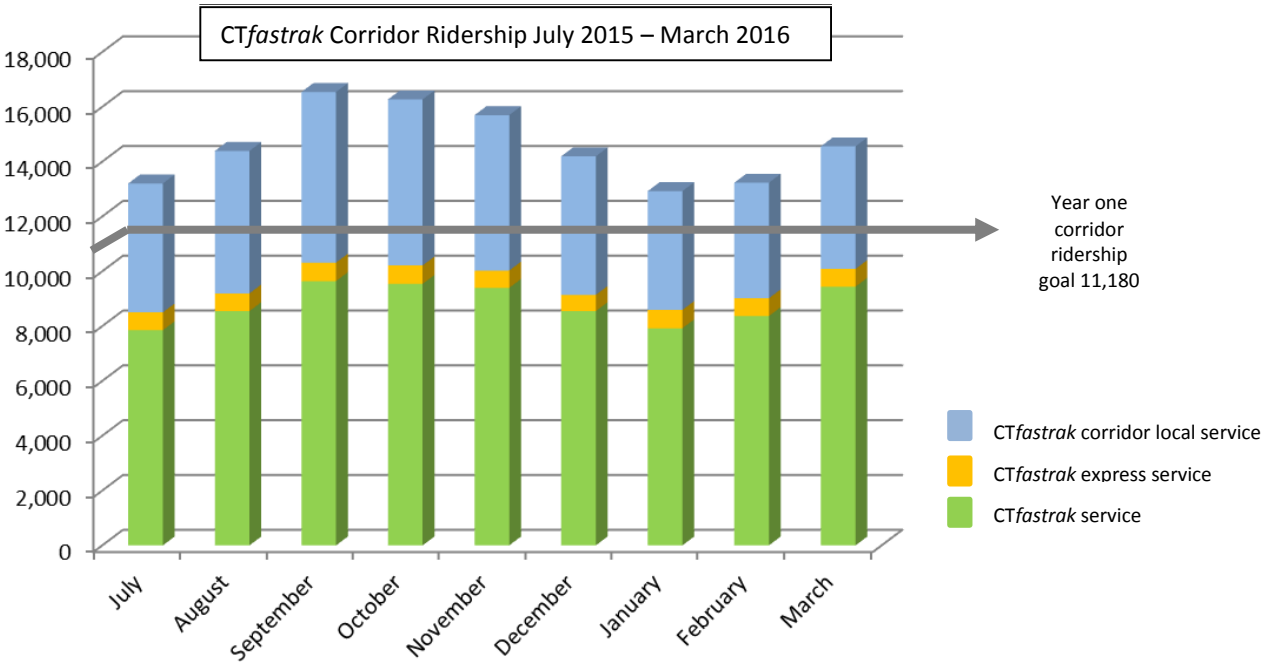
In 2013, the travel model was used to estimate ridership in the first year on CT*fastrak*. Results showed that weekday average passenger trips in the corridor would increase from 8,000 to over 11,000. Actual ridership performance is shown in the table below.

CT*fastrak* ridership data is gathered using Automated Passenger Counters at each door of each bus.

To assure that passenger trip counts in the corridor now served by CT*fastrak* truly represent the net growth in usage, ridership is monitored for both CT*fastrak* and the pre-existing CT*transit* routes in the corridor. The CT*transit* routes provided service prior to the opening of CT*fastrak* and continue to provide service today. The CT*fastrak* passenger counts are added to passenger counts on CT*transit* local routes in the corridor. This is the total transit ridership in the corridor.

To meaningfully assess the impact of CT*fastrak* on transit ridership, the total transit ridership figure can then be compared with average ridership on the CT*transit* local buses in the corridor in the prior years. Ridership in the corridor before CT*fastrak* opened was around 8,000 weekday passenger trips. Weekday passenger trips now average between 12,000 and 16,000 trips in the corridor. This provides a more accurate picture of CT*fastrak*'s impact on ridership in the corridor as a whole.

For more information on ridership please visit: www.ct.gov/dot/ctfastrak



OPERATING BUDGET | FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE | (July 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015)

The operating budget was developed using scheduling tools that estimated hours and miles of bus service and applied standard cost allocations for vehicle maintenance including parts, supplies, technician time, etc. The budgeting also included costs associated with station maintenance, roadway maintenance and additional personnel required for road supervision and the fare inspection process. The budgeted expense for the CT*fastrak* system operations and maintenance for state fiscal year 2016 is $22.5 million. Revenues were estimated to be about $4.2 million based upon an "average fare times total ridership" calculation. A comparison of budgeted expense and revenue compared to actual is included in the table on page five.

OPERATING BUDGET | REVENUES | FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE

CT*fastrak* uses a proof of payment system where fare compliance is managed by means of fare inspection. For more information on fare compliance, see Fare Collection on page seven of this document. A proof of payment system tracks ridership and revenue differently than the rest of the CT*transit* bus system where riders enter through the front door and use the farebox.

The most popular fare instruments (10-Ride tickets, multi-day passes, 31-day passes) used by CT*transit* riders are not sold on the bus. Fares can be purchased in advance at the downtown Hartford customer service booth, Stop & Shop stores or on-line with fulfillment by mail. Any of these pre-paid fares can be used on the CT*transit* and CT*fastrak* systems. CT*fastrak* riders without a pre-paid ticket use a ticket vending machine on the platforms to purchase their ticket prior to boarding at any door. Because of all of these off-board purchasing options, revenue generated from pre-paid fare media cannot be directly attributed to a specific CT*fastrak* route.

CT*fastrak* revenue is determined by multiplying the average fare per passenger by the total number of passengers. For budgeting purposes, average fares were based on the passengers and revenue for November 2014 through February 2015.

Using this same process, revenues for the first six months of fiscal year 2016 for CT*fastrak* local and express routes totaled $2.4 million, or about 14% ahead of forecasts, due to ridership figures that exceeded initial forecasts.

Ridership and Revenues – Budget vs. Actual – 7/1/15 to 12/31/15

CT*fastrak* Local Ridership	CT*fastrak* Express Ridership	CT*fastrak* Average Local Fare	CT*fastrak* *Average* Express Fare	CT*fastrak* Local Revenue	CT*fastrak* Express Revenue	Total Revenue
2,243,098	88,269	$0.94	$3.24	$2,108,512	$285,992	**$2,394,504**
		Forecasted Annual Revenue				$4,193,521
		Forecasted Revenue Prorated 7/1/15 to 12/31/15				$2,096,761
		Favorable (Unfavorable) to Forecast				$297,743

OVERALL PERFORMANCE | FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE

For fiscal year 2016 beginning on July 1, 2015 actual expenses for CT*fastrak* bus service were slightly favorable to budget. The costs for these services are driven primarily by bus service scheduling decisions and resulting bus operator pay hours. More efficient scheduling results in lower operating expenses for bus service. Expenses for non-bus service items, such as field supervision and snow removal, are unfavorable to budget by approximately $0.3 million. The non-bus service budget was based on an estimate of potential facility and support staff costs since there was no actual operating experience to use as guidance for maintenance of a BRT facility in Connecticut.

CT*fastrak* passenger revenue is slightly favorable to budget by approximately $0.3 million. Passenger revenue directly corresponds with ridership. Higher ridership levels have resulted in higher passenger revenue. This trend is expected to continue through fiscal year 2016. The budgeted and actual expenses breakdown is as follows:

	*FY 2016 Budget	* FY 2016 YTD July - December Budget	* FY 2016 YTD July - December Actual	* YTD Budget vs. Actual
CT*fastrak* Bus Services				
CT*fastrak*/HNS Routes	$16.5	$8.3	$7.8	$0.5
CT*fastrak*/DATTCO Express Routes	$2.2	$1.1	$1.3	($0.2)
CT*fastrak* Non-Bus-Service Items				
Additional Personnel	$1.9	$0.9	$1.1	($0.2)
Station Maintenance	$1.7	$0.9	$1.0	($0.1)
Roadway Maintenance	$0.2	$0.1	$0.1	$0.0
TOTAL				
CT*fastrak* System Expenses	$22.5	$11.3	$11.3	$0.0
CT*fastrak* Passenger Revenue	$4.2	$2.1	$2.4	$0.3
CT*fastrak* Subsidy	$18.3	$9.2	$8.9	$0.3
CT*fastrak* Farebox Recovery Ratio	22%		26%	

**Figures shown are in millions*
Favorable/ (Unfavorable)

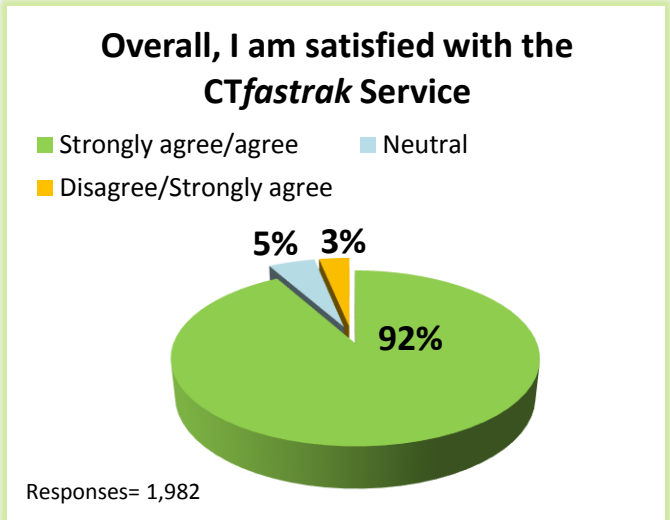
Ridership on CTfastrak generates additional capital funding for Connecticut to use to buy more buses and rail cars, or for maintaining or expanding bus and rail systems. That increment is estimated at roughly $3.5 million annually starting in 2016.

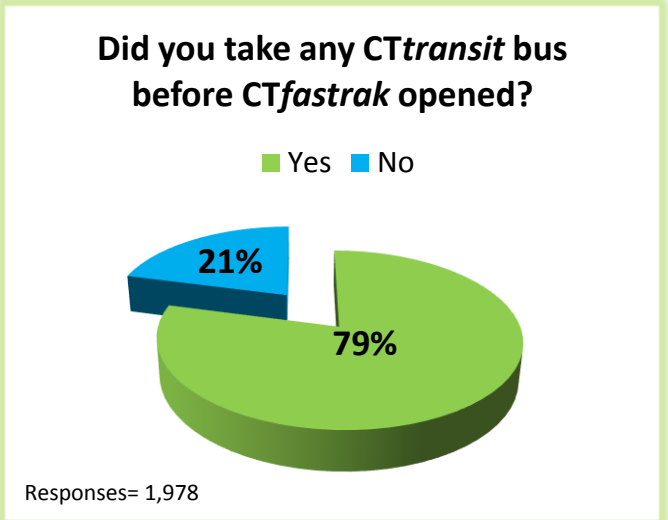
FAREBOX RECOVERY

Public transportation is supported by passenger fares. This is the money that passengers deposit into the farebox whenever they board, as well as purchases of pre-paid fares that are bought prior to boarding. The amount collected through passenger fares is divided by the expense for bus services to determine the farebox recovery ratio. For example, if the service costs $100 per day and passenger fares collected total $30, then the service has a 30% farebox recovery ratio. Most bus transit systems in the United States have farebox recovery ratios between 20% and 30%. CT*fastrak* has a 26% farebox recovery year-to-date for fiscal year 2016. The balance of the cost to operate public transportation service is called a subsidy. During the three year start-up period for CT*fastrak*, federal funds are being used to offset 80% of the deficit (difference between costs and revenues). The use of these funds significantly reduces the state's contribution to the overall funding as the new CT*fastrak* system starts up.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

In June 2015 a survey was conducted on CT*fastrak* routes to gauge customer satisfaction of the new system. A total of 2,400 surveys were collected. The survey polled riders regarding a number of basic system characteristics and gave respondents the opportunity to share comments about the CT*fastrak* service. Survey responses revealed that 21% of the respondents did not use CT*transit* before CT*fastrak,* indicating CT*fastrak* has a significant number of riders that are new to transit. Of the respondents, 92% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied overall with CT*fastrak* service. See charts below.





FARE COLLECTION

CT*fastrak* uses a proof of payment system for passengers boarding at any of the CT*fastrak* stations and at five key stops in downtown Hartford. This policy requires riders to pay their fare prior to boarding the bus. Riders can use any previously purchased valid CT*transit* tickets and passes or they can purchase a 2-Hour or All-Day Pass using a ticket vending machine at CT*fastrak* stations and at key stops in downtown Hartford.

Proof of payment speeds up travel time, as riders with a valid ticket or pass can board the bus through any door without waiting to pay a fare at the farebox. Using a ticket vending machine allows riders to purchase a single-ride ticket or All-Day Pass with a credit or debit card, so there is no need to carry exact change.

The Connecticut General Assembly established "non-payment of bus fare" as a civil penalty to ensure fare compliance. CT*fastrak* has a staff of seven full and part time fare inspectors. Fare Inspectors are authorized to inspect tickets and passes to make sure that passengers have paid the required fare and to issue citations for violations of the law. Failure to provide proof of payment makes a rider subject to a citation and fine. The fine established by the Connecticut Judicial Branch was set at $75. Receipts from citations are collected by the Judicial Department and handled as they customarily do, returning revenues to the state budget general fund.

In order to educate passengers and bus operators about the proof of payment system, fare enforcement personnel checked proof of fare payment without issuing tickets until July 2015. From July 2015 to February 2016, fare enforcement personnel conducted 123,863 fare checks on platforms and on-board buses. Out of those, only 67 tickets were issued. CT*fastrak*'s average fare compliance rate is 99.4% and can be partly attributed to the highly visible fare enforcement personnel and strong support from local and state police. CT*fastrak's* fare compliance rate is comparable to other proof of payment transit systems in the United States. Compliance percentages range from 93.9% (NY Transit, BRT) to 99.2% (LACMTA, BRT). (TCRP Synthesis 96, Off-Board Fare Payment Using Proof of Payment Verification, 2012)

For more information on fare payment and enforcement on CT*fastrak*, please see www.ctfastrak.com/how-to-ride/fares

Over 750 runners participated in the CTfastrak 15k and Relay race on May 3, 2015, including the winner Jonas Hampton who went on to win the 2015 Hartford Marathon, and compete in trials for the 2016 U.S. Olympic Team.

BRAND VALUE

BRT is a new concept in Connecticut. In order to attract riders, CT*fastrak* needed to show people how BRT is different from buses operating in mixed traffic. To do so, CT*fastrak* branded itself to convey what CT*fastrak* offers. Customers see the value in the unique features of CT*fastrak*, such as the bus-only roadway, reliable travel time, fast boarding, real-time bus arrival information, buses that circulate through downtown so there is no need to transfer, longer hours and more frequent service.

CT*fastrak* is a high quality rapid transit system that just happens to use buses. The stations, stops, and buses are clean and contemporary looking. The system has a modern feel due to the use of technology to improve the customer experience. CT*fastrak* interacts with customers through social media which inspires customers to feel like they are part of a community.

*"So awesome! Makes it **so much easier** for me to get myself to and from work!!"*

- Elizabeth K. via CTfastrak Facebook

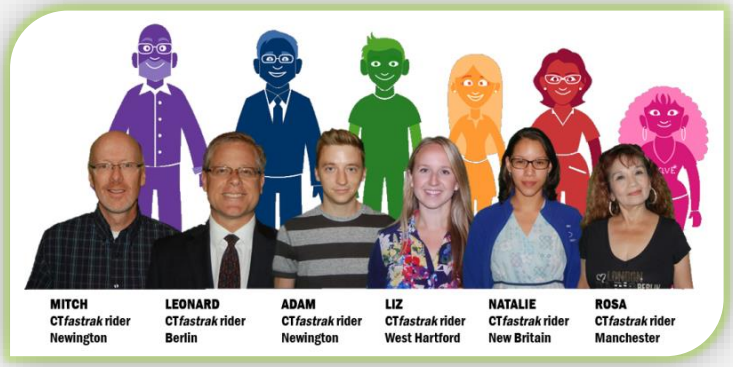
Using Automatic Vehicle Location systems combined with routing, schedule and other data, real-time bus arrival information is provided to customers on an electronic message board at stations. That information can also be relayed audibly with the push of a button for the convenience of visually-impaired riders. The vehicle location and schedule data is also made available to developers for free. This data feed is used by Google Transit and Transit App to provide real time travel information to their (and our) customers.

SERVICE RELIABILITY

CT*fastrak* provides reliable travel time because:

1. The bus-only roadway keeps CT*fastrak* vehicles out of mixed traffic.
2. Station platforms are built to match the height of the bus floor, so there is no need to step up or down, or wait for a ramp to unfold.
3. By requiring pre-payment of fares, customers don't wait in line at the farebox and all doors can open for boarding.
4. Traffic signal preference at five intersections allows CT*fastrak* buses to reduce travel time.

The CTfastrak system consists of 8 local bus routes and 4 express bus routes



CTfastrak radio and television commercials were produced using real people telling their stories on how CTfastrak impacted them. People were selected based on their stories told in survey responses, and then were brought into a studio to record their story and be photographed for animations based upon their likeness.

ENHANCED MOBILITY

CT*fastrak* is improving mobility in central Connecticut by expanding convenient and reliable public transportation to both new and existing customers.

CT*fastrak* routes are designed to bring people closer to key destinations without having to make a transfer to another bus (one-seat ride). Some bus routes exit the bus-only roadway and bring riders directly to destinations such as UConn Health, Westfarms Mall, Central Connecticut State University, Manchester Community College, Aetna and Travelers. Customers value the one seat ride because they can quickly and easily get to their destination. When a CT*fastrak* bus gets to downtown Hartford, it travels on local roads to deliver passengers to key places within the city.

Circulator routes make it easier to connect to West Hartford, Newington, Wethersfield, and Bloomfield without having to travel first to downtown Hartford to take another bus out to these destinations.

Express buses travel to and from Waterbury, Cheshire, Southington and Bristol, using the bus-only roadway between Downtown New Britain Station and Sigourney Street Station in Hartford providing a traffic-free ride with a more reliable travel time.

CT*fastrak* connects people to more places within the region. At Union Station in Hartford, riders can board an Amtrak train, an inter-city bus or any CT*transit* bus including the Route 30 - Bradley Flyer service to Bradley International Airport. A new express bus route provides hourly service between Hartford and Waterbury, and connects to the CT*rail* Waterbury Branch. In January 2018 connections to the CT*rail* Hartford Line will be available at Hartford Union Station. Connections to the Hartford Line at CT*fastrak* Newington Junction and Flatbush stations are also planned for the future.

Cedar Street and Kane Street stations are located in close proximity to large grocery stores, providing downtown residents with easy access to a wide variety of high quality food.

Lastly, CT*fastrak* has expanded hours of service and provides more frequent options for travel. For example the CT*fastrak* Route 101, offers service every seven to eight minutes during the weekday peak period (6-9am & 3-6pm). CT*fastrak* routes operate seven days a week. Other service enhancements were rolled out at the same time CT*fastrak* opened in order to improve mobility in the areas surrounding the system. These include the addition of Sunday service and late night service in New Britain and Bristol.

*"Even though I have a car, I live at the Bushnell Tower in Hartford and take the fastrak right out of my front door to my gym in Elmwood especially during rush hour, it **beats being stuck in traffic**."*

- Roberto T. via CTfastrak Facebook

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

From its role as a lower-polluting travel option, to sustainable elements incorporated into its design and construction, CT*fastrak* makes an important environmental contribution to the state.

CT*fastrak* provides frequent and reliable transportation in the central Connecticut corridor, offering a viable and attractive alternative to driving. The CT*fastrak* five mile multi-use trail, which is parallel to the bus-only roadway from Newington Junction Station to Downtown New Britain Station, promotes opportunities to travel in the community using non-motorized "green" modes of travel. This popular trail provides access to the CT*fastrak* stations for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as providing a recreational asset to the community.

CT*fastrak* contributes to a sustainable environment in central Connecticut by integrating environmentally-friendly technologies into the design of CT*fastrak*. This includes new diesel-electric hybrid vehicles that are approximately 90% cleaner than buses purchased 12 years ago. Hybrids also reduce fuel consumption by up to 30%.

The Downtown New Britain CT*fastrak* station is equipped with a 100 kW photovoltaic solar panel system. All stations have LED lighting and bicycle racks. CT*fastrak* allows passengers to bring their bikes on board the CT*fastrak*-branded 60-foot and 40-foot buses making for easier intermodal trips. All of the stations have both trash receptacles and recycling bins.

Design and construction of CT*fastrak* has also contributed to improving the quality of the air, soil, and wetlands in the vicinity of the project. The use of natural and engineered drainage systems such as grass-lined swales, water quality basins, and deep sump catch basins filter sediments and prevent pollutants from reaching nearby brooks, groundwater and wetlands.

*"Taking it from East St to Parkville (Real Art Ways, Trinity) and downtown Hartford (Bushnell Park, Riverfront) any time of the year. Combined with a bike, it's easy to avoid **driving** from NB to Hartford."*

– Paul D. via CTfastrak Facebook

Open space was created at Downtown New Britain Station allowing for an area directly on Main Street for potential transit oriented development. In conjunction with the construction of CT*fastrak*, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) removed the existing I-84 on-ramp at the Flatbush Avenue exit in Hartford and relocated it to the west, creating a contiguous wetland area. As a result, 5.26 acres of wetlands were created and another 3.86 acres of wetlands were enhanced. The sustainability of the environment in Connecticut has been integral to the planning and operations of CT*fastrak* now and in the long term.

5.26 acres of wetlands were created during the construction of CTfastrak

SUPPORTING THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

Economic Impacts of Bus Rapid Transit Systems

In November 2015, the National Institute for Transportation and Communities issued a peer-reviewed report that analyzed economic development following the implementation of thirteen different BRT systems that opened in the United States prior to 2011.

The report concluded that overall, "BRT systems are associated with positive development and job location outcomes…" (National Study of BRT Development Outcomes, Nov. 2015). After only one year of operation, CT*fastrak* has generated active debate, discussion, and action around transit oriented development and accessibility within the corridor.

CTfastrak Fostering Economic Activity

The CT*fastrak* network of express and local routes provides frequent and reliable transit service that provides transit access to 86,000 jobs within a half mile of the CT*fastrak* corridor, and 128,000 jobs, when considering the circulator routes like Route 128-Hartford to New Britain via Stanley, and Route 121-MCC – Hartford – UConn Health.

The central Connecticut region is experiencing an increased focus on transit oriented development, partly due to the impact of CT*fastrak*, and partly to development of the Let's GO CT! plan. That plan identifies $2.8 billion of increased transportation investments over a five year period, including expanded transit options.

There has been both public and private investment along the entire CT*fastrak* corridor.

Vacant for over eight years, the old New Britain Herald Building in New Britain, CT is in the midst of a three million privately funded redevelopment. The building will have a medical facility on the first floor with new office space for rent above when it opens fall 2016. A national firm, American Renal Associates, has already signed a lease; the single tenant alone will bring 20 professional jobs to this location. Also in New Britain, the Berkowitz Building was purchased by a local developer in 2015 to create 52 apartments and a first floor retail space in the historic 24,000 sq. foot building.

The proposed development at 616 New Park Avenue in West Harford is directly attributed to the CT*fastrak* Elmwood station. "This mixed use real estate project and this location would not have attracted this interest without having had the CT*fastrak* Station Elmwood Station right next door", said local restaurateur, Chris Foley

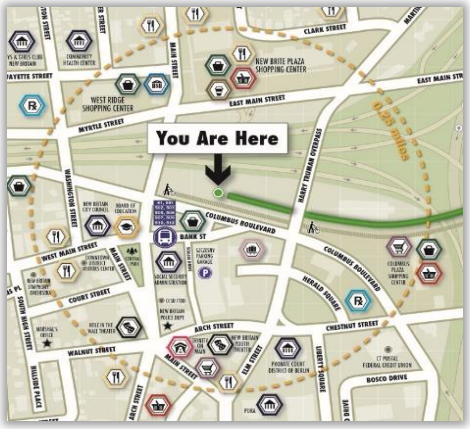
In Newington, clean-up of the "brownfield" at the former National Welding site for future development became more economically feasible when the CT*fastrak* Cedar Street Station opened up access to the site.

A total of 162 new bus drivers were hired to handle the extra services.

The city of New Britain has taken advantage of the construction of CTfastrak to support applications for several grants to make improvements in the downtown area. The large investment made by the Federal Transit Administration and state of Connecticut has led to new grants for the city.

Central Connecticut State University

CTDOT partnered with CCSU Department of Design to create 'local interest and direction' maps for the kiosks at each CT*fastrak* station. Because of the early development of a relationship between CTDOT and CCSU, many other successful opportunities with students and faculty members at the school were created. Examples include student video documentaries, sports team promotions and media opportunities.



Pedestrian maps designed by CCSU students are displayed at all ten CTfastrak stations

Rewards Program

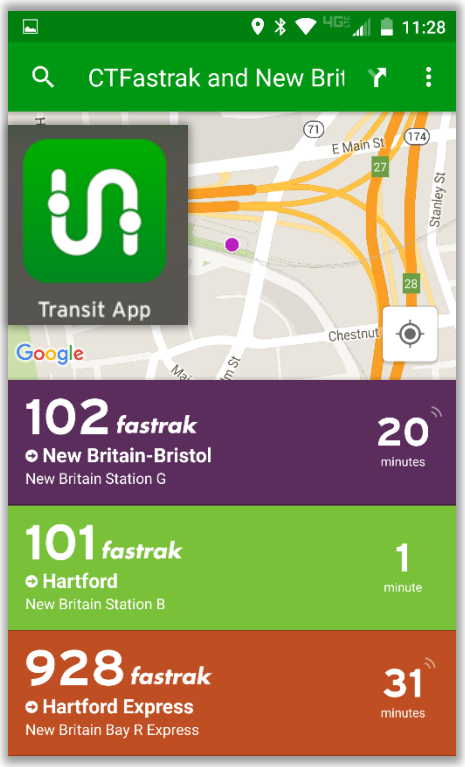
In order to offer a benefit to our riders and connect them with businesses in the CT*fastrak* corridor, a transit rewards program was created. Each business can create its own rider reward. As a result, over 60 businesses are now participating. Offers include everything from food, product and rental discounts to ticket and merchandise discounts. Recent partners include the University of Connecticut Men's and Women's Basketball program, the Hartford Wolf Pack hockey team and the New Britain Bees minor league baseball team.

"I went back to school because of fastrak…thanks for your service."

– RoseJah B. via CTfastrak Facebook

Technology Partnerships

There are a variety of top transit industry smartphone applications available for the consumer. CT*fastrak* chose to make automatic vehicle location and schedule data available freely to app developers. CT*fastrak* has unofficially promoted the free, highly rated, "Transit App" available for iOS and Android. During the last three months, the number of CT*fastrak* "Transit App" users has doubled. Riders use Transit App thousands of times each day. Google Transit also accesses the CT*fastrak* information in order to offer real-time information for CT*fastrak* buses on their trip planning site. Using Google Transit, you can also get walking directions from the bus stop to your destination.



Education and Outreach

An extensive education and outreach effort was undertaken to help the community learn how to use CT*fastrak*, Connecticut's first BRT system. The outreach plan included printed materials, and print, radio, and television advertising designed to lead people to the website to find out more about how to use the system. Outreach efforts focused on having CT*fastrak* team members available where potential riders are located rather than expecting people to come to an open house. Presentations about the system at civic events and "tabletop events" were held at employment locations located near the system. Tabletop events occurred at Central Connecticut State University football and basketball games, Westfarms Mall, Saint Francis Hospital, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Cigna, Bishop's Corner Farmer's Market, Copaco Shopping Center, Newington Senior Center and at employers served by the system. A tabletop event at Westfarms Mall is shown in the photo to the right.

CTfastrak OPENING DAY

The first nine days of service on CT*fastrak* routes were free to encourage new and existing riders to try the system. The fare free period attracted many riders who might not normally use public transportation and allowed existing transit riders to explore the new CT*fastrak* system. CTDOT created a CT*fastrak* ambassador program to help the customers during the first weeks of service. While most ambassadors were CTDOT employees from all areas of the department, ambassadors also included staff from consultants and the general public who volunteered.

Ambassadors worked various shifts at the stations each day, answering questions and helping customers transition into this new system.

This past year the CTfastrak team has done 66 tabletops, 20 tours, and 15 presentations

"As someone who grew up in Hartford and now studies urban planning and transportation in NYC, I am incredibly impressed at this new system. ***Clean, comfortable, fast and frequent****. I cannot wait to ride again! Bravo!"*

– Nick A. via CTfastrak Facebook

SOCIAL MEDIA

Extensive use of social media, which includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, helped enhance public involvement and interest before and after the start of service. The various platforms were used to keep the public informed on construction progress and outreach events, and provide visuals of construction progress. Now, social media is used as a tool to encourage use of the system for activities in the corridor and is a means of interaction with customers. In addition to social media, a CT*fastrak* website was established early on as another source of information for the public. Open communication and information will continue to play a vital role in the CT*fastrak* customer experience. Communication will be particularly vital when smart cards and mobile payments are introduced in the coming year.

Opportunities for the Future

As the first year comes to an end, the work to provide a high-quality customer experience on CT*fastrak* will continue, guided by data and customer feedback.

PARKING EXPANSION

The use of parking at CT*fastrak* stations reached capacity shortly after opening. The system was designed with the intention that in addition to driving to the stations, riders would use the circulator bus routes, walk, bike, or get dropped off at stations. Most customers find alternative ways to access the station, but since many prefer to drive to the stations, plans are in motion to be able to accommodate more vehicles. However, many stations are bound by wetlands, railroad right-of-way, contaminated soils or private developments, making it challenging to simply expand the parking areas. Locations have been identified for additional parking but will require lead time to get agreements in place and complete any upgrades for parking use. Improvements that have already been made and future plans for additional spaces include the following:

- 24 parking spaces were added at the Elmwood Station in December 2015.
- A new passenger drop-off lane was added on Main Street in front of the Downtown New Britain Station for easier pick-up and drop-off in November 2015.
- Enforcement of the CT*fastrak* customer only parking policy made more customer parking available at the East Street Station in New Britain.
- 11 spaces will be added at the Newington Junction Station in spring 2016.
- 90 or more spaces at the Cedar Street Station in Newington expected in 2016.
- A new park and ride lot near University of Connecticut Health in Farmington in 2016 which will be served by CT*fastrak* Route 121 is in design.
- Leased parking space agreements with businesses in close proximity to stations are still being pursued.

*"I wasn't sure about the service at first, but I rode it and experienced firsthand, and I have to say it has a **really good vibe to** it. I had a few questions at first, and the **drivers were really helpful and friendly**, (not the phony kind) LOL! They seriously were willing to help out. **It has a very unique, community oriented feel to it** and I will be using the service more often."*

- Adam B. via Info@CTfastrak.com

A promotional video overview of the CTfastrak system was produced by CTDOT staff. It is available on the CTfastrak YouTube channel www.youtube.com/c/ctfastrak

ROUTE EVALUATION

After this first full year of operation, CT*fastrak* routes will be evaluated to see how they are performing. With the data collected over the past year, there is an opportunity to determine if routes need to be adjusted in terms of how often they run and where they travel. This is a process that all routes in the CT*transit* system routinely go through. CT*fastrak* routes will continue to be monitored and evaluated to make sure they are meeting customer needs and are running as efficiently as possible.

CUSTOMER AMENITIES

Winter weather modifications are in the works for waiting areas and shelters at stations. Select shelters will be equipped with heat by fall 2016.

EXPANSION

CTDOT is creating a multi-year strategy for expanded transit service east of the Connecticut River. The end goal is an enhanced system with many of BRT features available on CT*fastrak*. Initial service improvements will begin operation summer 2016. A second stage of the planning effort will identify physical roadway and bus stop improvements to create a BRT service using existing streets, park and ride lots and High Occupancy Vehicle lanes in 2017 and beyond.

CT fastrak

Thank you for a fantastic year and many more to come!