

Chapter 3: Existing Transit

This chapter describes the current transit services that connect with the Danbury Branch, including Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) bus service, Norwalk Transit District bus service and private/corporate shuttles. Shuttle services that connect with the MNR Harlem Line from the Danbury area are also described.

3.1 Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART)

The Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) operates base fixed-route bus service, supplemented by evening and Sunday loop routes, commuter shuttles and one interagency regional route.³ HART’s regular service stops at the Danbury and Bethel Metro-North stations on the Danbury Branch and the Brewster Metro-North station on the Harlem Line. HART also provides shuttle service—designed to meet specific train trips—to the Brewster and Katonah Railroad stations on the Harlem Line in New York. The 7 Link, jointly operated by HART and the Norwalk Transit District, serves the Merritt 7, Wilton and Branchville Railroad stations on the Danbury Branch. HART fixed-route service is in place at the proposed Brookfield and New Milford Railroad stations.

HART fares are presented in Table 24 below. Free transfers are available between any two HART routes or The 7 Link at the Pulse Point in downtown Danbury. Metro-North UniTickets, which combine rail and local bus fares, are also accepted.

Table 24: HART Fare Structure

Regular Fare	
Adult	\$1.25
Student	\$0.90
Elderly and Disabled	\$0.60
Child Under 5 Years	Free
Ten-Ride “Bye-Pass”	
Adult	\$11.00
Student	\$8.25
Elderly and Disabled	\$5.50
Monthly Unlimited-Ride “Fast Pass”	
Adult	\$45.00
Student	\$32.00
Elderly and Disabled	\$22.50

³ Route and schedule information taken from materials last revised on October 6, 2008.

Base Service

HART operates base fixed-routes, all of which serve the HART Pulse Point in downtown Danbury, a few blocks from the Danbury Railroad station. Route 5 serves the Bethel Railroad station. Route 3 serves the Brewster Railroad station on the Harlem Line, but only during off-peak times. Route 7 operates near the proposed Brookfield and New Milford Railroad stations. All weekday service (except Route 4, which has off-peak service only) operates half-hourly from 6:00 AM to 9:00 AM (morning peak), hourly from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM (off-peak), and half-hourly from 3:00 PM to 6:30 PM (afternoon peak). Saturday service operates hourly from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM (except Route 4 which starts at 9:00 AM).

Route 1: Route 1 serves the northern part of Danbury and is the only route operating north of I-84 within Danbury. It serves Danbury Hospital, Danbury High School, the Town Park and the North Street Shopping Center.

Route 2: Route 2 operates along Newtown Road and Stony Hill Road in the northern part of Bethel. It serves several retail sites before terminating at the Big Y supermarket. Although Route 2 operates in Bethel, it does not serve downtown or the Bethel Railroad station.

Route 3: Route 3 (Figure 13) serves retail, employment and residential complexes along Lake Avenue and Mill Plain Road (US 6) in the western part of Danbury. Peak trips terminate at the I-84 Exit 2 Park and Ride, while midday trips continue to the Brewster Railroad station. The route has five part-time deviations, including the Hilton Garden, DOW Chemical and Boehringer employment complexes. The West Side Campus of Western Connecticut State University is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the route but is not directly served.



Figure 13: HART Route 3

Route 4: Route 4 is a shorter, local version of Route 7, operating south of Brookfield during off-peak times. Route 4 serves Danbury Hospital and several medical and retail sites in Danbury and along US 202 in Brookfield. Service operates hourly from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM on weekdays

and 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM on Saturdays. The Route 4 terminus is two miles south of Brookfield center and the proposed Brookfield Railroad station.

Route 5: Route 5 serves Main Street in Danbury before entering the town of Bethel via South Street or Coalpit Hill Road. The bus circulates within Bethel, including a stop at the Bethel Railroad station, and offers peak hour deviations designed for Danbury residents employed at Shepard's and the Francis J. Clarke Industrial Park. Route 5 is displayed in Figure 14.

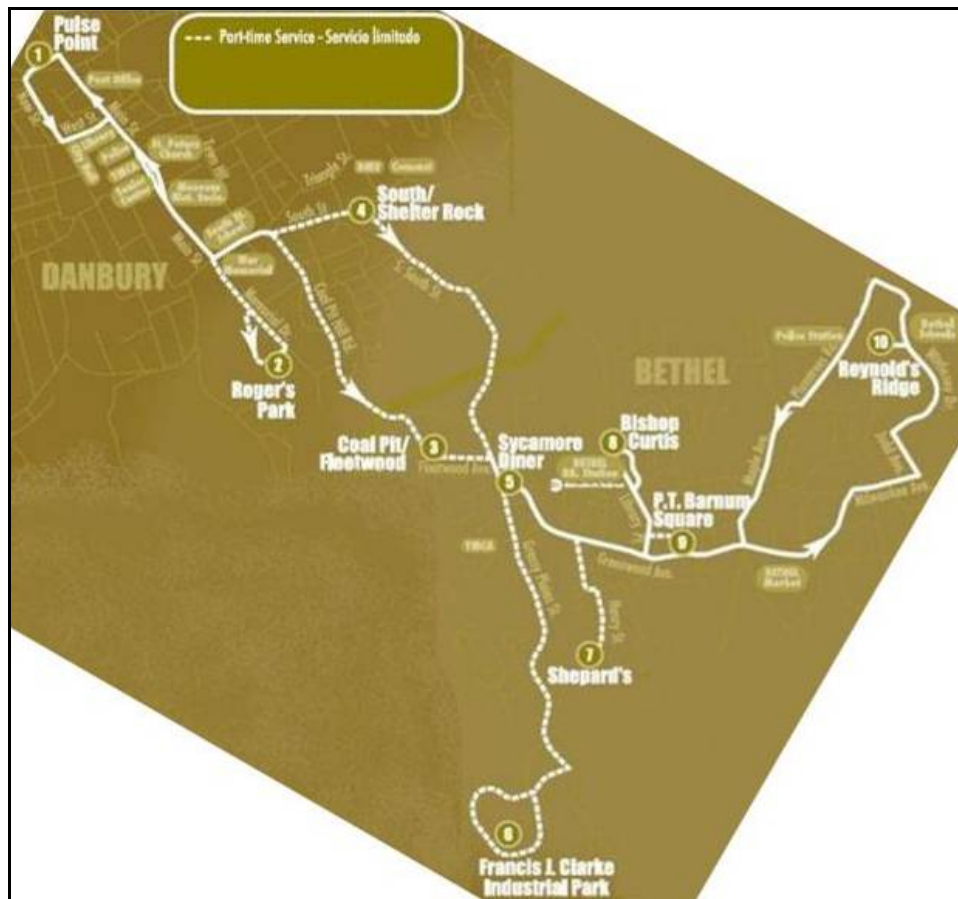


Figure 14: HART Route 5

Route 6: Route 6 travels along Lake Avenue and serves the Danbury Fair Mall, Danbury Square Mall and several employment complexes along Kenosia Avenue. Deviations serve additional employment complexes and the Danbury Municipal Airport.

Route 7: HART Route 7 operates primarily on US 7 and is not to be confused with “The 7 Link”. It offers a combination of local and express service along Federal Road (US 202 and US 7) between downtown Danbury and New Milford. In addition to the HART Pulse Point and Danbury Railroad station, it serves two intermediate Park and Ride lots where connections may be made to the Danbury – Brewster Shuttle. Route 7 serves many locations by request only and provides local service at times when Route 4 is not operating. Route 7 operates adjacent to the proposed Brookfield and New Milford Railroad stations and terminates two miles north of New Milford center at the intersection of US 202 and Chestnut Land Road (CT Route 109).

Evening and Sunday Loop Routes

HART operates three evening and Sunday routes to cover most of its fixed-route service area by serving the Pulse Point and key destinations. The loops operate from 6:30 PM to 10:30 PM on weekdays, 5:30 PM to 10:30 PM on Saturdays and from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Sundays.

Mall – Hospital Loop: This loop services the north and west sections of Danbury, including the Danbury Fair Mall, Danbury Hospital and Western Connecticut State University. Numerous retail and entertainment sites are located along the route.

New Milford Loop: Routes 4 and 7 are combined into the New Milford Loop, which provides local service to numerous retail and entertainment locations and residential areas along US 202 and US 7 in Brookfield and New Milford. The New Milford Loop serves the locations of the proposed Brookfield and New Milford Railroad stations.

South Street – Newtown Road Loop: This loop services the south and east sections of Danbury, including Western Connecticut State University, and the town of Bethel. Numerous retail and entertainment sites are located along the route.

Commuter Shuttles

HART operates shuttles to the Brewster and Katonah Railroad stations on the Metro-North Harlem Line in New York. Unlike base service, shuttles serve only a few locations such as park and rides and are timed to meet specific trains. The Brewster and Katonah shuttles provide Housatonic Valley residents an opportunity to use the faster and more frequent direct commuter rail service on the Harlem Line. Shuttle fares are identical to fixed-route fares, and Metro-North UniTickets are accepted.

Danbury – Brewster Shuttle: The Brewster Shuttle is designed to serve New York-bound Metro-North passengers. Service operates on weekdays only between Danbury and the Brewster (New York) Railroad station. In the peak hour and direction, trips serve four park and ride lots on I-84 before terminating at the Brewster station. Midday trips and some reverse peak trips omit the two park and ride lots in Danbury and instead serve the HART Pulse Point, Danbury Fair Mall, I-84 park and ride lots and the Brewster station.

For trips to New York, the shuttle meets eight morning peak departing trains, eight midday departing trains and six evening peak departing trains. For trips from New York, the shuttle meets four morning peak arriving trains, six midday arriving trains and eleven evening peak arriving trains. Riders may transfer for free to Putnam Area Rapid Transit (PART) Route 1 at the Brewster Railroad station.

Service frequency is approximately 15 to 20 minutes in the peak period and direction and hourly in the midday period. The shuttle operates from 5:19 AM to 9:10 PM from Danbury to the Brewster Railroad station, and from 5:50 AM to 9:38 PM from the Brewster Railroad station to Danbury. The shuttle served an average of 268 daily riders, plus 60 midday riders (when trips do not serve Brewster Railroad station) in the month of November 2008. This represents a 4% increase over November 2007.

Route 3 provides additional midday service to the Brewster Railroad station and the Exit 1 and Exit 2 Park and Ride lots on weekdays; on Saturday Route 3 terminates at the Exit 2 Park and Ride and does not serve Brewster.

Ridgefield – Katonah Shuttle: The Katonah Shuttle is designed to bring passengers from park and ride lots in the Route 35 corridor to the Katonah (New York) Railroad station during peak commuting times. The shuttle stops at the Jessie Lee Memorial Church and Prospect Ridge lots in Ridgefield, CT; the Municipal Lot in South Salem, NY; and the Katonah Railroad station. Excepting the last three evening trips to Ridgefield, which serve the HART Pulse Point by request, the Katonah Shuttle is the only HART route which does not connect to any other HART routes.

For trips to New York, the shuttle meets seven morning departing trains and two evening departing trains. For trips from New York, the shuttle meets one morning arriving train and ten evening arriving trains. Riders may transfer for free to Westchester County’s Bee-Line Bus Route 19 at the Katonah Railroad station.

Service frequency is approximately 20 to 25 minutes during the peak period in both directions, on weekdays only. The span of service to Katonah is 5:46 AM to 8:24 AM and 5:26 PM to 8:19 PM. The span of service to Ridgefield is 6:12 AM to 7:44 AM and 4:59 PM to 8:54 PM. The shuttle served an average of 201 daily riders in the month of November 2008 (Table 25). This represents a 13% increase over November 2007.

Table 25: Metro-North Harlem Line Shuttle Ridership, November 2008

Ridership	Danbury - Brewster			Katonah Trips
	Midday Local	Peak Shuttle	Total	
Total Riders (November 2008)	1147	5087	6234	3817
Average Daily Riders	60	268	328	201
Riders Per Trip	6.7	14.9	12.2	15.5

Source: Housatonic Area Regional Transit

Regional Routes

The 7 Link: HART operates this peak-hour route in conjunction with the Norwalk Transit District. The Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board contributes funding for the joint venture. The route provides a connection between the two transit districts and serves major retail and employment destinations along US 7 in Danbury, Ridgefield, Wilton and Norwalk. The Merritt 7, Wilton and Branchville Railroad stations are also served along the route. Bidirectional service is provided on weekdays from 6:05 AM to 11:50 AM and from 3:00 PM to 8:45 PM.

The one-way base fare for The 7 Link is identical to regular HART and WHEELS fares (except no discounted student fare is offered). Passengers may use fare media from either agency. Riders may transfer without charge to HART, WHEELS, CT Transit’s Route 41 or the Coastal Link. The 7 Link averaged 276 daily riders in the month of September 2008, a significant increase compared to 2002 (Table 26).

Table 26: Average Daily Boardings, The 7 Link

Route	Time Period									
	Fiscal Year							2008		
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Jul	Aug	Sept
7 Link	119	146	156	177	217	209	229	262	268	276

Source: Norwalk Transit District

3.2 Norwalk Transit District (NTD)

The Norwalk Transit District operates base weekday service (“WHEELS”), evening and Sunday routes (called “shuttles”), commuter rail shuttles, and regional interagency “Link” services.⁴ Base routes operate on weekdays until 7:35 PM and on Saturdays until 6:35 PM. Two shuttle routes operate during evenings and on Sundays to serve the most popular destinations. Full-time service is available on the Coastal Link to Milford and CT Transit Route 41 to Stamford.

NTD fares are presented in Table 27. Transfers to and from CT Transit, Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA), Milford Transit and The 7 Link are free. CT Transit, GBTA tokens and Metro-North UniTickets are also accepted.

Table 27: NTD Fare Structure

Regular Fare	
Adult	\$1.25
Elderly and Disabled	\$0.60
Child Under 5 Years	Free
Tokens	
Adult 10 rides	\$10.50
Adult 20 rides	\$21.00
Adult 40 rides	\$42.50
Punch Card	
10-ride, Adult	\$10.50
10-ride, Elderly and Disabled	\$6.00
40-ride, Adult	\$42.00

Base Service

There are 12 base fixed routes operating on weekdays and Saturdays (Figure 15). All of these routes serve the WHEELS Hub in downtown Norwalk. Routes 10, 11, and 12 serve the South Norwalk railroad station, the southern terminus of the Danbury Branch. Route 3 and The 7 Link serve the Merritt 7 railroad Station. Other routes serve Rowayton and East Norwalk railroad stations, but these stations are located on the New Haven Line and are not part of the Danbury Branch.

⁴ Route and schedule information taken from materials last revised on December 8, 2008.

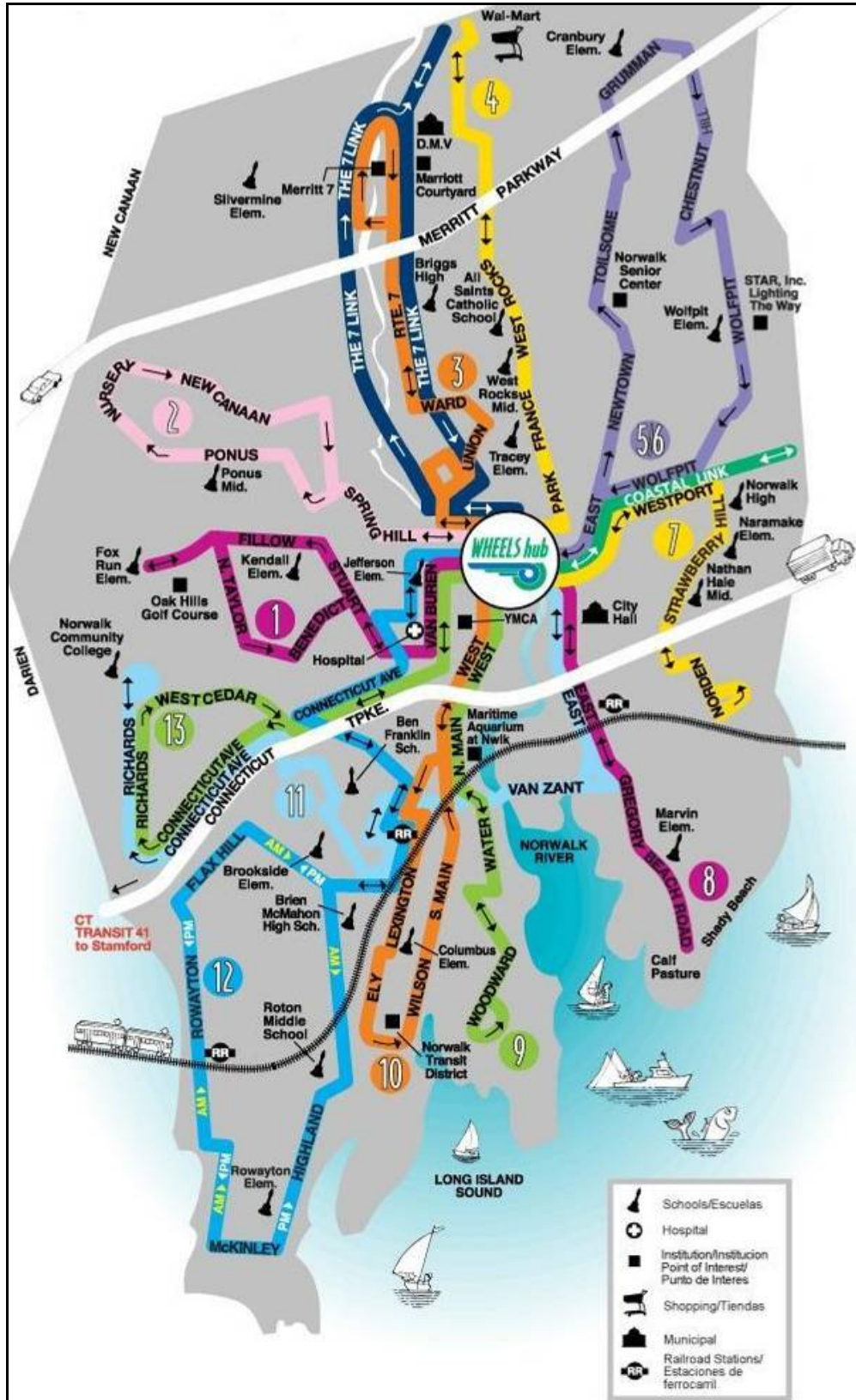


Figure 15: Norwalk Transit District Route Map

Route 3: Route 3 serves north-central Norwalk and terminates at the Merritt 7 railroad station on Glover Avenue, just north of the Merritt Parkway. Service operates every 20 minutes on weekdays from 5:46 AM to 7:35 PM and every 40 minutes on Saturdays from 6:40 AM to 6:55 PM. Route 3 is interlined with Route 10, providing a one-seat ride between the Merritt 7 area and the South Norwalk Railroad station.

Route 10: Route 10 serves the South Norwalk rail station before terminating at the NTD office in the southern part of the city. Service operates every 20 minutes on weekdays from 5:51 AM to 7:35 PM and every 40 minutes on Saturdays from 6:20 AM to 6:55 PM. The route is interlined with Route 3.

Route 11: Route 11 serves the South Norwalk railroad station before serving Connecticut Avenue and terminating at Norwalk Community College in the western part of the city. Service operates every 40 minutes on weekdays from 5:40 AM to 8:15 PM and on Saturdays from 6:20 AM to 7:35 PM.

Route 12: Routes 12 serves the South Norwalk Railroad station before making a loop in the city's southwest corner, which includes the Rowayton Railroad station. Morning service operates every 80 minutes in the clockwise direction on weekdays from 5:37 AM to 12:55 PM and on Saturdays from 6:57 AM to 12:55 PM. Afternoon service operates every 80 minutes in the counterclockwise direction from 1:00 PM to 7:35 PM.

Evening and Sunday Service

Two routes operate hourly during evenings and on Sundays in the most popular portions of the base service area. The Connecticut Avenue Shuttle serves the South Norwalk railroad station directly, while the Main Avenue Shuttle stops nearby and also serves the Merritt 7 railroad station. The schedules for these bus routes are not coordinated with the rail schedule.

Both routes pass through the WHEELS Hub, where riders can transfer without charge between routes or to the Coastal Link and CT Transit Route 41 to Stamford. The evening and Sunday routes operate on weekdays from 7:37 PM to 10:32 PM, on Saturdays from 6:37 PM to 9:32 PM, and on Sundays from 8:40 AM to 6:40 PM.

Connecticut Avenue Shuttle: In addition to the South Norwalk railroad station and WHEELS Hub, the Connecticut Avenue shuttle serves the South Norwalk neighborhood, Norwalk Hospital, Norwalk Community College and several retail and entertainment destinations. This route is shown in Figure 16.

Main Avenue Shuttle: In addition to the Merritt 7 railroad station and WHEELS Hub, the Main Avenue shuttle serves the South Norwalk neighborhood and several retail and employment destinations. This route is shown in Figure 17.

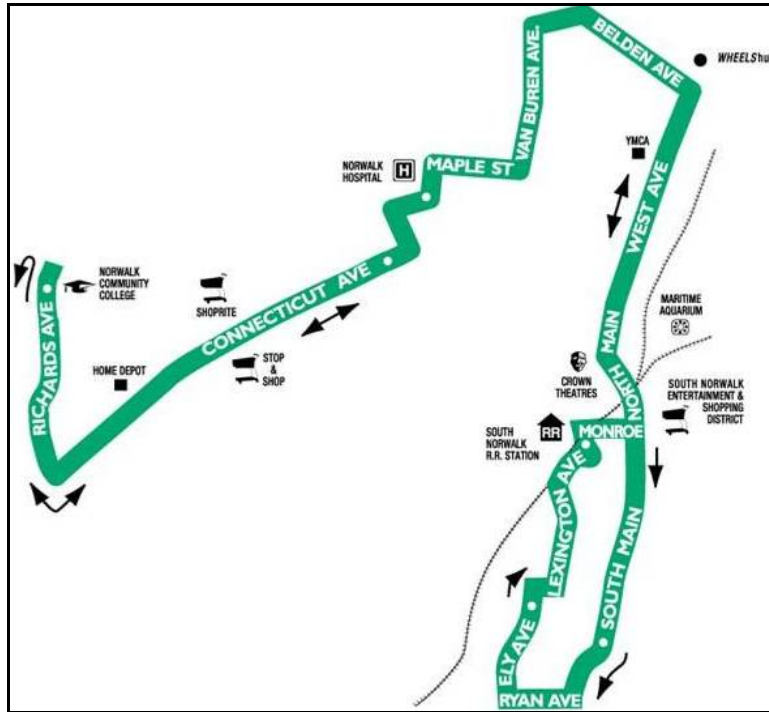


Figure 16: Connecticut Avenue Shuttle (NTD)

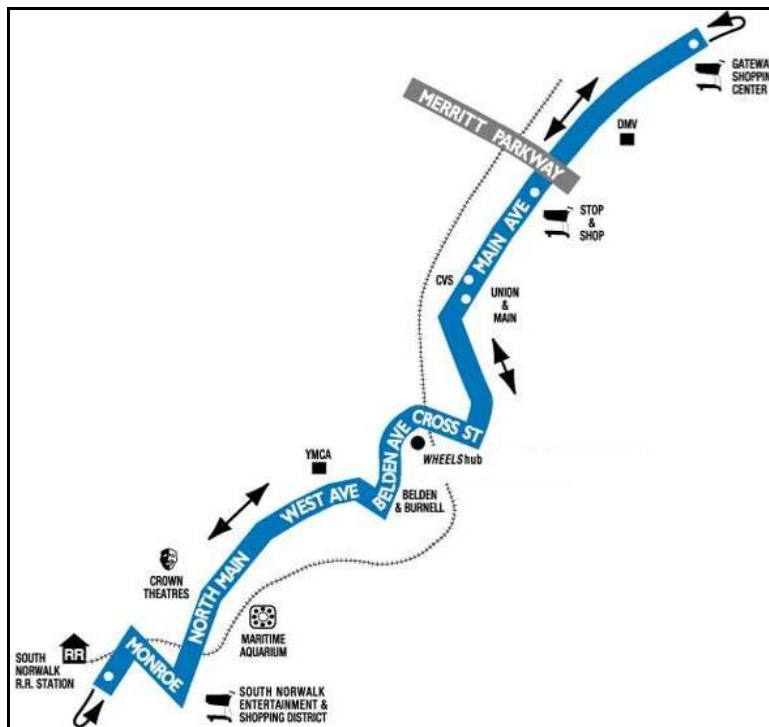


Figure 17: Main Avenue Shuttle (NTD)

Commuter Shuttles

NTD offers three commuter shuttles and one train station park and ride shuttle, all operating only during peak periods on weekdays. The commuter shuttles provide extensive coverage for trains

arriving and departing the South Norwalk Railroad station. The Merritt 7/Glover Avenue shuttle also serves the Merritt 7 Railroad station. Base routes provide additional service to both stations and all of the sites they serve at non-peak hours, although the base route schedules are not coordinated with the train schedules. Shuttle fares are identical to base route fares, and Metro-North UniTickets are accepted. Table 28 shows the average daily ridership of these shuttles.

Table 28: Average Daily Boardings, NTD Commuter Shuttles

Commuter Shuttle	Time Period									
	Fiscal Year							2008		
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Jul	Aug	Sept
Merritt 7/Glover Ave	70	83	106	167	205	194	228	311	309	318
10/20 Westport Road	34	38	40	40	44	56	73	88	85	91
Norwalk Hospital/Belden Ave	81	93	101	112	118	117	114	141	132	134

Source: Norwalk Transit District

Merritt 7/Glover Avenue Commuter Shuttle: The Merritt 7/Glover Avenue Commuter Shuttle provides peak hour service from the South Norwalk Railroad station to the Merritt 7 employment complex and other nearby employment centers. The shuttle served an average of 318 daily riders in the month of September 2008. Each one-way trip takes approximately 20 minutes. Morning trips operate every 10-30 minutes from 6:50 AM to 9:37 AM, meeting all peak trains arriving from New Haven (6), Fairfield (2) and New York (5). Afternoon trips operate every 12-30 minutes from 3:36 PM to 6:30 PM, meeting all peak trains to New Haven (7) and New York (6). An additional trip arrives at 7:30 PM to meet later trains to New York and New Haven. At the Merritt 7 railroad station, the shuttle meets two of the four morning trains arriving from Danbury and three of the six trains to Danbury.

Additional service is offered, although not coordinated with train schedules:

- WHEELS routes 10 and 3, through-routed at the WHEELS Hub, provide service every 20 minutes from the South Norwalk Railroad station to the Merritt 7 area.
- The 7 Link provides hourly service from the WHEELS Hub to the Merritt 7 area during peak hours.

10/20 Westport Road, Wilton Commuter Shuttle: The 10/20 Westport Road, Wilton Commuter Shuttle provides peak hour service from the South Norwalk Railroad station to the Route 7 corridor employment complexes at 50 Danbury Road and 10/20 Westport Road in Wilton. The Department of Motor Vehicles in northern Norwalk is also served by this shuttle, which averaged 91 daily riders in the month of September 2008. About 3 percent of operating expenses are provided by Golf Digest and News America Marketing, employers at 10/20 Westport Road.

Each one-way trip is scheduled to take 20 minutes. Morning trips operate approximately 30 minutes from 7:38 AM to 9:30 AM, meeting four peak trains arriving from New Haven, two from Fairfield, three from Danbury, and four from New York. Afternoon trips operate every 20-40 minutes from 4:35 PM to 6:35 PM, meeting four peak trains to New Haven, three to Danbury, and four to New York.

The 7 Link also serves these destinations hourly during peak hours, although a transfer is required at the WHEELS Hub for service to or from the South Norwalk Railroad station.

Norwalk Hospital/Belden Avenue Commuter Shuttle: The Norwalk Hospital/Belden Avenue Commuter Shuttle provides peak hour service from the South Norwalk Railroad station to Norwalk Hospital and downtown Norwalk. The shuttle served an average of 134 daily riders in the month of September 2008. Each one-way trip is scheduled to take ten minutes. Morning trips operate every 15-20 minutes from 6:47 AM to 9:24 AM, meeting all peak trains arriving from Danbury (5), New Haven (6), Fairfield (2) and New York (5). Afternoon trips operate every 18-40 minutes from 3:48 PM to 6:30 PM, meeting three of the six peak trains to Danbury and all peak trains to New Haven (7) and New York (6).

Additional service is offered, although not coordinated with train schedules:

- WHEELS Route 12 provides service every 80 minutes from the South Norwalk Railroad station to both Norwalk Hospital and Belden Avenue
- WHEELS routes 10 and 11 each provides service every 40 minutes to Belden Avenue (adjacent to the WHEELS Hub), with a timed transfer required for service to Norwalk Hospital.

Maritime/SONO Train Station Shuttle: The Maritime/SONO Train Station Shuttle, initiated in October 2008, is designed to bring rail commuters from the Maritime Garage on North Water Street to the South Norwalk Railroad station. Incoming rail passengers may also use the shuttle to access employment sites along North Water Street. The shuttle departs each end about every ten minutes from 6:00 AM to 9:15 AM and from 3:45 PM to 7:45 PM, for the five-minute one-way trip. No fare is charged for riders with a parking stub or UniTicket; others are charged the full fare.

Additional service is offered, although not coordinated with train schedules:

- WHEELS Route 11 provides service every 40 minutes from the South Norwalk railroad station to the corner of Washington Street and North Water Street.

Regional Routes

The 7 Link: NTD operates The 7 Link in conjunction with HART. This peak hour route provides an interagency connection and serves major retail and employment destinations along US 7 in Danbury, Ridgefield, Wilton and Norwalk. Three intermediate Metro-North stations at Merritt 7, Wilton and Branchville, are also served. The Route 7 Link is described in more detail above in section 3.1.

CT TRANSIT Route 41: The Stamford Division of CT TRANSIT operates Route 41 from downtown Stamford to the WHEELS Hub, serving Norwalk Community College (served on 41A trips) and the Darien and Stamford Railroad stations on the Metro-North New Haven Line. Service operates every 20 to 60 minutes on weekdays from 5:10 AM to 12:28 AM, every 30 minutes on Saturdays from 5:30 AM to 10:37 PM, and every 30 minutes on Sundays from 8:00 AM to 7:28 PM. Additional service (41B) operates between Stamford and Norwalk Community College only; some of these trips operate express via I-95 and omit Darien Railroad station.

Coastal Link: The Coastal Link is a joint venture between NTD, GBTA and Milford Transit District to provide service along US 1 between the WHEELS Hub in downtown Norwalk and the CT Post Mall in Milford. The route serves numerous retail and employment destinations in the dense US 1 corridor and the Railroad stations at Fairfield, Bridgeport, Stratford and Milford (on the New Haven Line). Service operates every 20 to 60 minutes on weekdays from 5:00 AM to 12:00 AM, every 30 minutes on Saturdays from 5:20 AM to 12:00 AM, and hourly on Sundays from 7:30 AM to 8:30 PM.

3.3 Corporate Shuttles

Merritt 7 Corporate Park operates shuttle service from the Merritt 7 Railroad station to places of employment in and around the Merritt 7 Corporate Park, an Albert D. Phelps, Inc. property. The shuttle meets the four morning trains arriving from Danbury at 6:59, 7:31, 8:03 and 8:33 AM and the 9:00 AM train arriving from South Norwalk and New York. In the evening, the shuttle meets the 4:21, 5:38 and 6:20 PM Danbury-bound departures.⁵ There is also a 5:52 PM departure to South Norwalk. Passengers may wait in the shuttle vehicle until their train arrives. Passenger counts in the first week of December 2008 showed an average of 40 riders per day (Table 29).

Table 29: Daily Boardings, Merritt 7 Corporate Park Shuttle, December 2008

	Dec 1	Dec 2	Dec 3	Dec 4	Dec 5
Boardings	45	33	38	45	39

Source: A. D. Phelps

Metro-Pool sets up private and corporate shuttles for employers and employees in an attempt to reduce the number of people traveling alone to work (especially along US 7). According to Metro-Pool, there are currently no private or corporate shuttles that serve stations along the Danbury Branch Line but some shuttles serve the South Norwalk Railroad station. One private shuttle, from Cendant Mobility, does operate as both an inter-site and a train shuttle, but acts as a train shuttle only upon request.

3.4 Ride Sharing

Metro-Pool provides free commuter services to employers and commuters with the support of the Connecticut and New York Departments of Transportation. It administers commuting programs for approximately 300 companies, with customized employer and employee incentive programs.

Metro-Pool also facilitates carpool and vanpool ride matching, provides commuting advice to individuals who do not have employer-based programs available to them. Vanpools and carpools administered by Metro-Pool do exist in the Housatonic Valley, although no vanpools serve Danbury Line Metro-North Railroad stations.

⁵ This information was received on January 14, 2009 from Merritt 7 Corporate Park. The schedule was last revised in October 2008 to reflect the Metro-North Railroad winter schedule.