



# Waterbury Branch Rail Line Improvement & Funding Conference January 13, 2020



# Agenda

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks
  - Mayor Pete Hess, Chair, Waterbury Rail Working Group
  - Mayor Neil O'Leary, Chair, NVCOG & CNVMPO
2. Why are we here today?
3. Overview of Waterbury Branch Rail Line
  - Current Operating Conditions & Problems
  - Status of On-going Capital Projects
  - Legislative Actions since February 2018 Rail Summit
4. Governor's CT2030 Plan – WBL Actions
5. NVCOG Rail Action Plan – Our Shared Vision
  - Rail Action Plan
  - Proposed Action Plan
6. Roundtable Discussion with Legislators and State Officials
  - Rick Dunne, Moderator

# Proposed Action Plan

## 2020

- Immediately increase service level
  - 2020 – 1 trip in AM and PM peak periods (at appropriate times)
  - 2021-2024 – add one more trip to peak periods
- Specific legislation / bonding request for WBL actions:
  - Dedicate new rail equipment to WBL service = ±\$112 million
  - Develop and construct new rail maintenance and storage yard in Waterbury

## 2024-2025

- Expand service: 30-min. headways (peak); 60-min. headways (off-peak) = ±\$5.3 million increase in annual operating subsidy

## Future Needs

- Construct new rail stations with full amenities
- Develop & construct Devon transfer station
- Planning Studies:
  - Feasibility of extending WBL north to Thomaston & Torrington
  - Feasibility of instituting passenger service on Central CT Line – Berlin to Bristol

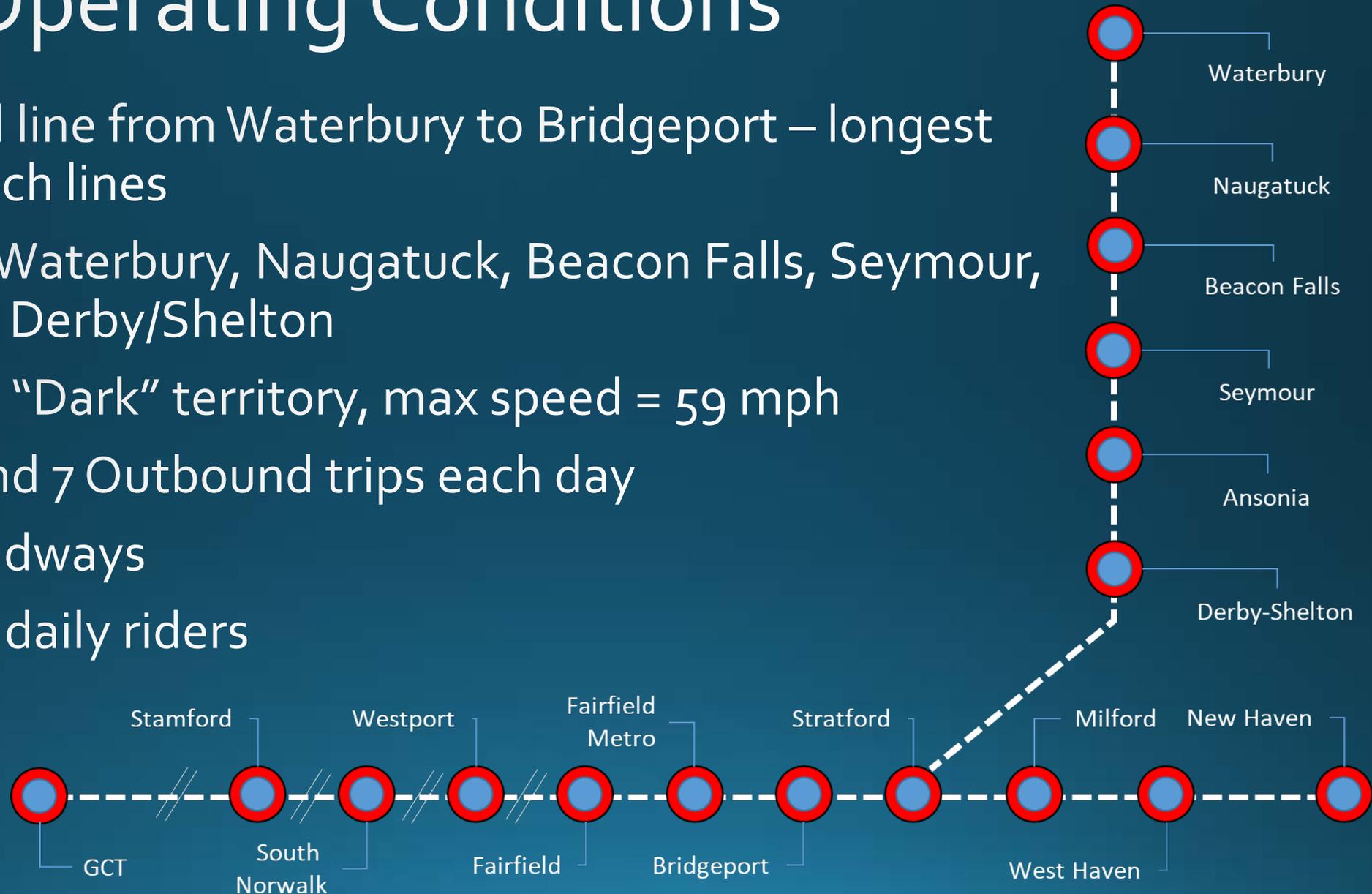
# Why are we here today?

- Reach consensus on a *Rail Action Plan* for the Waterbury Branch Line
- Get commitments to fund investments in the WBL:
  - Expand service – at least 2 additional trips in both the AM and PM peak periods under current operating conditions
  - Expedite design and delivery of new rail equipment – dedicate new train sets to the WBL
  - Initiate planning and design of a new rail maintenance and storage yard along the WBL
  - Support long-term vision for improving the WBL – new stations, high level platforms, full amenities, Devon transfer station
  - Initiate planning on feasibility of extending passenger rail service north to Thomaston and Torrington and between Berlin and Bristol

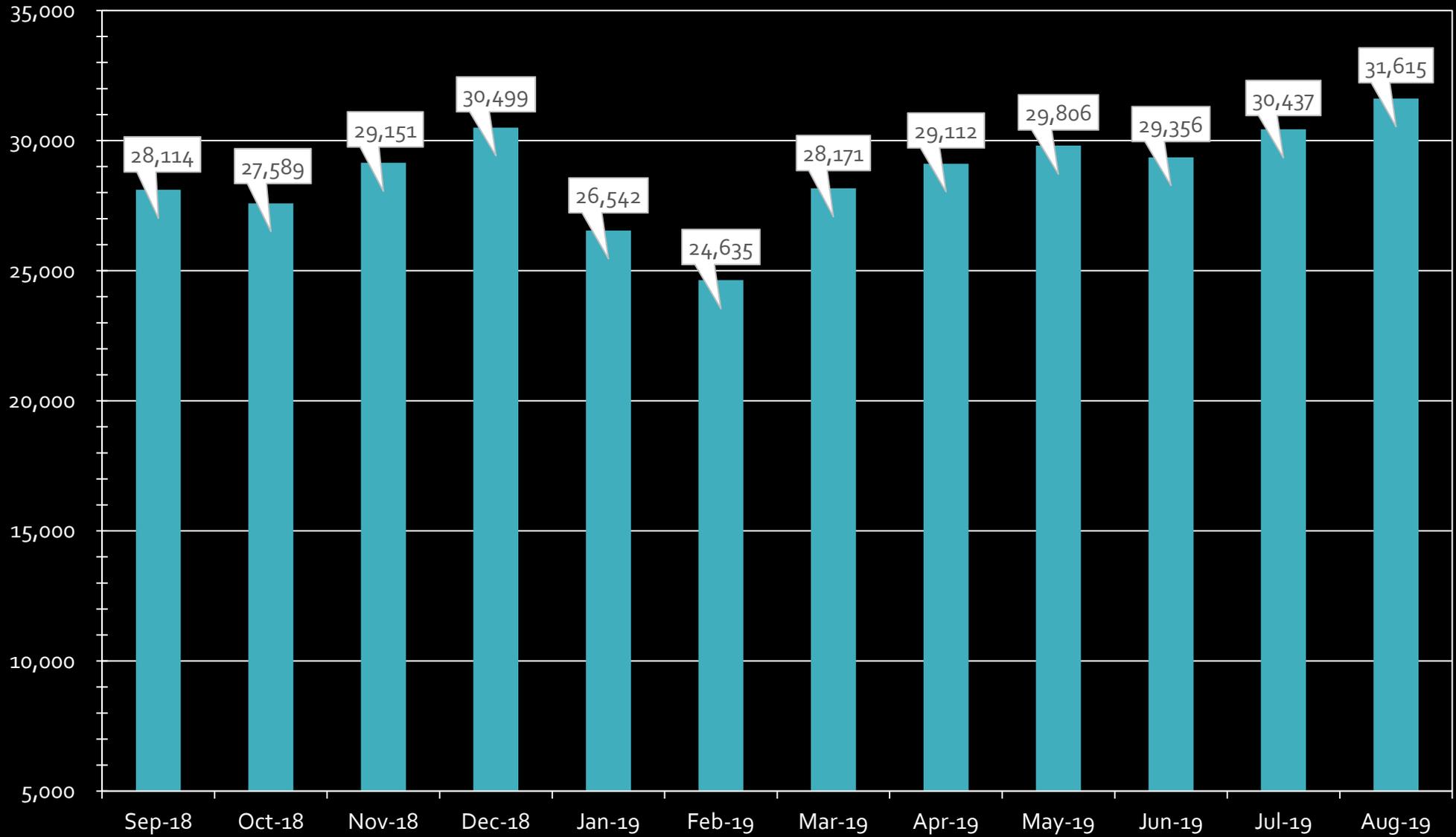
# Overview of the Waterbury Branch Rail Line

# Current Operating Conditions

- 27.1-mile rail line from Waterbury to Bridgeport – longest of the 3 branch lines
- 6 Stations – Waterbury, Naugatuck, Beacon Falls, Seymour, Ansonia and Derby/Shelton
- Single track, “Dark” territory, max speed = 59 mph
- 8 Inbound and 7 Outbound trips each day
- 2½ hour headways
- About 1,000 daily riders

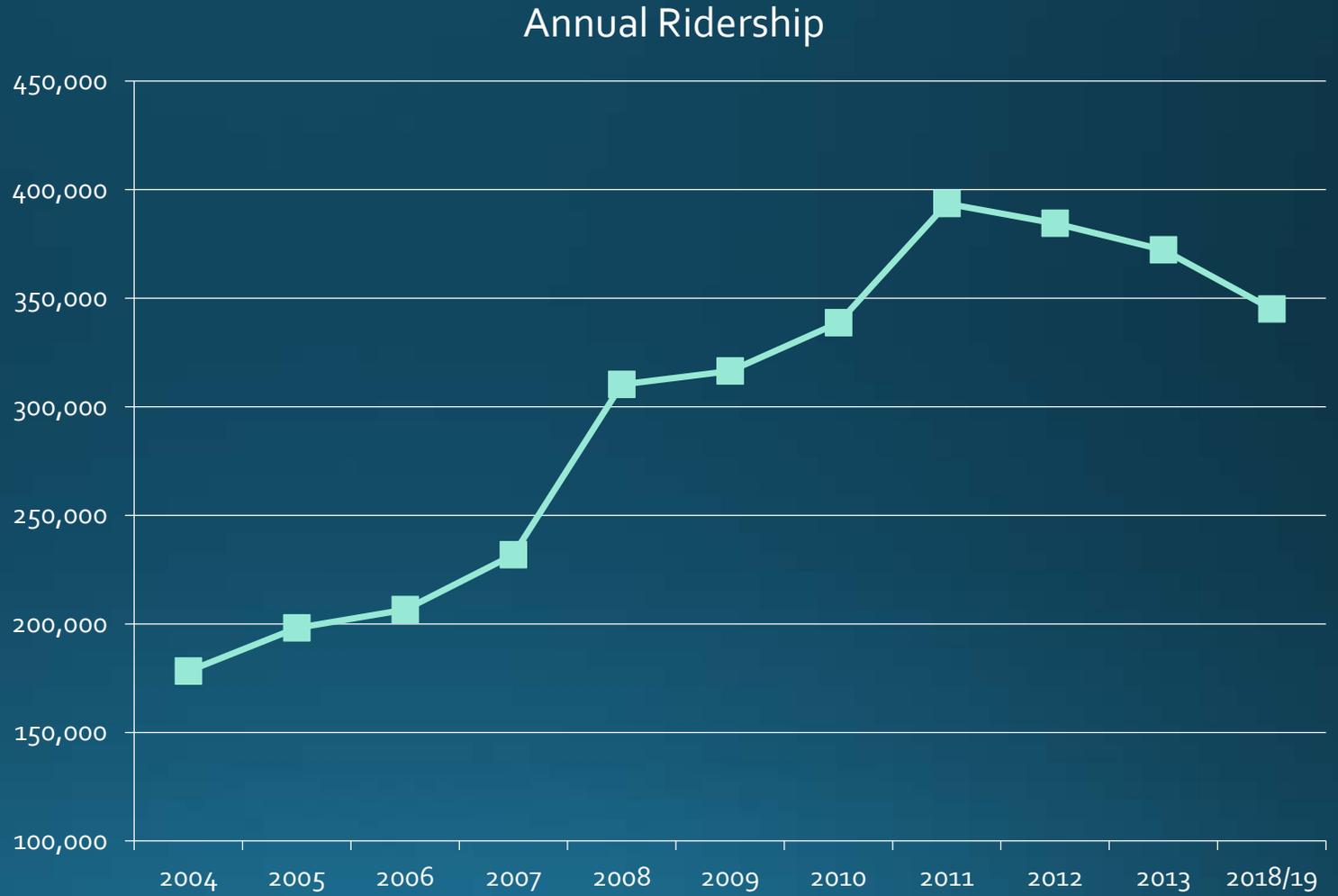


# Monthly Ridership – Waterbury Branch Line



# Change in Ridership

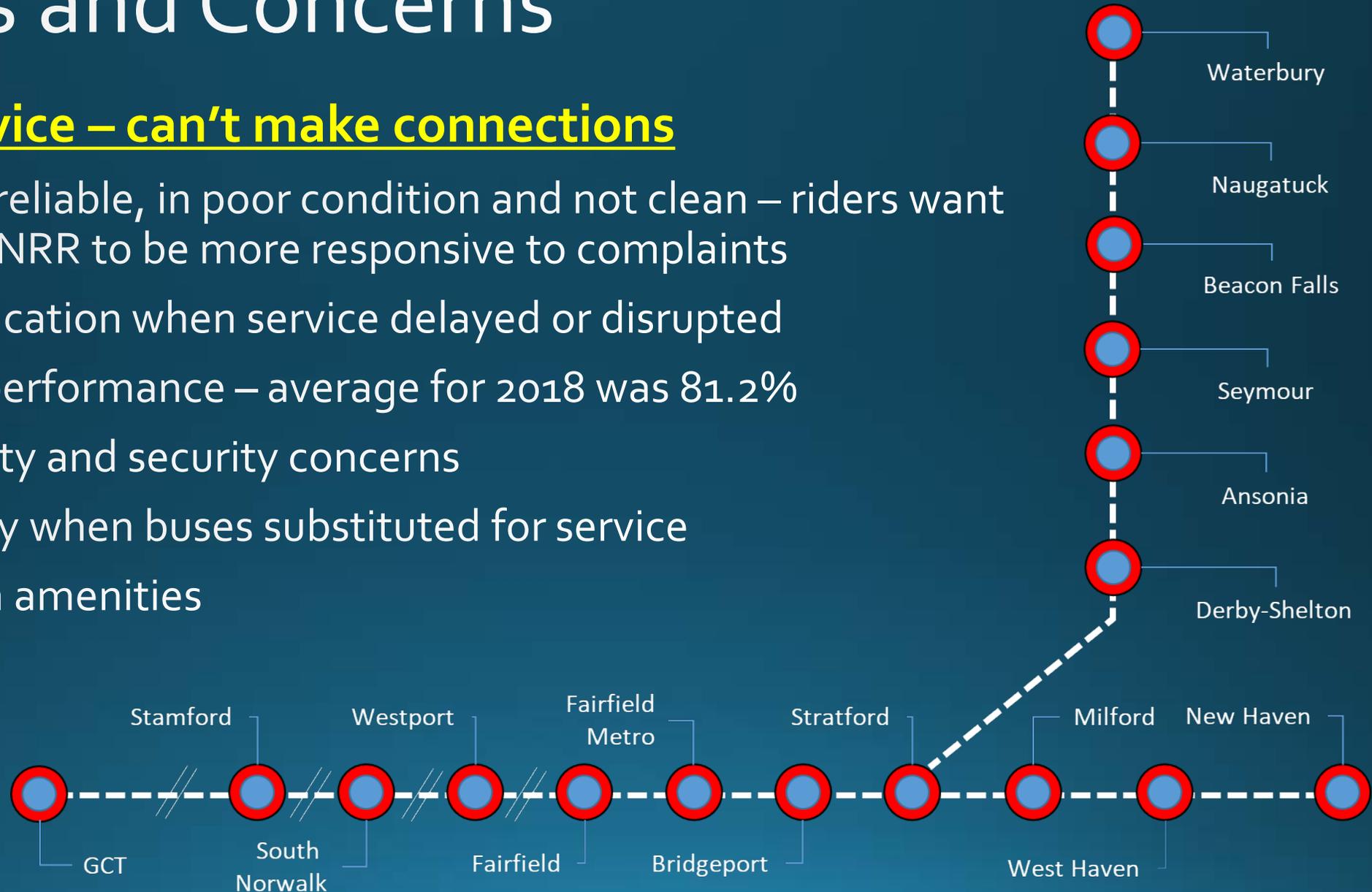
- Annual Ridership:
  - 178,170 in 2004
  - 345,027 in 2018/19
  - 94% increase
- Ridership Peaked in 2011 at 393,596
- 34% increase in ridership occurred after adding 1 new inbound trip in the AM peak period



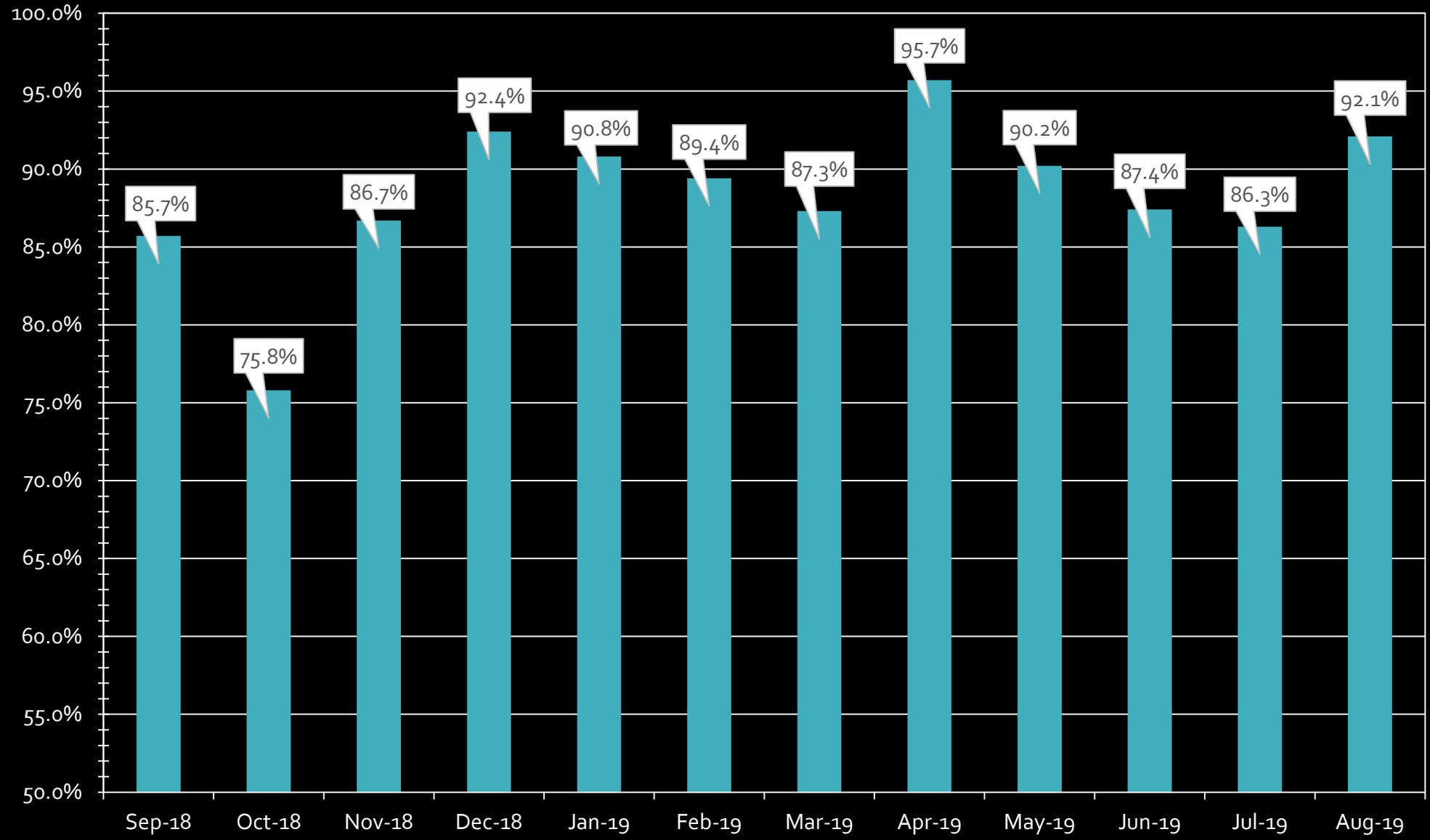
# Problems and Concerns

- **Limited service – can't make connections**

- Equipment unreliable, in poor condition and not clean – riders want CTDOT and MNRR to be more responsive to complaints
- Poor communication when service delayed or disrupted
- Poor on time performance – average for 2018 was 81.2%
- On-board safety and security concerns
- Excessive delay when buses substituted for service
- Lack of station amenities



# On-Time Performance – Waterbury Branch Line



# Status of On-going Capital Projects

- Completion of Signal and Cable installation: December 2020
- Final testing and commissioning of Signal System & PTC: June 2021
- Passing sidings:
  - Derby siding track completed: August 2019
  - Beacon Falls siding track expected to be completed: April 2020
  - Other sidings to be worked on during outages scheduled in 2020 and 2021
  - Passing sidings can't be put into service until signal system operational
- All freight sidings and spurs will be under MNRR control once PTC operational on the mainline
- Multiple trains will be permitted to operate on WBL once all Signal & PTC systems operational
- Reconstruction of the Waterbury rail station parking lot: underway
- Looking at leasing rail equipment from other states to add 2 trains
- Central CT Rail Study completed in 2016

# Requests from February 2018 Rail Summit

1. Make improvements on WBL a priority
2. Funding for equipment for replacement and expanded service:
  - At least 2 replacement trains sets at ±\$32 million
  - At least 3 new train sets for expanded service at ±\$48 million
3. Expand service to 30-minute headways during peak periods:
  - ±\$1.9 million annual subsidy
4. Install high level platforms at all stations: ±\$17.3 million
5. Future relocation of Naugatuck rail station: ±\$14-to-21 million
6. WBL storage & maintenance yard: ±\$40-to-60 million

## Response:

**Everyone promised to get funding to order new rail equipment dedicated to WBL**

# Legislative/CTDOT Actions to Date

- **No Action to Date**
- No State Legislative or State Bond Commission action on new equipment dedicated to Waterbury Branch Line
  - One Raised Bill to increase service – HB 7098; not passed out of committee
  - Several SBC actions to provide funds for Bus & Rail projects; none specific to WBL – PA 2, 2017, Section 416(b) and 422(b)
- CTDOT developing specs for new rail equipment
  - \$250 million appropriated for 60 rail cars
  - RFP late 2019(?)
  - Up to 5 years to complete design and acquisition
  - None of new rail cars would be dedicated to be placed in service on WBL
  - No new locomotives; refurbish existing

# Governor's CT2030 Plan

# Waterbury Branch Line Actions

- 132 new rail cars & 30 locomotives for the NHML, WBL, Danbury branch line, SLE & Hartford rail line: ±\$842 million
- Dual powered (diesel & electric) locomotives for the WBL:
  - Operate on both branch and mainline
  - Direct service to Stamford and New York City
  - More frequent and convenient service
- Institute more frequent service on the WBL
- Install high level platforms on the WBL: ±\$50 million
- Real Time passenger information system upgrades: ±\$16 million
- Rail maintenance shop and storage yards to accommodate expanded rail fleet (location TBD): ±\$140 million;

# NVCOG Rail Action Plan

## Our Vision

# Immediate Actions

1. Add service to WBL:
  - a. 2020 – 1 trip in AM and PM peak periods (at appropriate times)
  - b. 2021-2024 – add one more trip to peak periods
2. Develop specifications for new rail equipment and issue RFP – delays lengthen timeline for placing new equipment into service
3. Clean and better maintain current rail cars
4. Address on-board safety issues and concerns
5. Complete plans to rehabilitate old Waterbury rail station building to provide indoor waiting area: preliminary design on hold

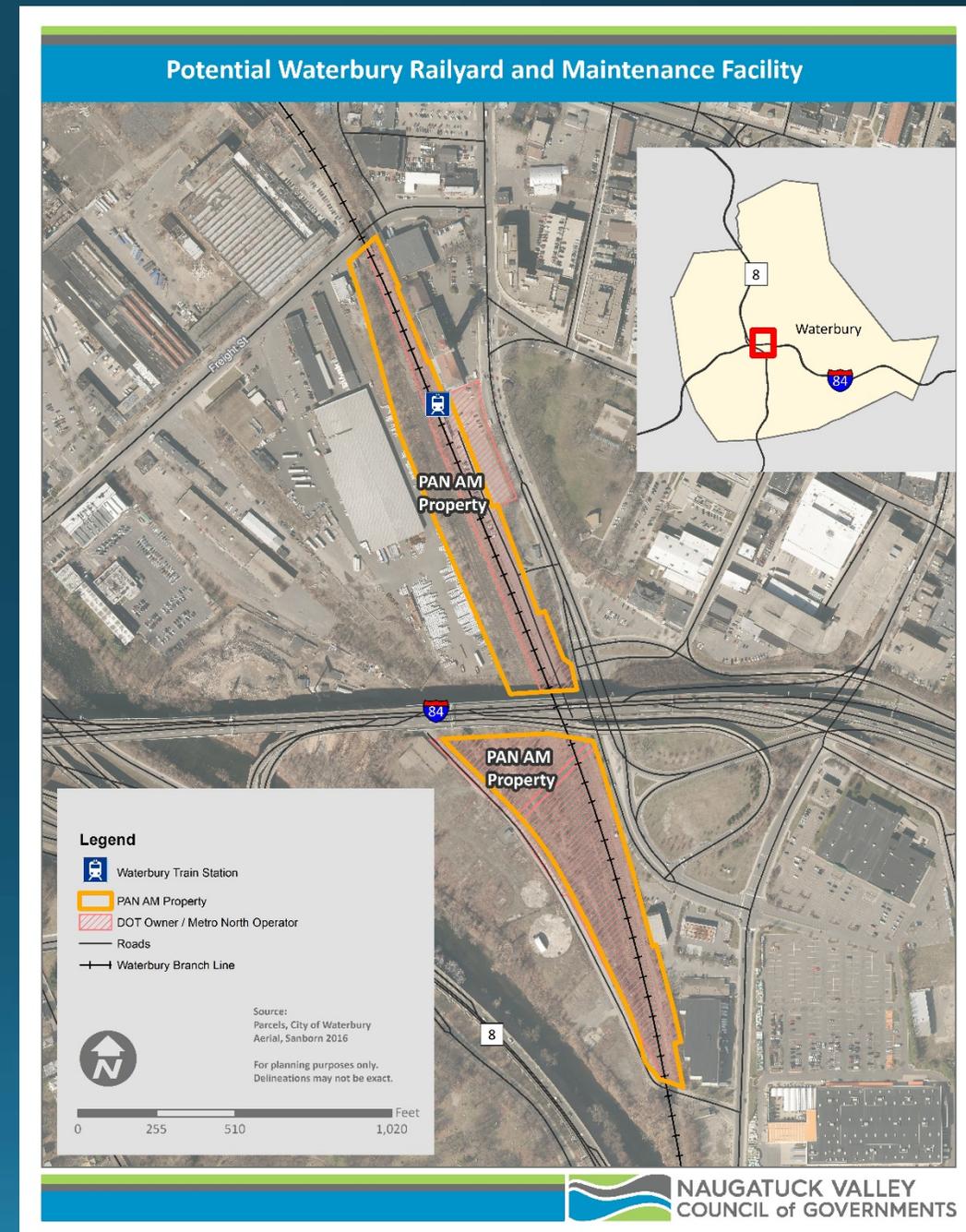
# Short-term Actions – 2020-2021

- Commit to acquiring new rail coaches and dual-powered locomotives dedicated to the Waterbury Branch Line: place in service by 2025
  - 4 sets to replace existing equipment – ±\$64 million
  - 3 sets to expand service – ±\$48 million



# Mid-Term Actions – 2025

- Expand service to provide 30-minute headways during peak periods & 60-minute headways during off-peak periods:
  - Increase in annual rail operating subsidies for the WBL =  $\pm$ \$5.3 million (starting in 2025)
- Develop new rail maintenance shop, storage yard and fueling at Waterbury:
  - Possibly acquire tracks adjacent to Waterbury station – Pan Am owner
  - Need maintenance building next to tracks
  - $\pm$ \$140 million



# Mid-to-Long Term Actions – 2025-2030

- New and rehabilitated stations:
  - New buildings at Beacon Falls and Ansonia: ±\$60 million
  - Relocate Naugatuck and Seymour stations: ±\$100 million
  - Rehabilitate Waterbury and Derby/Shelton stations: ±\$50 million
- Include Full Station Amenities:
  - High level platforms
  - Platform canopies
  - Landscaping and parking
  - Real-time information systems
  - Ticketing kiosks
  - Full accessibility
  - Connections to downtown areas



# Long-Term Vision – Beyond 2030

- Design and construct new permanent transfer station at Devon wye:
  - ±\$50 million
  - Install interconnected platforms between WBL and NHML
  - Connection to Track 4 (outbound)
  - Operate “shuttle” type service on WBL to meet NHML trains
  - Connect to New Haven
  - Maintain / retain through service
- Upgrade CT Central Line & institute passenger service; Berlin to Bristol – planning
- Extend WBL to Thomaston and Torrington – need to assess

## Devon Wye

Option 2

- Up and Over
- Eastbound Platform
- Parking
- Modified Wye
- Westbound Platform
- Transfer Platform
- Polygon 9



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# Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing Act (RRIFA)

- Possible financing option – USDOT direct loans and loan guarantees
- To fund railroad infrastructure improvements
- Eligible activities:
  - Acquire, improve or rehabilitate rail equipment and facilities
  - Develop new rail facilities
  - Refinance debt on projects listed above
- Loans can fund up to 100% of railroad project
- Up to a 35 year repayment schedule
- Low interest rates – railroad assets used as collateral
- Buy American requirements

# Roundtable Discussion