

## **STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND OWNERSHIP**

All of the analyses, findings, data, and recommendations contained within this report are the exclusive property of Parsons Transportation Group, a contractor to Connecticut Department of Transportation.

As required by the Code of Ethics of the National Council on Public Polls and the United States Privacy Act of 1974, The Center for Research & Public Policy maintains the anonymity of respondents to surveys the firm conducts. No information will be released that might, in any way, reveal the identity of the respondent.

Moreover, no information regarding these findings will be released without the express written consent of an authorized representative of Parsons Transportation Group or Connecticut Department of Transportation.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## SECTION 1

Introduction.....Page 3

## SECTION 2

Methodology.....Page 4

## SECTION 3

Highlights.....Page 6

## SECTION 4

Summary of Findings.....Page 8

*Mode of Transportation* .....9  
*Metro-North History* .....11  
*The Market*.....15  
*Demographics* .....18

## SECTION 5

Appendix.....Page 20

*Survey Instrument*  
*Composite Aggregate Data*  
*Crosstabulation Table & Frequencies*

# INTRODUCTION

---

The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is pleased to present the results of a 2008 *New Canaan Branch Line Survey* conducted on behalf of Parsons Transportation Group (PTG), a contractor to Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT).

CRPP, a full service market research and public policy consulting firm, was commissioned by PTG to conduct comprehensive research related to current and potential use of Metro-North commuter rail service among commuters in its catchment area that do not currently commute by train. This report provides findings of a survey conducted among commuters living in specified towns near the New Canaan Branch Line. The survey was designed to elicit commuter opinions and input on a wide range of topics.

CRPP research staff completed a total of 400 surveys for PTG among commuters living near the New Canaan Branch Line.

This report summarizes statistics collected from telephone interviews conducted among commuters September 29 through October 15, 2008. All interviews were conducted during this time.

The *Branch Line Survey* included the following areas for investigation:

- Mode of transportation currently used;
- History of using Metro-North;
- Perceptions of the market; and
- Demographics.

Following this Introduction, Section II - contains and explains the methodologies employed in completing this *New Canaan Branch Line Survey*, the margins for error and the confidence level for the statistics collected.

Section III - contains Highlights made after a careful analysis of the data which is presented in narrative format in the Summary of Findings, Section IV.

Section V - is the Appendix containing a copy of the survey instrument utilized, a crosstabulation table, additional crosstabulation frequencies and the composite aggregate data.

## METHODOLOGY

---

The Center for Research & Public Policy utilized a quantitative research design using a questionnaire developed by officials from CRPP, ConnDOT, and Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI), a subcontractor to PTG, to collect commuter views. Actual wording of each question is contained in the Appendix of this report.

CRPP research staff completed a total of 400 surveys for PTG among commuters living near the New Canaan Branch Line. Respondents qualified if they regularly commute anywhere from two to seven times weekly to such places as work, school or business activities, if they do not currently use Metro-North train services for their regular commute, and if they commute to a specific list of zip codes that were provided to CRPP from FHI personnel.

Survey design at CRPP is a careful, deliberative process to ensure fair, objective and balanced surveys. Staff members, with years of survey design experience, edit out any bias. Further, all scales used by CRPP (either numeric, such as one through ten, or wording such as strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree) are balanced evenly. And, placement of questions is carefully accomplished so that order has minimal impact.

Completion rates are a critical aspect of any telephone survey research. Because one group of people might be easier to reach than another group, it is important that concentrated efforts are made to reach all groups to an equal degree. A high completion rate means that a high percentage of the commuters within the original sample were actually contacted, and the resulting sample is not biased toward one potential audience. CRPP maintained an **83%** completion rate on all calls made to commuters during the survey. And, a high completion rate often indicates an interest in the topic.

CRPP used a callback procedure to ensure the randomness of the sample and to reduce non-response bias. When a randomly selected commuter was not available during the first telephone contact, additional callbacks were made in order to complete the interview.

All telephone interviews were conducted from CRPP headquarters, located in Trumbull, Connecticut. Research was conducted primarily during the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. weekdays and 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on weekends. The survey was conducted September 29 through October 15, 2008.

All facets of the *New Canaan Branch Line Study* were completed by CRPP's researchers and senior staff. These aspects included survey design, pre-testing, computer programming, fielding, coding, data entry, editing, validation, verification, computer analysis, analysis and report writing.

Statistically, a sample of 400 surveys represents a margin for error of +/-5.0% at a 95% confidence level.

In theory, a sample of area commuters will differ no more than +/-5.0% than if all commuters were contacted and included in the survey. That is, if random probability sampling procedures were reiterated over and over again, sample results may be expected to approximate the larger population values within plus or minus 5.0% -- 95 out of 100 times.

Readers of this report should note that any survey is analogous to a snapshot in time and results are only reflective of the time period in which the survey was undertaken. Should concerted public relations or information campaigns be undertaken during or shortly after the fielding of the survey, the results contained herein may be expected to change and should be, therefore, carefully interpreted and extrapolated.

Furthermore, it is important to note that all surveys contain some component of "sampling error." Error that is attributable to systematic bias has been significantly reduced by utilizing strict random probability procedures. This sample was strictly random in that selection of each potential commuter was an independent event, based on known probabilities.

Each qualified commuter had an equal chance for participating in the study. Statistical random error, however, can never be eliminated but may be significantly reduced by increasing sample size.

# HIGHLIGHTS

## MODE OF TRANSPORTATION...

- While the majority of commuters living near the New Canaan Branch Line 85.8% reported making their weekly commute by “driving alone,” more than ten percent of all respondents (11.5%) also reported “driving or riding with others” during their weekly commute.
- Respondents along the New Canaan Branch Line reported making their round trip commute, on average, 4.16 times per week.
- On average, commuters living among the New Canaan Branch Line reported an average commute time of 26.24 minutes each way.
- Further, New Canaan area commuters reported spending, on average, \$47.24 each week, for total commuting fuel costs.

## METRO-NORTH HISTORY...

- Three-quarters of all commuters living among the New Canaan Branch Line (76.3%) reported to be either “very aware” or “somewhat aware” of Metro-North train services such as schedules, logistics, costs and destinations.
- Despite not utilizing the train service for their weekly commute, respondents reported making, on average, 5.79 trips annually on Metro-North for reasons other than commuting.
- Top reasons reported for not using Metro-North train service or not using it more often for reasons other than a commute included the following: “prefer driving,” “it’s not close by/not convenient,” “only use it for entertainment/NYC,” “no need to use the train,” “hard to get to different destinations after train” and “no specific reason.”
- When asked to estimate what the price would be for their weekly commute if they used Metro-North as opposed to their current mode of transportation, respondents reported the following:
  - New Canaan – estimated average cost to use Metro-North = \$59.27
  - New Canaan – estimated average fuel cost using current transportation = \$47.24

## THE MARKET...

All respondents were read a list of improvements and/or enhancements to the New Canaan Branch Line and asked how likely, if made, each might influence them to begin using Metro-North for their weekly commute.

- The improvements/enhancements which were reported as having the greatest impact included the following: “lower cost of train fares,” “lower cost of parking” and “more parking at existing train stations.”
- The improvements/enhancements which were reported as having the least impact included the following: “trains being better equipped for physical disabilities,” “more frequent trains,” and “a more convenient train schedule.”
- Top reasons reported among respondents for not using Metro-North train service for their regular commute included the following: “I use my car more often,” “it’s not convenient,” “train does not go to my destination,” “I am too close to work to use it” and “no need/value to commute by train.”
- Finally, respondents reported the cost of gasoline would need to reach \$6.74 (MEAN) per gallon before they would make a concerted effort to use Metro-North train service for their regular commute.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

---

Respondents qualified for the survey if they regularly commute anywhere from two to seven times weekly to such places as work, school or business activities, if they do not currently use Metro-North train services for their regular commute, and if they commute to a specific list of zip codes that were provided to CRPP from FHI personnel, a subcontractor to PTG.

The Summary of Findings presents results collected for commuters living along the New Canaan Branch Line.

## MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

To begin the survey, all respondents were asked to report what mode of transportation they utilize most frequently when making their regular weekly commute.

As presented in the table below, the majority of all respondents reported “driving alone” most frequently.

<i>How do you make your regular weekly commute?</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
Drive alone;	85.8%
Drive or ride with others;	11.5
Are dropped off;	0.8
Take a bus;	1.5
Walk; or	0.5
Ride a bike	---

All respondents were then asked to report the number of days, each week, they make this round trip commute.

As presented in the table below, respondents reported making their round trip commute, on average, slightly more than four times per week.

<i>Average days each week you make this round trip commute.</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
0	0.3%
1	1.5
2	12.0
3	17.3
4	10.5
5	47.8
6	4.0
7	2.3
Depends	0.3
Don't know/unsure	4.3
<i>Average (without “don't know” responses)</i>	<b>4.16</b>

All respondents were asked to report how long their one-way commute is from door-to-door (in minutes) each time they make it.

On average, commuters living along the New Canaan Branch Line reported a commute time of 26.24 minutes each way. Detailed findings may be found in the table below.

<i>How long is your one-way, door-to-door commute each time you make it?</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
1-15 minutes	33.0%
16-30 minutes	44.3
31-45 minutes	9.5
46-60 minutes	6.7
61-75 minutes	1.5
76-90 minutes	0.8
91 or more minutes	1.2
Depends	1.8
Don't know/unsure	1.3
<b><i>Average (without "don't know" responses)</i></b>	<b><i>26.24</i></b>

In addition to time, researchers asked all respondents to approximate how much money they spend, on a weekly basis, for the cost of fuel used in their weekly commute.

Detailed findings may be found in the table below.

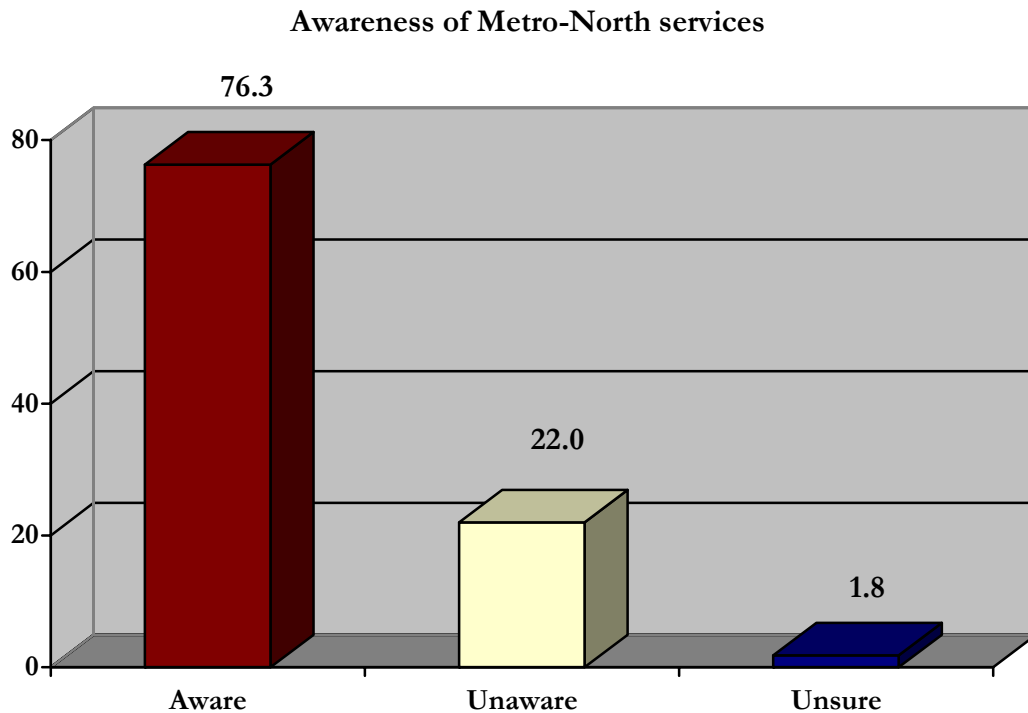
<i>How much you spend on the cost of fuel used in your commuting?</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
\$0-10 per week	8.8%
\$11-25 per week	19.7
\$26-50 per week	34.0
\$51-75 per week	10.0
\$76-100 per week	6.8
\$101-125 per week	2.2
\$126-150 per week	1.8
\$151-175 per week	---
\$176-200 per week	0.5
\$200 or more per week	1.2
Depends	2.8
Don't know/unsure	12.3
<b><i>Average (without "don't know" responses)</i></b>	<b><i>\$47.24</i></b>

## METRO-NORTH HISTORY

Researchers asked all respondents to report their awareness of Metro-North train services such as schedules, logistics, costs and destinations.

Detailed findings may be found in the table and chart located below.

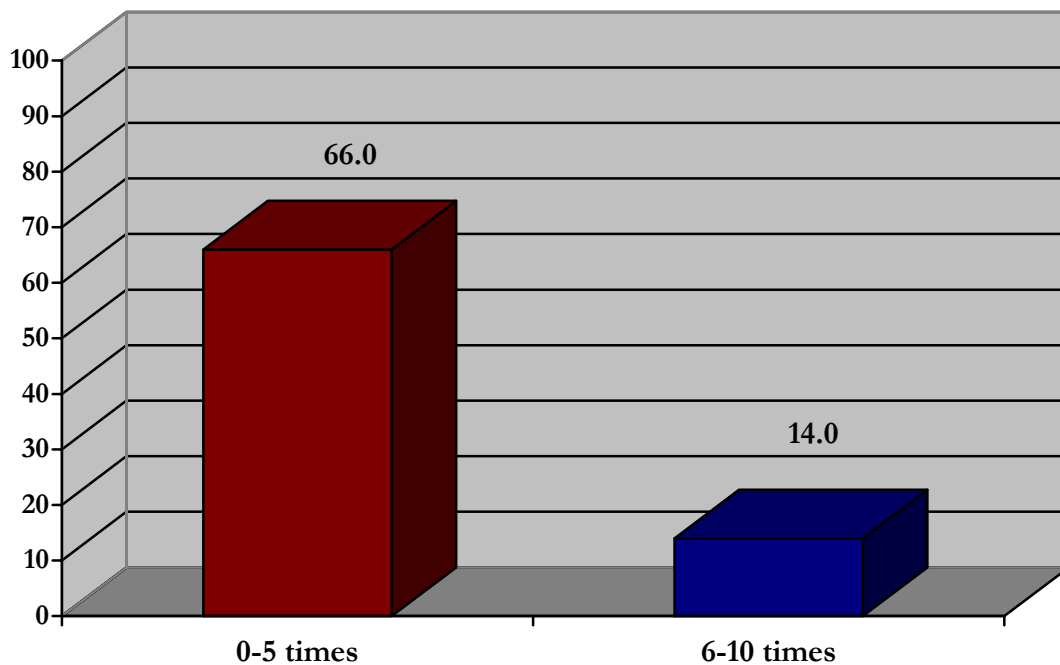
<i>Awareness of Metro-North train services such as schedules, logistics, costs and destinations?</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
Very aware	47.5%
Somewhat aware	28.8
Somewhat unaware	4.5
Not at all aware	17.5
Don't know/unsure	1.8
<b><i>Total aware</i></b>	<b><i>76.3</i></b>
<b><i>Total unaware</i></b>	<b><i>22.0</i></b>



Despite not utilizing Metro-North train service for their weekly commute, all respondents were asked to approximate the number of times, on an annual basis, they use Metro-North for reasons other than commuting.

<i>Number of times you use Metro-North for reasons other than a commute?</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
0-5 times per year	66.0%
6-10 times per year	14.0
11-15 times per year	8.0
16-20 times per year	3.0
21-25 times per year	2.3
25 or more times per year	2.2
Don't know/unsure	4.3
Refused	0.3
<i>Average (without "don't know" responses)</i>	<i>5.79</i>

Number of times, per year, you use Metro-North for reasons other than a commute?



In an open-ended format question, respondents were asked to identify the reasons why they don't use Metro-North train service or don't use it more often for reasons other than a commute.

<i>Reasons you don't use Metro-North train service or don't use it more often for reasons other than a commute</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
Prefer driving	23.3%
It's not close by/not convenient	16.5
Only use it for entertainment/NYC	15.8
No need to use the train	13.0
No specific reason	5.3
Sometimes it's cheaper to drive	3.8
Don't like riding the train	3.8
Hard to get from train to destination	2.8
Don't know/unsure	2.5
Takes too long	2.3
More parking is needed at the station	2.0
The train does not go close to my job	1.5
Too much equipment to get on the train with	1.3
Doesn't travel far enough to justify taking train	1.3
I am disabled	1.0
The bus is easier	1.0
No time	0.8
Overcrowded	0.5
I get sick on the train	0.5
Poor economy (train is more expensive)	0.5
Too old to travel by train	0.3
Do use it a good amount of time	0.3
Not safe	0.3
Trains are dirty	0.3

In an effort to better understand perceptions of the cost that is associated with riding Metro-North for their commute, researchers asked respondents to report what they believe they would pay to use Metro-North train service for their regular, weekly commute.

Detailed findings may be found in the table below.

<i>Estimation of what you believe you would pay Metro-North train service for your regular, weekly commute?</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
\$0-10	7.0%
\$11-20	3.8
\$21-30	5.5
\$31-40	2.0
\$41-50	4.2
\$51-75	3.3
\$76-100	5.0
\$101 or more	5.0
Don't know/unsure	64.3
<i>Average (without "don't know" responses)</i>	<b>\$59.27</b>

## THE MARKET

Researchers read a list of improvements or enhancements being considered by the Connecticut Department of Transportation and asked respondents to state whether each improvement would make them very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or not at all likely to begin using Metro-North for their commute.

The table below presents the results as collected.

<i>Improvements – New Canaan</i>	<i>Very likely</i>	<i>Somewhat likely</i>	<i>Somewhat unlikely</i>	<i>Not at all likely</i>
Lower cost of train fares	28.5%	9.5	3.3	52.5
Lower cost of parking fees	25.5	10.3	4.5	53.8
More parking at existing stations	20.0	15.3	3.5	55.8
Better shuttle bus service to and from existing stations	18.8	12.5	3.3	58.8
Decreasing travel time by 20%	18.0	14.5	4.5	55.0
A more convenient train schedule	17.5	15.5	5.0	54.3
More frequent trains	16.0	14.5	4.0	57.4
Trains are better equipped for physical disabilities	8.3	6.3	4.3	59.5

In an open-ended format question, all respondents were asked to report the primary reason why they don't use Metro-North train services for their regular commute.

The table below presents the results as collected.

<i>Primary reason you don't use Metro-North train service for your regular commute</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
I use my car more often	24.3%
It's not convenient	20.5
Train does not go to my destination	9.0
I am too close to work to use it	9.0
No need/value to commute by train	8.5
Too far from home	7.5
Too expensive	6.3
Parking never available at station	4.0
Don't know/unsure	3.0
Don't like riding the train	1.8
No specific reason	1.8
Bus is earlier/easier	1.0
Sometimes rides with others	0.5
No shuttle available	0.5
Sometimes they're late	0.5
There's no direct line from New Canaan to Stamford	0.5
Trains make me sick	0.5
Owens a business/schedule never the same	0.5
Overcrowded	0.3
Trains are dirty	0.3

All respondents were asked by researchers to indicate at what price, per gallon of gas, they would make a concerted effort to use Metro-North train service for their regular commute. Readers should note the cost for a gallon of gas at the time of the survey was approximately \$3.75.

Detailed findings are presented in the table below for comparison.

<i>At what price, per gallon of gas, would you make a concerted effort to use Metro-North train for your regular commute?</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
\$0-2 per gallon	5.3%
\$3 per gallon	0.8
\$4 per gallon	2.8
\$5 per gallon	10.0
\$6 per gallon	6.0
\$7 per gallon	2.5
\$8 per gallon	2.3
\$9 per gallon	0.5
\$10 or more per gallon	8.5
Refused	5.5
Don't know/unsure	56.0
<b><i>Average (without "don't know" responses)</i></b>	<b><i>\$6.74</i></b>

## DEMOGRAPHICS

<i># of Children at home</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
None	61.5%
One	13.8
Two	13.0
Three	5.0
Four	1.5
Five or more	0.3
Don't know/unsure	3.3
Refused	1.8

<i>Access to a car?</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
Yes	98.0%
No	1.8
Don't know/unsure	0.3

<i>Driver's license?</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
Yes	98.0%
No	1.5
Don't know/unsure	---
Refused	0.5

<i>Age</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
18 to 24	1.3%
25 to 34	3.3
35 to 44	9.3
45 to 54	27.0
55 to 64	21.5
65 or older	30.3
Refused	7.5

<i>Income</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
Under \$9,999	1.3%
\$10,000 to less than \$40,000	6.3
\$40,000 to less than \$70,000	10.5
\$70,000 to less than \$100,000	10.5
\$100,000 to less than \$130,000	8.5
\$130,000 to less than \$160,000	3.3
\$160,000 or more	9.8
DK/unsure	2.5
Refused	47.5

<i>Gender</i>	<i>New Canaan</i>
Male	38.5%
Female	61.5

# APPENDIX

---

## INTERPRETATION OF AGGREGATE RESULTS

The computer processed data for this survey is presented in the following frequency distributions. It is important to note that the wordings of the variable labels and value labels in the computer-processed data are largely abbreviated descriptions of the Questionnaire items and available response categories.

The frequency distributions include the category or response for the question items. Responses deemed not appropriate for classification have been grouped together under the “Other” code.

The “NA” category label refers to “No Answer” or “Not Applicable.” This code is also used to classify ambiguous responses. In addition, the “DK/RF” category includes those respondents who did not know their answer to a question or declined to answer it. In many of the tables, a group of responses may be tagged as “Missing” – occasionally, certain individuals’ responses may not be required for specific questions and thus are excluded. Although when this category of response is used, the computations of percentages are presented in two (2) ways in the frequency distributions: 1) with their inclusion (as a proportion of the total sample), and 2) their exclusion (as a proportion of a sample sub-group).

Each frequency distribution includes the absolute observed occurrence of each response (i.e. the total number of cases in each category). Immediately adjacent to the right of the column of absolute frequencies is the column of relative frequencies. These are the percentages of cases falling in each category response, including those cases designated as missing data. To the right of the relative frequency column is the adjusted frequency distribution column that contains the relative frequencies based on the legitimate (i.e. non-missing) cases. That is, the total base for the adjusted frequency distribution excludes the missing data. For most questions, the relative and adjusted frequencies will be nearly the same; however, some items that elicit a sizable number of missing data will produce quite substantial percentage differences between the two columns of frequencies. The careful analyst will cautiously consider both distributions.

The last column of data within the frequency distribution is the cumulative frequency distribution (Cum Freq). This column is simply an adjusted frequency distribution of the sum of all previous categories of response and the current category of response.