

# DERBY/SHELTON TRAIN STATION

## VISUAL INSPECTION REPORT



January 2007



Prepared by the Bureau of Public Transportation  
Connecticut Department of Transportation

**Overview:**

The Derby/Shelton Train Station is located near the Naugatuck River in downtown Derby. Shelton is located about a half-mile west across the Housatonic River. The Station is located next to the Valley Transit Center, and it is easily accessible from Routes 8 and 34. However, the placement of existing trailblazing signs should be reviewed. The parking lot is located under and adjacent to Route 8 overpass. The station driveway also services the Valley Transit District building.



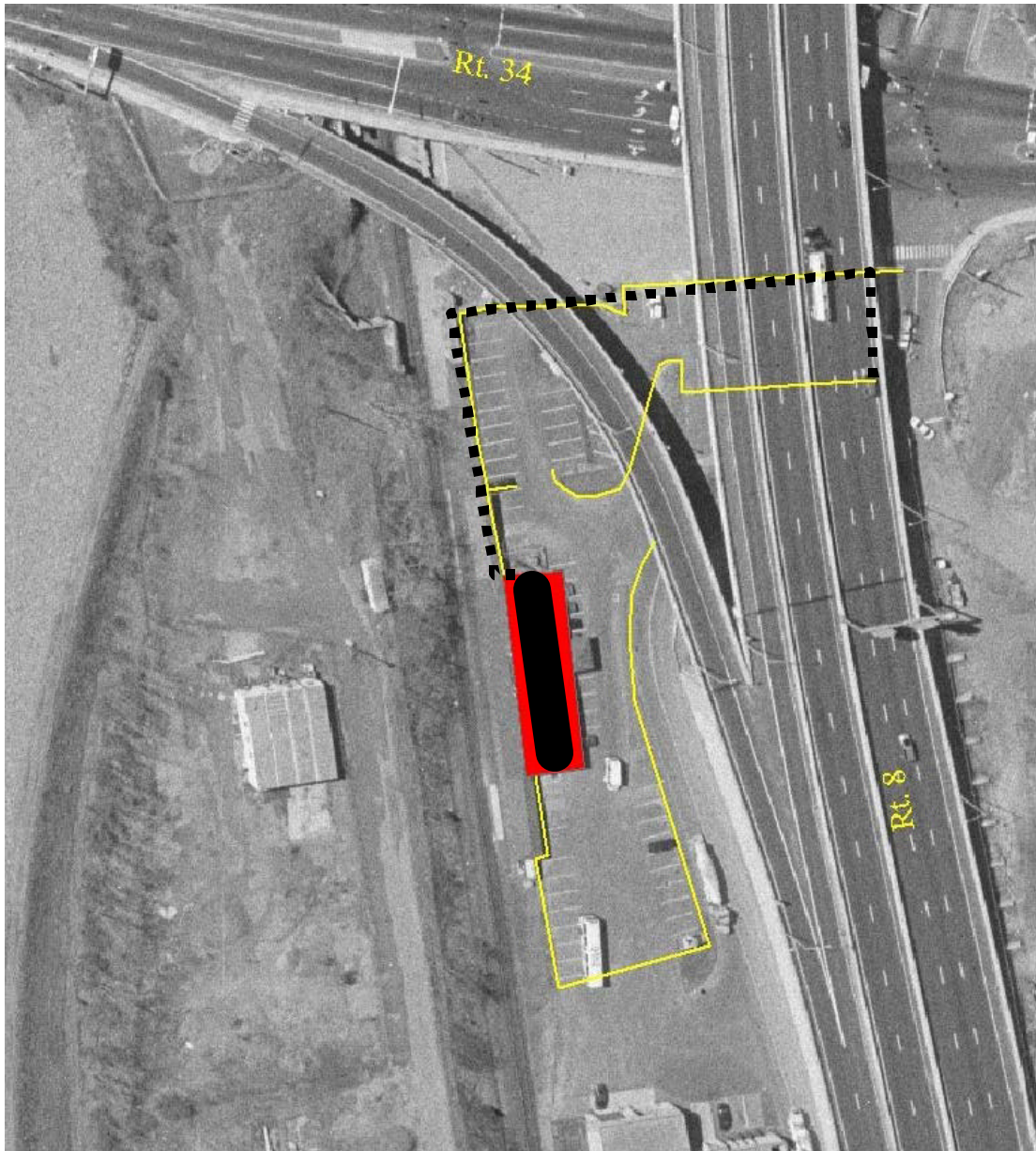
The station is a classic train stop. The historic brick building houses a coffee shop, a Motor Vehicle office and the offices of the Valley Council of Governments. In addition, there is a platform canopy, Plexiglas shelter, several picnic tables and a low-level boarding platform consisting of a wooden box.

Due to low ridership, this and other Waterbury Branch stations have received less attention than some station counterparts on the main line or other branch lines. However, Metro-North and the Department will continue to evaluate the demands of the Waterbury Branch patrons. The Department plans to initiate a Waterbury Branch needs and feasibility study next year. Study recommendation may be made included in planned station improvement program.

**Maintenance Responsibilities:**

Owner:	CDOT
Operator:	CDOT
Platform Lights:	Metro-North
Trash:	Metro-North
Snow Removal:	Metro-North
Shelter Glazing:	CDOT
Platform Canopy:	CDOT
Platform Structure:	CDOT
Parking:	Valley Planning Agency

**Station Layout:**



*Aerial Photo by Aero-Metric, Inc. – Graphics by Urbitran as part of the Rail Governance Study*



Station Building  
State-Owned Parking Area

### **Train Station Visual Inspection Parameters:**

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department) recently inspected all 36 New Haven Line train stations to assess their appearance, safety, means of access and overall condition. Observations have been noted in an inspection report prepared for each station. The findings of these individual reports will be used to develop a Station Improvement Program. Initially, maintenance issues will be passed along to responsible parties for resolution. Soon after, a series of improvement projects will be recommended, followed by a long-term program of maintenance repairs and capital improvements.

The following station components were reviewed as part of the visual inspection process:

- **Highway Access** – While traveling to each station, inspectors observed the placement of trailblazing signage. In addition, they assessed the ease of locating appropriate station parking and drop-off areas. Typically, a green highway sign has been placed in advance of the proper exit for a particular train station. This sign notes the name of the station and commuter service operator. However, trailblazing signage at ramp termini or on secondary routes is typically missing or indistinguishable amid the clutter of other signs. Primary routes from the major roadways to each station need to be established and prominently identified. Conversely, trailblazing the return route is also required.
- **Parking** – This station reports cover signage, illumination and pavement condition issues within station parking areas. The Department and municipalities will address parking capacity and demand matters separate from this report.
- **Platforms** – Each station report details observations related to the general condition of the platforms, stairs, ramps, handrails and railings. The reports also incorporate the comments and recommendations of the Department's Connecticut Rail Station Governance Study - May 2005 (Governance Study) and High Level Platform Visual Inspection & Inventory. The latter inspection effort addresses only main line stations. The Department will inspect branch line platforms and canopies in the second phase of the high-level platform inspection program and incorporate the findings into future improvement projects
- **Canopies** – Each station report details observations relative to the general condition of any canopies located at the station. As noted under the Platform heading above, other studies have been referenced in presenting the findings for this component of the station.
- **Illumination** – The observations noted in each station report do not include a specific heading for illumination. Field visits occurred during daylight hours, thus inspectors could not assess the effectiveness of illumination in parking areas, along paths or on the platforms. Comments have been included in other headings relative to the number of fixtures, location and assumed coverage. This station report incorporates the comments of the Governance Study, where appropriate. However, the reports generally recommend that any first phase of station improvement include an evaluation of illumination levels in all areas of the stations and upgrade light fixtures, as necessary.

- **Painting** – As with illumination, the station inspection reports address painting issues under the appropriate headings.
- **Walks and Paths** – This station inspection report makes note of paved paths between parking areas, streets and station platforms. Where appropriate, general observations of the condition of the paths, vegetation, lighting, signage and stairways along the paths have been included.
- **Ticket Vending Machine (TVM)** – Metro-North has placed TVM's at most high volume stations. Where appropriate, this station report notes current locations. The Department and Metro-North plan to install at least one full service TVM at all main line and branch line stations. They will accomplish each of these installations based on ridership demands and funding availability.
- **Shelter** – Many platforms have shelters in lieu of adjacent waiting areas in station buildings. Typical Plexiglas or glass shelters protect waiting commuters from the elements. Many of these structures are similar to curbside shelters found along local bus routes. If appropriate, this report notes the location and general condition of platform shelters. It also addressed the need for new or additional protective structures.
- **Station Building** – The typical New Haven Line station building is a historic structure with a waiting room, rest room, and ticket office. Some have a coffee shop and/or newsstand. Where appropriate, observations have been incorporated into the station reports. Where station buildings were closed at the time of site visit, applicable findings of the Governance Study have been included in the report.
- **Taxi Stands and Bus Stops** – Taxis can physically access most station areas with the exception of parking garages and gated lots. Several stations have designated taxi stands. However, roadway geometry may limit bus access to most train stations. Stations with narrow parking aisles, tight turns or dead ends can accommodate bus patrons by placing bus stops on nearby streets. This report notes general taxi and bus accessibility issues.
- **Variable Message Sign (VMS)** – Every New Haven Line station has an audio PA system consisting of the typical “steel can” speaker or horn. The inspectors did not assess the regularity, audio levels or content of public announcements. These matters will continue to be addressed by the Department and station operators. Variable message signs or VMS provide a visual backup to audio announcements. These signs not only assist the hearing challenged. They also provide necessary train information over the din of large stations, nearby construction activities or noisy rail equipment. Currently, Metro-North is installing VMS at the designated “key” stations listed in the ADA section below. The Department and Metro-North intend to address visual messaging needs at all stations based on ridership demands and funding availability.

- **Signage** – This heading includes general observations of signs placed on platforms, along paths and in other areas of the station. Inspectors attempted to look at the signage as a first time or infrequent user. Their observations are noted in this report. In addition to observations noted within this topic, signage issues are addressed under the Highway Access and Parking headings.
- **Fence** – Nearly every station uses metal fencing beyond the platform ends to restrict unauthorized access to the tracks. Fencing has also been installed to secure parking areas, demarcate private property or cordon off potentially hazardous areas. Most locations employ a chain link fence, although occasional ornamental steel, cast iron or wood fences can be found. The condition of station fencing has been noted in this report.
- **Litter** – Litter may be the most conspicuous distraction at train stations. Patrons appreciate a well-maintained facility. For this report, inspectors have noted the general appearance of the station including areas under and behind platforms, along paths, around station buildings and in parking lots. It should be noted that these comments are depict the station condition only for the day of the site visit. It is assumed that station operators and Metro-North will continue to maintain the train stations to the high standards of the rail commuters.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Access:** The New Haven Line has its origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, so many of the stations do not conform to the current ADA standards. Due to funding limitations, the Department cannot upgrade all New Haven Line stations at this time. Therefore, State and federal agencies have incorporated a “key station” upgrade program for twelve of the stations (Greenwich, Stamford, Darien, South Norwalk, Westport, Bridgeport, Milford, New Haven, New Canaan, Danbury, Waterbury, and the proposed Fairfield Metro Station). The remaining facilities will be upgraded over time. Meanwhile, the Department will continue to incorporate code compliant materials and practices into all of its current and planned station upgrades and improvements.
- **Amenities** –This inspection report addresses the inspectors’ observations of amenities placed around the stations. These may include items such as benches, trash cans, platform and stair railings, entrance signs, kiosks, vending areas, bike racks, station color schemes, clocks and light fixtures.
- **General Remarks** – General comments may be included at the conclusion of each observation report to address those matters that do not fall within the criteria of the above list of headings.

**Observations – August 8, 2006:**

**Highway Access** – The entrance to the Derby/Shelton Train Station is located across from the busy Route 8 entrance/exit ramps. Existing trailblazing signage locations need to be reviewed. One station sign at the entrance to the Valley Transit Center is obscured by highway signage. In addition, the two signs include a small station pictogram along with a transit pictogram and the words “Park & Ride.” Several trailblazing signs placed in advance of the entrance and a more conventional station entrance sign might minimize confusion.

**Parking** – Free parking is provided under the Route 8 viaduct and adjacent to the tracks. The parking lot surface is cracked with a few potholes. Parking lot illumination should be evaluated. The Valley Transit driveway should be better delineated from the parking area under the viaduct.

**Platforms** – The low-level platform is a wooden box. The boarding rests on the old bituminous platform that is uneven and cracked.

**Canopy** – The canopy on the trackside of the building is part of the station roof. The canopy has been extended beyond the building at both ends. Canopy supports and the underside of the canopy roof need to be scraped and repainted. Lighting appears to be adequate but the Rail Governance Study notes that fixture lenses were deteriorating to the point of needing replacement. This should be confirmed as a follow up to this report.

**Walks/Paths** – The Derby Train Station is surrounded by its parking lot. Therefore, patrons are forced to walk through the parking aisles to access the platform. A sidewalk from Route 34 terminates at the parking lot. This walk should be extended over the parking lot surface to the station platform area by either painting a crosswalk or installing brick paving/concrete. The walk shares illumination with the parking lot.

**Ticket Vending Machine (TVM)** – There is no TVM at this location.

**Shelter** – A Plexiglas glass shelter is located just beyond the north end of the canopy. The glazing is scratched from graffiti and numerous attempts to remove it. The shelter has a wooden bench.

**Station Building** – The station building is used by the Motor Vehicle Department and the Valley Council of Governments. The Coffee Depot also maintains a coffee shop at the north end of the building. Hours of operation (6am to 2pm) are posted on the coffee shop door. Rest rooms in the coffee shop were indicated to be “out of order.” The building itself is in good condition. Its brown brick façade hides the dirt and grime from the adjacent highways.

**Taxi Stands and Bus Stops** – Taxi and bus accessibility is good. It is likely that Valley Transit provides service to this station since their office is located behind the station parking lot.

**Signage** – Signage is minimal or nonexistent. Patrons should be informed of the limits of free parking and other conditions of using this lot.

**Fences** – The fence on the other side of the tracks is weathered and covered with vegetation.

**Litter** – There is track level trash on the east side of the tracks. Otherwise, the station is neat.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Access** – An ADA parking space is provided at each end of the station building. However, the low-level boarding platform makes it difficult to access rail cars.

**Amenities** (See Appendix A Photos)

- Kiosk: None
- Exterior Paint Theme: Light brown brick, dark brown and beige trim.
- Vending: The coffee shop sells newspapers
- Benches: One bench in shelter. Two picnic tables under the canopy.
- Railings: None
- Light Fixtures: Contemporary light fixtures.
- Trash: Blue recycling bin on platform. Plastic trash barrel outside Valley COG entrance.
- Bicycle Rack: None
- Platform Clock: None outside

**General Remarks** – This is a small train stop utilized by relatively few commuters. Given its location, however, the station has potential. If the use of this station is expected to increase over the next few years, a high-level platform and all the amenities should be installed. The Department plans to initiate a Waterbury Branch needs and feasibility study next year. Study recommendations may be included in planned station improvement program.

**Recommended Repairs, Upgrades and Improvements:**

At the urging of the Governor, the Department is establishing a program of repairs, upgrades and improvements to better the appearance, safety, and functionality of all 36 New Haven Line Stations. As a first step, the Department will continue to pass along all maintenance concerns to station operators for their immediate attention. The next step will be to have the Department and station operators upgrade station amenities. These might include benches, kiosks, railing, light fixtures, trash cans, bike racks, clocks and other common station elements. When funding becomes available, the Department will initiate a project to commence the upgrade of amenities at the stations.

With the cooperation of municipalities and Metro-North, the Department will review, categorize, and prioritize the findings listed under the Station Governance heading below. In addition, the recommendations of the High Level Platform Visual Inspection Report and the Connecticut Rail Governance Study will be considered. The resulting priority listing will include a number of projects to accomplish the repairs, upgrades and improvements needed to bring the New Haven Line Commuter Rail Service up to the commuters' expectations.

Finally, the Department anticipates that a number of major capital improvements may result from a comprehensive review of the findings of these station inspection reports. These might include the installation or extension of high-level platforms and canopies, the replacement or addition of shelters, and major ADA improvements. As noted earlier, the Department and individual municipalities will address parking issues separate from this report. However, these too may demand major capital investments. Finally, the recently completed Danbury Branch



Feasibility Study and similar reports planned for the New Canaan and Waterbury Branches could lead to other capital improvements at some of the branch line stations.

The findings of this Visual Inspection Report and recommended solutions for station repairs, upgrades and improvements are listed below:

**Maintenance Repairs:**

- Supplement and/or relocate trailblazing signage to and from Routes 8 and 34.
- Add a station entrance sign.
- Add a parking information sign.
- Scrape and repaint the canopy.
- Repair and paint the wood boarding platform.
- Seal cracks in bituminous pavement in the platform area.
- Fill pavement potholes
- Replace shelter glazing.
- Power wash the station's brick façade.

**Amenity Upgrades:**

- Install a station kiosk.
- Install a bench under the canopy.
- Replace the existing trash can with the recommended Amenities Committee trash can.
- Install a bike rack, if warranted.
- Provide a station clock on the shelter or in the recommended kiosk.

**Governance Improvements:**

- Install a sidewalk and black railing between the parking area and the tracks, south of the old station platform.
- If high level platforms are not planned for the near future, extend the sidewalk and railing under the canopy to the wooden platform.
- Extend the sidewalk from Route 34 across the parking lot to the platform.
- Install post mount light fixtures along sidewalks.
- Replace the highway guide rail from the north end of the platform with black steel fencing.
- Replace light fixtures along platform and around the station.

**Major Capital Improvements:**

- When warranted by increased ridership or future demand, install a high level platform and all the amenities. The canopy may have to be modified to accommodate the platform.

--- END OF NARRATIVE ---

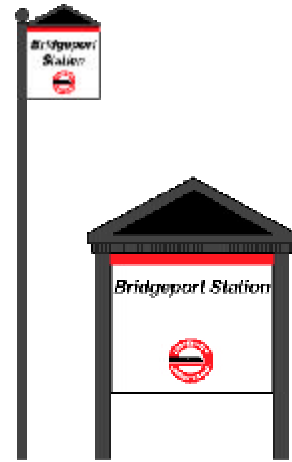
**APPENDIX A**



**Pole Mounted Lights**



**Kiosk (Historic)**



**Signs (Contemporary)**



**Bench (Contemporary) and Railing**



**Fence, Walk and Post Mounted Light Next to Track**



**Trash Can (Black preferred)**



**Bike Rack**