

STATE STREET (NEW HAVEN) TRAIN STATION
VISUAL INSPECTION REPORT



January 2007



Prepared by the Bureau of Public Transportation
Connecticut Department of Transportation

Overview:

The State Street Train Station, which is about 10 years old, is located on State Street in downtown New Haven several blocks from the Green. Commuters access the station either by foot, by bus or by being dropped off. There is no station parking lot, although ample parking is available in the area.

This station includes an entrance driveway for cars and buses, a pedestrian bridge, elevators and a center island platform. It services both Metro-North and Shore Line East commuters.

The station is clean, landscaped and full of amenities for its patrons. Apart from some minor maintenance items, the station infrastructure is in good condition.



Maintenance Responsibilities:

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Owner: | CDOT |
| Operator: | CDOT |
| Platform Lights: | CDOT |
| Trash: | CDOT |
| Snow Removal: | CDOT |
| Shelter Glazing: | -- |
| Platform Canopy: | CDOT |
| Platform Structure: | CDOT |
| Parking: | n/a |



Station Layout:



— Station Building

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 19th 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 – September 12, 2006:

Highway Access – State Street Station is easily accessible to those who know the area. For non urban residents, finding the station is a little more challenging. It is assumed that most out of town patrons will use Union Station just down the street. A small green sign has been placed at the entrance to the station. The wall in front of the facility has the station name in large letters on the concrete wall.

Parking – There is no parking lot set aside for commuters. However, there are plenty of surface lots and garages in the area which are available for commuters.

Platforms – The station has one center island platform which is in good condition. Stair risers and nosings are losing their paint and rusting. Railing paint is starting to fade, but attempts at touching up the surfaces have been successful. Tactile warning strips are in good condition. The platform edge wood rub rail has a few nicks. The end of platform guardrail appears to be offset more than necessary (1'-9"). If so, extend the railing along the end of the platform (perpendicular to the tracks) to the railroad's minimum lateral clearance.

Canopy – The platform canopy is in good condition. Some of the painted trim is peeling or fading.

Walks/Paths – Walks, stairs and ramps in front of the station are in good condition. Some stair treads are rusted. Some of the painted stair and ramp handrails are peeling and rusting.

Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) – There is a TVM in the pedestrian overpass to the platform.

Shelter – There are no shelters on the platform.

Station Building – The pedestrian overpass provides access to the platforms and a waiting area during inclement weather. The structure is relatively new and in good shape. There are no rest rooms or ticket office. The elevators are operational. Glazing is relatively clear.

Bus Access & Taxi Stand – The entrance is a regular bus stop for CT Transit. Taxis can easily access the station.

Signage – Signage inside the station appears adequate, although a review of sign content and placement might be a useful exercise.

Fences – Walls, ornamental steel fences and chain link fences separate the entrance from the railroad right of way. All are in good condition.

Litter – Graffiti tags have made their way onto the front kiosk and some of the railroad's signal houses, but in general, the entire area is clean.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Access – ADA compliant variable message signs have been installed at this station. Other elements of the station are generally ADA compliant with only a few issues noted in the High Level Platform Visual Inspection Report.

Amenities (See Appendix A Photos)

- Kiosk: One in front of entrance and one on the platform. Both kiosks are missing their telephones. Front kiosk has graffiti tag.
- Exterior Paint Theme: Mainly blue with some gold trim
- Vending: None
- Benches: Adequate compliant seating on the platform
- Railings: Some handrail is faded or worn
- Light Fixtures: Adequate illumination levels
- Trash: Trash cans are well placed and numerous
- Bicycle Rack: None
- Platform Clock: Variable message signs have date and time, when operating.

General Remarks – According to the High Level Platform Visual Inspection Report, benches, sign boards, trash cans, and handrails are not properly grounded electrically.

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:

- Clean and paint worn and rusted handrail around the station entrance.
- If special parking arrangements have been made with local lots, post availability, conditions and fees somewhere near the station entrance or on the kiosk.
- Clean, repair, and/or replace rusted stair treads, risers and nosings.
- Continue touching up the paint on the platform railings and canopies.
- Confirm end of platform rail offset. If less than 1'-9" from the edge of the platform, then extend the rail to that point.
- Have railroad keep up with graffiti removal on its equipment.
- Ground all platform mounted metal fixtures.

Amenity Upgrades:

- Add CDOT's small (banner type) station entrance sign to driveway entrance.
- Add a bike rack, if warranted.
- If variable message signs do not continuously show date and time, add an analog clock to the area around the top of the elevators.

Governance Improvements:

- Address ADA non-compliant issues noted in the High Level Platform Visual Inspection Report.

Major Capital Improvements:

- None noted at this time

-- END OF NARRATIVE --

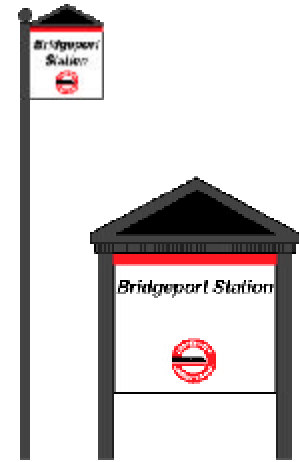
APPENDIX A



Pole Mounted Lights



Kiosk (Historic)



Signs (Contemporary)



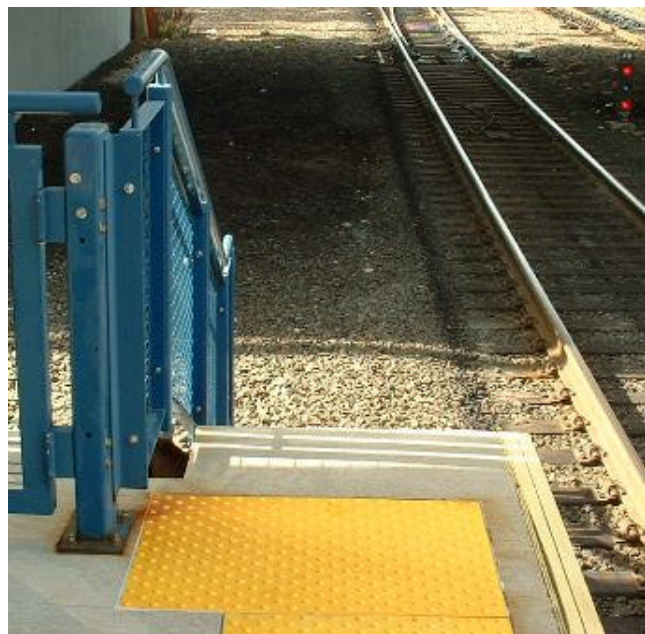
Trash Can (Black preferred)



Bike Rack



Typical Trailblazing Sign



Wide Gap at South End of Platform