

COS COB TRAIN STATION  
VISUAL INSPECTION REPORT



January 2007



Prepared by the Bureau of Public Transportation  
Connecticut Department of Transportation

**Overview:**

The Cos Cob Train Station is located a half mile from Exit 4 of Interstate 95, near the west bank of the Mianus River. The west end of the two platforms is located under the highway overpass. Patrons move from platform to platform using paths and stairs along Sound Shore Drive.

The 1894 station building has been nicely restored. It was closed at the time of this site visit, but it appears to be in good condition.



State and municipal parking lots are located on both sides of the station, accessible from several local streets. Several other lots can be found about the area. Both permit and daily parking spaces are provided.

**Maintenance Responsibilities:**

Owner:	CDOT
Operator:	Town
Platform Lights:	Town
Trash:	Town
Snow Removal:	Town
Shelter Glazing:	Town
Platform Canopy:	Town
Platform Structure:	Town
Parking:	Town

**Station Layout:**



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



Station Building  
State-Owned Parking Area  
Municipality-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 25, 2006:**

**Highway Access** – The Cos Cob Train Station is located in Greenwich, just down the street from Exit 4 off Interstate 95. Highway exit signs note the appropriate exit. Trailblazing signs are a little harder to find. Local road trailblazing and station entrance signs are needed.

**Parking** – Parking lots are spread out around the station. Two of the larger lots parallel the tracks on both sides of the station. Several other lots can be found to the north of the station at the east end. The Governance Study notes that daily parking is available in the remote town lot located on Strickland Road.

**Platforms** – The platforms at Cos Cob are only six cars in length. Structurally, the platforms are in fair to good condition. Some of the joints between platforms are failing. Most platform stairs and ramps are in fair to good condition with minor spall and cracks, especially at railing connection plates. The aluminum platform, stair and ramp railings are weathered with an occasional bent panel. The trackside edge of the platform has a fading yellow stripe. Platform illumination appears to be recent and in good condition. Rusted catenary supports rise through or just behind the platforms. Both platforms extend under the I-95 overpass.

**Canopy** – The westbound canopy is in fair condition. Peeling paint, rust stains and corrosion are evident on all structural elements. The canopy drainage is in poor condition.

**Walks/Paths** – Pedestrian movement around the station involves a series of sidewalks, paths, stairs and street crossings. The west end of the station is situated under the I-95 overpass. Paths in this area are intertwined with the highway's bridge piers. The off-site parking lots use town sidewalks to access the station. Access from the remote Strickland Road lot was not noted. Platform-to-platform access utilizes new wooden stairs to Sound Shore Drive. Once at street level, pedestrians pass under the bridge along a narrow bituminous walk separated from the street by a poorly supported plywood fence. Most other paths and walks are bituminous. At the east end of the eastbound platform, a catenary support and protective fence interrupt the path to the street. The fence forces pedestrians to walk around the structure on an uneven bituminous surface.

**Ticket Vending Machine** – There are TVM's on the westbound platforms.

**Shelter** – The eastbound platform shelter is weathered. Its interior is graffiti covered and generally messy. The glazing is scratched.

**Station Building** – The station building has been nicely restored. The doors were locked on the day of this site visit so interior features were not observed. There appears to be a waiting room and coffee shop inside. Additional information is available in the Governance Study.

**Bus Access & Taxi Stand** – Taxis can access both sides of the station. Buses can maneuver through the westbound parking lot, which is a through street to Sachem Road.

**Signage** – Signage in and around the station is minimal. Parking lot signs explain some of the rules for using the lots. However, the availability of daily parking spaces needs to be better indicated. Paths have little or no signage.

**Fences** – The chain link fence beyond the ends of the platforms appears to be in good shape.

**Litter** – The station is generally clean. Several blue recycling bins have broken latches.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Access** – While ramps provide access to platforms and trains, this station is not ADA compliant for accessibility.

**Amenities** (See Appendix A Photos)

- Kiosk: None
- Exterior Paint Theme: Red
- Vending: Vending machines and newspapers are located on the platform. One newspaper box was sitting on top of a soda machine.
- Benches: There are aluminum benches on the platform.
- Railings: The aluminum railing on platforms, stairs and ramps is weathered.
- Light Fixtures: Light fixtures appear to be relatively new.
- Trash: Blue recycling bins and aluminum trash cans.
- Bicycle Rack: No bike rack was observed.
- Platform Clock: None

**General Remarks** – None at this time.

**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:**

- Trailblazing signs should be placed at key locations along Route 1 and other local roads.
- Add reverse trailblazing signage directing motorists back to the highways.
- Repair spall on platform stairs and ramps and repair railing base connections.
- Remove vending machines and newspaper boxes from platforms and primary paths.
- Clean and paint canopy.
- Repaint the platform edge warning strip.
- Clean eastbound shelter and replace glazing.

**Amenity Upgrades:**

- Add a station kiosk to each side of the station.
- Place a station entrance sign at Strickland Road entrance. Place smaller banner type station entrance signs at the eastbound and Sachem Road entrances.
- Add a TVM to eastbound platform.
- Replace all aluminum seats with black mesh benches.
- Replace and add trash cans to primary platform access points.
- Construct a shelter for vending behind the platform or near primary paths.
- Add a station clock to each platform, either wall or pedestal mounted.

**Governance Improvements:**

- Evaluate illumination levels around the station and supplement lighting as required.
- Repair platform surface, foundations, bearings and joints as required.
- Replace all platform, stair and ramp aluminum railing with black railing.
- Replace all bituminous walks with raised concrete sidewalk.
- Replace chain link fence at both ends of the station with black chain link fence. Consider installing a raised concrete walk along the new fence to provide a walkway for commuters parked in the more remote spaces.
- Place pole mounted light fixtures along new concrete walks and Sound Shore Road paths.
- Review paths from more remote parking areas. Improve or redefine walks, as required.
- Review content and location of station signage. Supplement, as needed.
- Add platform edge tactile warning strips.

**Major Capital Improvements:**

- Lengthen 6-car platforms to 10 cars.
- Extend and/or replace westbound platform canopy.
- Add a canopy and/or replace the shelter on the eastbound platform. Consider the West Redding Station shelter as a template.

----- **END OF NARRATIVE** -----

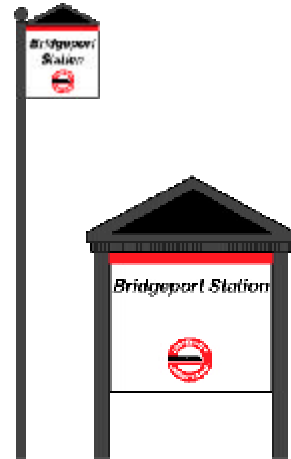
**APPENDIX A**



**Pole Mounted Lights**



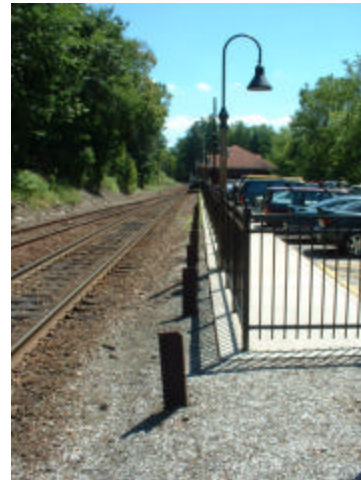
**Kiosk (Historic)**



**Signs (Contemporary)**



**Bench (Contemporary) and Railing**



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



**Trash Can (Black preferred)**



**Bike Rack**