

DANBURY TRAIN STATION  
VISUAL INSPECTION REPORT



January 2007



Prepared by the Bureau of Public Transportation  
Connecticut Department of Transportation

**Overview:**

The Danbury Train Station is located a block from the city’s central business district. Trailblazing signage has been provided from Interstate 84 to the station entrance. However, the station can be difficult to find from other directions without some local street knowledge. The station entrance crosses the railroad tracks about 50 feet from Patriot Drive. There is no station entrance sign. The parking lot pavement is cleanly striped and relatively even. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) parking spaces have been provided.

The station was reconstructed about ten years ago. This included a new station building, platform, sidewalks, rail crossing and parking lot. All remain in good condition. The building is clean and comfortable, but it closes at noon. The area appears to be adequately illuminated. The station has been nicely landscaped. However, some paths have been overwhelmed by overgrown vegetation.

Variable message signs have been added to the station building and platforms. When connected to the railroad’s communication network, these signs will provide a visual confirmation of audio train announcements.



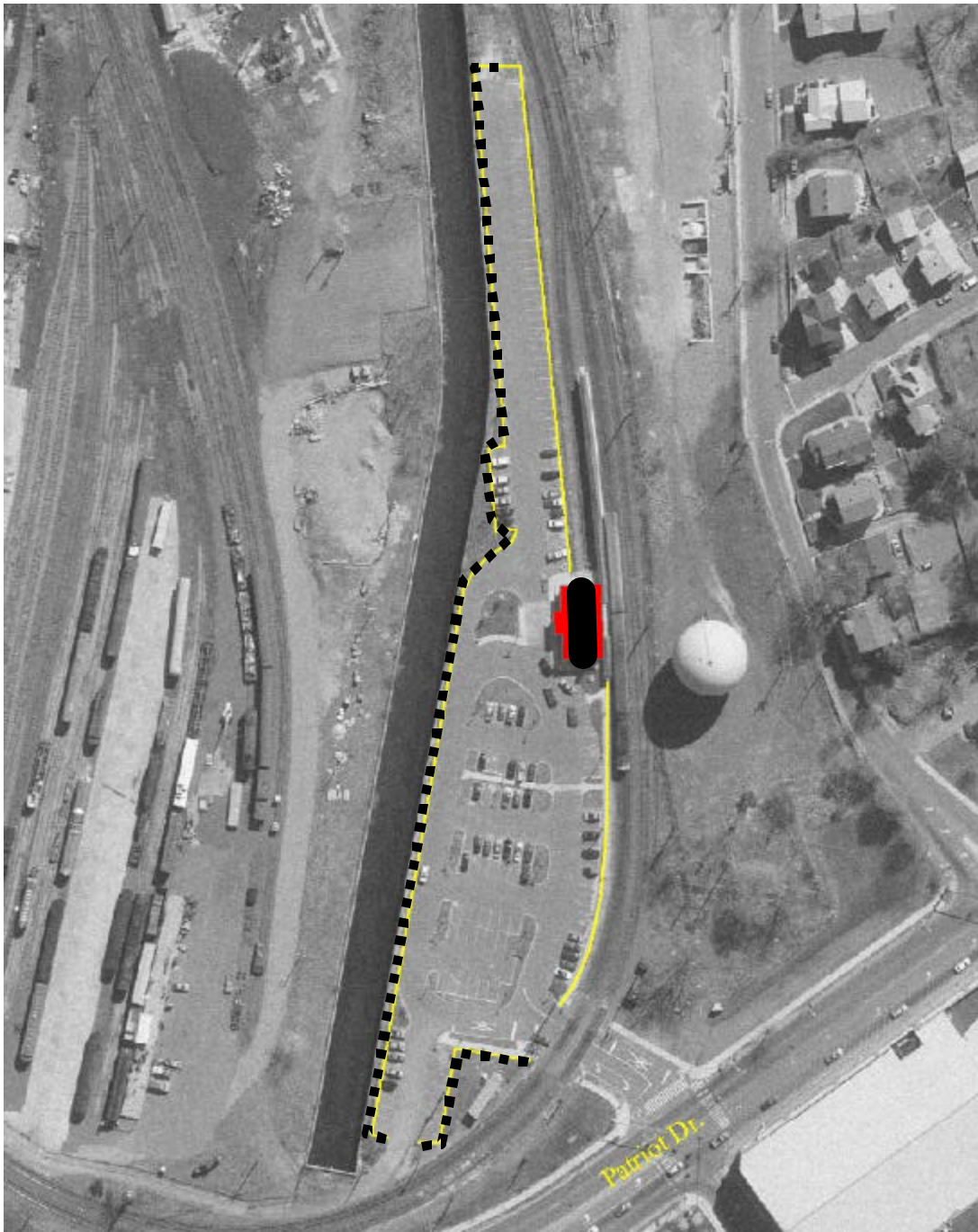
Just beyond the east end of the parking area is the Danbury Rail Museum. Due to a lack of signage, it is unclear if the station parking lot is also used for the Museum. The pedestrian route from the lot to the Museum may also be confusing.

In general, Danbury has a nice train station. It is clean, logically laid out, functional and ADA accessible.

**Maintenance Responsibilities:**

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

**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 16, 2006:**

**Highway Access** – A large station sign has been placed on Interstate 84 noting the appropriate exit. Once on local streets, trailblazing signs have been placed at various locations guiding motorists to the station. It is recommended that the placement of these signs be reviewed during the next phase of improvement projects. Once at the station, one can easily be confused by the adjacent Danbury Rail Museum or miss station parking lot entrance. The museum property needs to be clearly indicated. In addition, a station entrance sign is needed at the signalized Patriot Drive entrance to the station.

**Parking** – To access the parking lot, one must pass over the railroad tracks. Exiting the lot may result in queuing on the tracks. “Do Not Stop on Tracks” signs have been provided. The lot is in good condition with bright pavement markings. ADA parking spaces have been provided.

**Platforms** – The station platform has a through track on one side and a pocket or stub track on the other. The structure is in good shape.

**Canopy** – The platform canopy extends end to end, except for a short stretch directly in front of the station building. The canopy is in good condition. Some of the supports have chipped paint and rust, which will require some touch up. The Rail Governance Study has noted a problem with canopy lights seals that may allow excess moisture into the fixture.

**Walks/Paths** – Concrete walks are in good condition. They logically direct patrons through the parking lot. At several locations bushes and shrubs have overgrown the sidewalks. Plantings need to be trimmed. Some handrails need to be touched up with paint.

**Ticket Vending Machine** – There is a TVM on the platform.

**Shelter** – There is no platform shelter.

**Station Building** – The station building is in good condition. Rest rooms are clean. Benches are provided for patrons. Waiting room hours should be posted on the front door.

**Taxi Stand and Bus Access** – Buses and taxis can access the station, although turns may be a little tight for busses. There is no evidence of a scheduled bus stop at the station itself, but the possibility of a nearby local bus route is likely.

**Signage** – The location of monthly permit, daily and 15 minute parking should be noted somewhere near the lot entrance. Parking availability for museum patrons should be clarified and a clear route from the lot to the museum should be provided.

**Fences** – Chain link fence extends to the south of the station. Several sections need to be repaired.

**Litter** – The end of the pocket or stub track is very messy at track level. The remainder of the station is clean and neat.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Access** – Danbury is an ADA accessible key station. Although, some non-compliance issues have been noted, overall conditions permit access from parking lot to rail car.

**Amenities** (See Appendix A Photos)

- Kiosk: None
- Exterior Paint Theme: Nice mix of brick, brown, and beige.
- Vending: Newspaper boxes on paths around the building.
- Benches: Inside station building only.
- Railings: In good condition.
- Light Fixtures: Some moisture issues have been noted in the Rail Governance Study.
- Trash: Two blue recycling bins on both sides of the station. The dead end track is messy.
- Bicycle Rack: None evident. One bike was chained to railing.
- Platform Clock: Clock inside building. TVM sign provides time on platform.

**General Remarks** – This is a nice station.

**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:**

- Touch up canopy columns and handrails.
- Clean track level trash.
- Trim vegetation along all paths.
- Trim weeds from concrete cracks.
- Seal and paint wood platform rub rail.
- Repair the chain link fence at the southbound end of parking lot.

**Amenity Upgrades:**

- Review trailblazing sign locations. Supplement, if necessary.
- Add station entrance sign at Patriot Drive.
- Newspaper boxes are properly located on the side of the station building. If vending machines are added, keep these off platforms and primary paths.
- Add benches to the platform, where width allows.
- Add a trash can near the pocket or stub track.

**Governance Improvements:**

- Evaluate illumination levels throughout station area.

**Major Capital Improvements:**

- None noted at this time

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



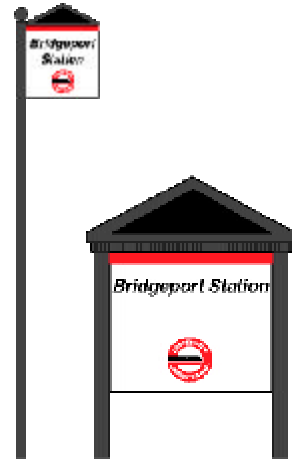
**Center Island Platform at Danbury Station – Note Litter on Right Track**

**APPENDIX A**

**Examples of Amenities**



**Kiosk (Historic Theme)**



**Signs (Contemporary Theme)**



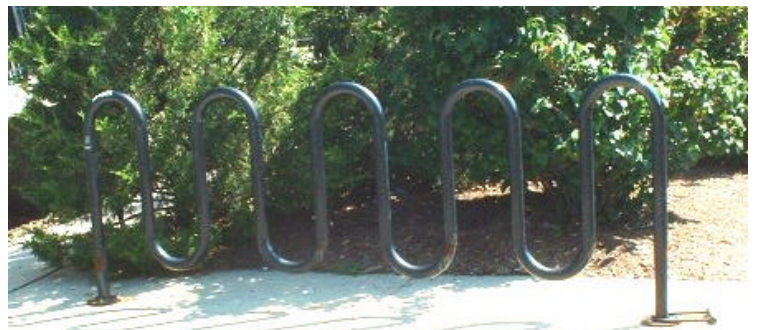
**Bench (Contemporary) and Railing**



**Trash Can (Black preferred)**



**Typical Trailblazing Sign**



**Bike Rack**