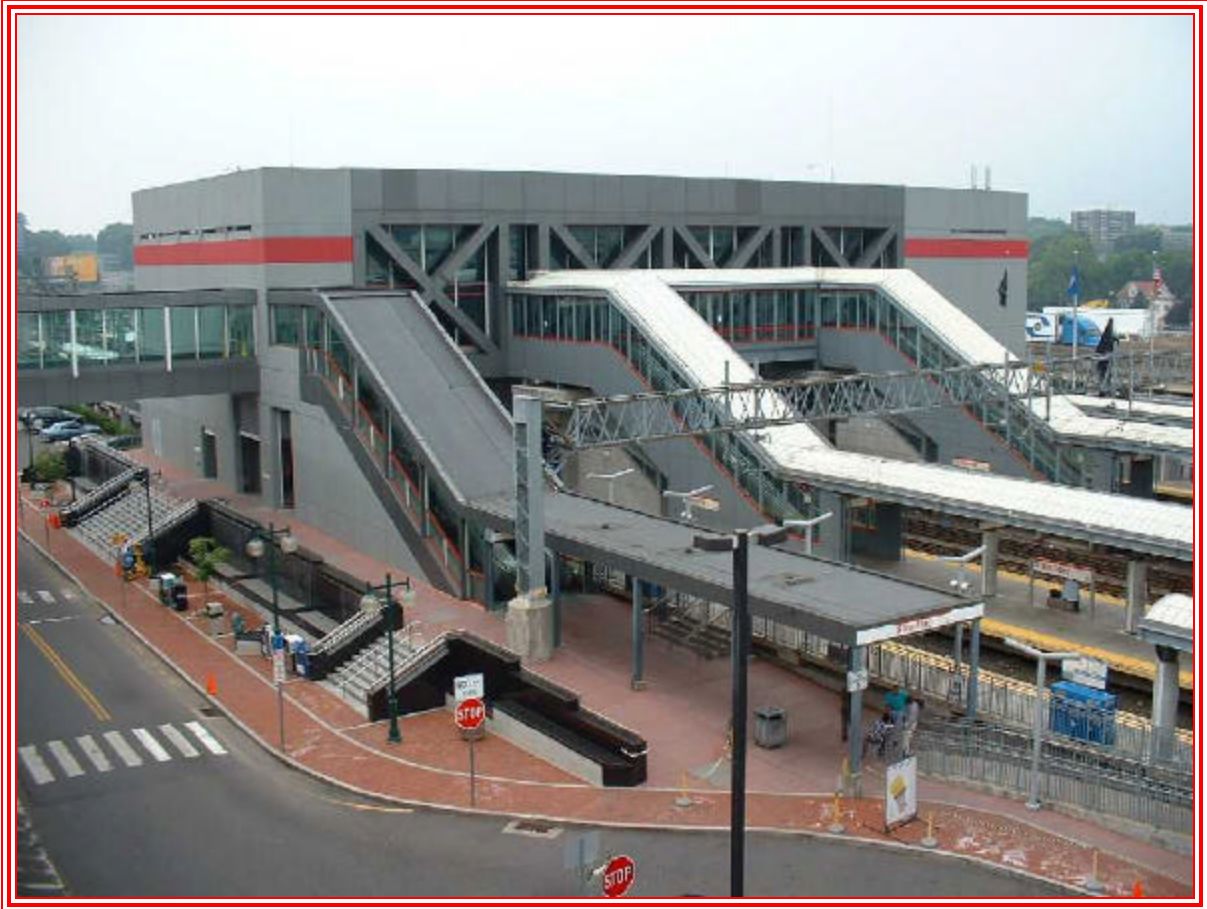


STAMFORD TRANSPORTATION CENTER

VISUAL INSPECTION REPORT



January 2007



Prepared by the Bureau of Public Transportation
Connecticut Department of Transportation

Overview:

The Stamford Transportation Center is located by Exit 8 of I95. The station and parking garage were constructed in 1985. Center island platforms and the new pedestrian bridge were added in 2002 and the garage was expanded to over 2000 spaces in 2004. The center includes a bus terminal, a small commercial mall and taxi stand.

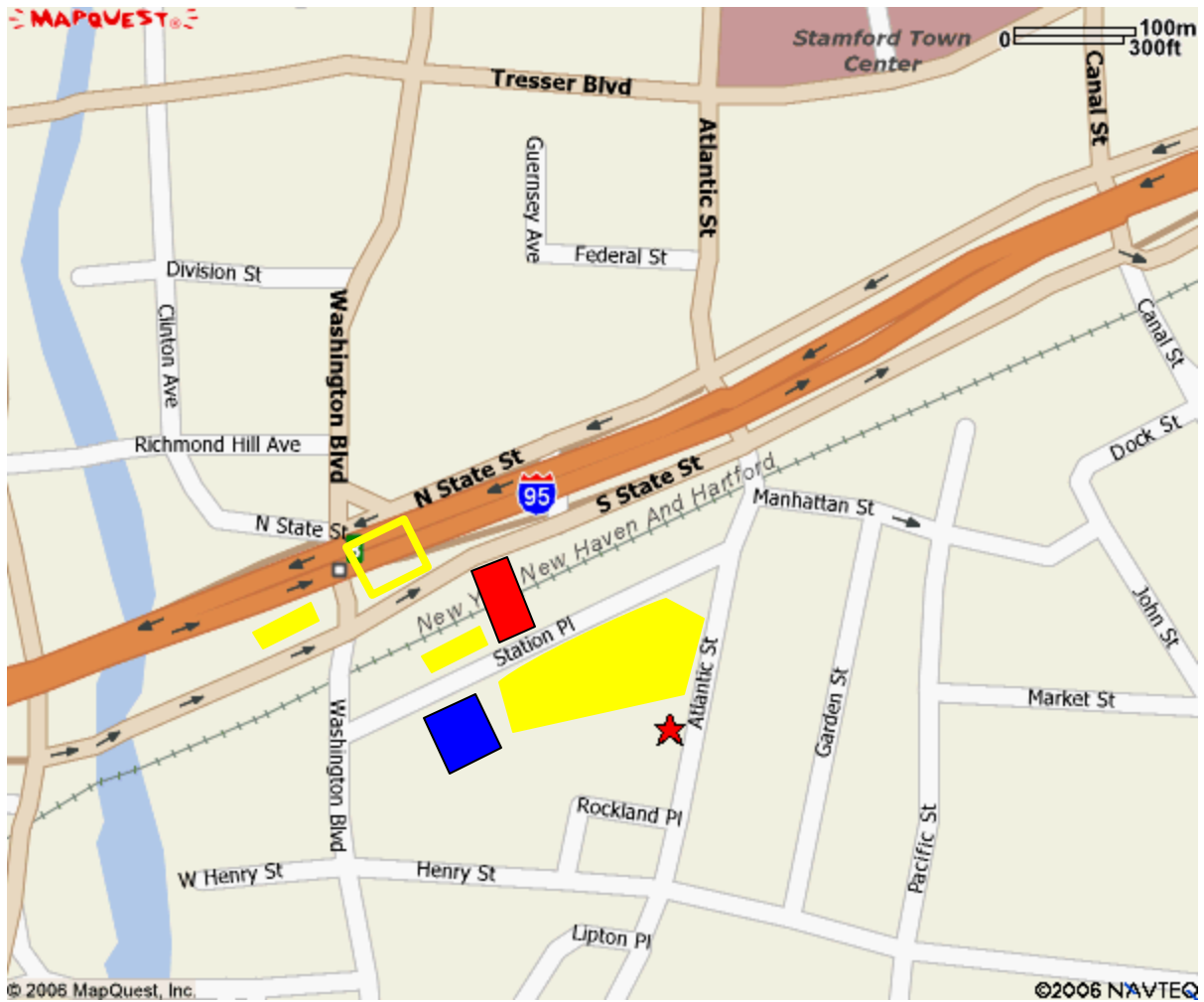
The Stamford train station is the second busiest station on the New Haven Line (Grand Central Terminal is the busiest).

Thousands of patrons pass through its doors everyday. Its center island platforms can board four trains at a time.

**Maintenance Responsibilities:**

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

Station Layout:



- █ Station Building
- █ State-Owned Parking Area
- █ Municipality-Owned Parking Area
- █ Privately-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 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 – July 11, 2006:

Highway Access – The Stamford Transportation Center is located adjacent to I-95 in downtown Stamford. Its unique profile and glass canopies are easily noticed from the highway. Highway signage is good. However, the local system of one-way roads may require some navigating before finding the station entrance.

Parking – Stamford Station has an attached parking garage with two direct pedestrian bridge connections. The older 900-car parking structure was recently expanded by 1100 cars, for a total capacity of more than 2000 vehicles. Daily and permit parking spaces are available. There is signage throughout the station, but the unique floor layout can be confusing to the occasional visitor.

The new expanded garage is in excellent condition. The older 1985 garage is in fair condition suffering from spall on most concrete surfaces. A recent inspection report commissioned by the Department has recommended extensive repairs or replacement of the older garage. The Department is reviewing the study with the intent of deciding the fate of the garage by the end of this year.

Platforms – There are four new platforms at this station all in good condition. The two center island platforms and two side platforms can board four trains at a time. This arrangement is necessary to support the station's role as the busiest facility in Connecticut.

Escalators, elevators and stairs from the station concourse provide access to all platforms. There are a few stairway issues needing attention. Stair risers and nosings are failing due to the failure of the riser face. The station operator addresses each failure as it occurs or when it is deemed imminent. A permanent solution is needed. The rubber flooring is separating from the subfloor in several areas. In many spots, duct tape is used to hold down the flooring. In addition, the floor is worn flat in many well-traveled sections.

Several joints between concrete tee sections are uneven creating a tripping hazard. Platform railing has an occasional gap between rail sections.

Lighting levels are sufficient along the platforms. However, rusted bolts can be found fastening a number of light posts.

Canopy – Each platform has a translucent canopy extending over at least half the platform. The canopies are in good shape. Illumination levels are good. The station operator and commuters have noted several problems with the new installation. Snow and ice slide down the stair canopies onto the platform. The Department recently installed roof edging to reduce the risk of falling ice. Bird droppings are another source of commuter complaints. The canopies have steel bracing and light fixtures that make comfortable roosting areas for pigeons and other birds. The station operator has attempted various methods to address the birds and their waste. Spikes have been placed at some of the more offensive areas. This has only moved the problem to other areas.

Walks/Paths – The Stamford Transportation Center includes the train station, a bus terminal, taxi and shuttles stops and a parking garage. A series of paths, pedestrian bridges, tunnels and a mall interconnect the facilities. The center island platform and garage expansion projects reconstructed

most of the station area. A new pedestrian bridge connects all four platforms to the parking garage. The older pedestrian bridge connects the station concourse to the garage. A tunnel connects all four platforms to the Gateway Mall, which was constructed under I-95. The mall exits onto North State Street across from the Swiss Bank building. Nearly all the area's sidewalks were reconstructed using concrete, tinted concrete and brick.

Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) – There are TVM's in the main concourse.

Shelter – Each platform has several Plexiglas shelters in good condition.

Station Building – The station building was constructed in the mid 1980's and spans over all four tracks. For the most part, the structure is in good condition. The Department through its station operator has improved the station building including exterior paint, interior siding, bathrooms, mechanical upgrades, and HVAC improvements. As part of its commitment to provide a first class facility, the Department's property management team will continue to assess the condition of the building and various elements, scheduling routine maintenance and recommending capital improvements

Bus Access & Taxi Stand – There is a bus terminal on the north side of the transportation center. Local and intercity service is accommodated. Buses can also access both sides of the train station. Taxis have been provided a dedicated area in the south side of the station to wait for customers. The queue area is gated at both ends requiring a special pass for entry.

Signage – Signage is abundant around the entire facility. However, commuters have questioned the content and placement of many of the individual signs. In addition, there may be too many signs in place resulting in "sign pollution" or confusion.

Fences – The various fences around the area have been replaced under the recent construction projects.

Litter – The area is well maintained.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Access – This station is ADA compliant with respect to accessibility to the station, pedestrian bridges, garage and platforms.

Amenities (See Appendix A Photos)

- Kiosk: In tunnel
- Exterior Paint Theme: Gray and red
- Vending: Vending machines and newspapers are scattered behind platforms and in the tunnel.
- Benches: In shelters, shuttle area, and main concourse, as well as on the platforms.
- Railings: Painted gray platform railing, black railing along South Frontage Street.
- Light Fixtures: Fluorescent and incandescent.
- Trash: Numerous and various styles of trashcans
- Bicycle Rack: On each side of station.
- Platform Clock: None on platform.

General Remarks – This train station is the busiest in Connecticut. The several thousand passengers who pass through its doors are constantly vigilant of station related issues. They are quick to pass along their concerns, which are then considered by the Department and acted upon, if appropriate.

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:

- Review and supplement trailblazing signs along all approaches to the station.
- Provide reverse commute signage for motorists returning to nearby highways.
- Continue housekeeping duties on platform including bird droppings.
- Perform annual preventative and corrective maintenance on the parking garage.
- Continue stair nosing repairs.
- Maintain rubber flooring.

Amenity Upgrades:

- Update tunnel kiosk. Add kiosk to north and south entrances.
- Add station sign to north and south entrances.
- Place clocks on platforms.

Governance Improvements:

- Review content and placement of all station signs.
- Fix substandard stair nosings and risers.
- Replace rubber floor if separation issues continue.
- Resolve bird drop issue.

Major Capital Improvements:

- Repair and/or replace 1985 parking garage.

-- END OF NARRATIVE --



Stamford Station Ticket Counter

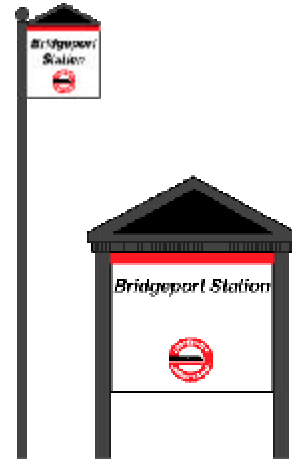
APPENDIX A



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