

RIVERSIDE TRAIN STATION
VISUAL INSPECTION REPORT



January 2007



Prepared by the Bureau of Public Transportation
Connecticut Department of Transportation

Overview:

The Riverside Train Station is located in Greenwich on the east side of the Mianus River. The station is on Riverside Avenue. A small brick station building provides a waiting room.

Access to the station from I-95 and Route 1 is convenient if one is familiar with the area. The close proximity of the Old Greenwich Train Station to the east might confuse motorists on Route 1 since trailblazing signs do not include station names.

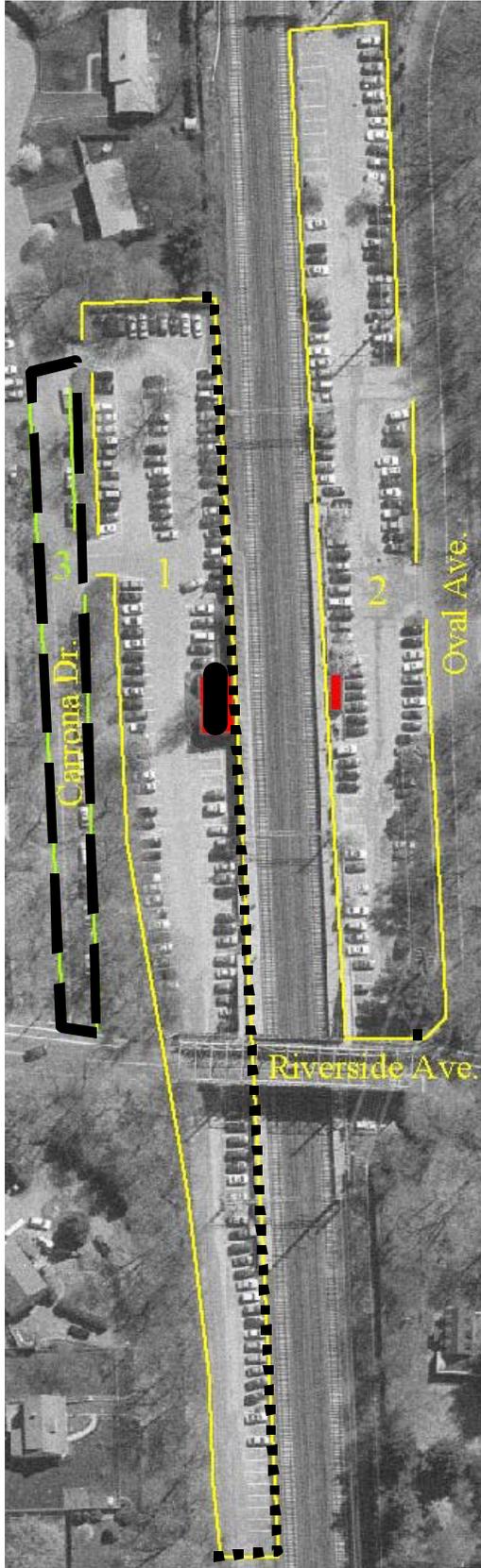
The historic Riverside Avenue Bridge over the railroad provides platform-to-platform access for commuters. This bridge is a relocated section of the old Housatonic River Railroad Bridge, which was replaced around 1900.

Overall, the station is in fair to good condition. Located in a quiet residential section of Greenwich, the station is functional and well utilized.

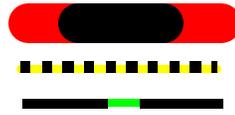
**Maintenance Responsibilities:**

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| 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 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 – August 25, 2006:

Highway Access – The Riverside Train Station is located on Riverside Avenue in Greenwich. Access from I-95 and US Route 1 is relatively easy if one is familiar with the area. Any installed trailblazing signs along the primary approach route could be missed amid the urban clutter.

Parking – Commuter parking is available on both sides of the station. The two bituminous lots are long and narrow with adequate signage. Mowed grass and landscaping provide a nice setting. Tree limbs obscure some of the lights. Illumination levels around the station area should be evaluated.

Platforms – The platforms at Riverside 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 spalling 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 up through or just behind the platforms. Both platforms extend under the historic Riverside Avenue Bridge.

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

Walks/Paths – Platform to platform access is accomplished by utilizing stairways on each end of the Riverside Avenue overpass. The stairs and pedestrian walkway over the tracks appear to be in good condition. Walkway fencing has large graffiti tags in several locations. Lighting along the path is minimal. Paths leading to the stairways and behind the platforms are bituminous. Much of the bituminous is cracked and uneven.

Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) – There is a TVM on the westbound platform.

Shelter – The eastbound platform shelter is in fair condition. It is covered with graffiti tags and litter. The glazing is scratched.

Station Building – The brick station building was closed during this site visit. It appears to have a waiting room and bathrooms. The Governance Study has noted some issues.

Bus Access & Taxi Stand – Taxis can access the parking areas. However, buses cannot maneuver through the narrow aisles.

Signage – Parking signage is adequate for this compact station area. However, this and other station signage should be reviewed for content and placement.

Fences – The chain link fences around the station are weathered, rusted and broken.

Litter – Track level trash is minimal. However, there was scattered litter throughout the platform areas.

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: None
- Vending: Vending machines and newspapers on platforms
- Benches: Aluminum benches on platforms.
- Railings: Weathered aluminum railing on platforms, stairs and ramps.
- Light Fixtures: Recent replacement lights at this and other Greenwich stations.
- Trash: Blue recycling bins
- Bicycle Rack: Yes
- Platform Clock: None

General Remarks – Railroad high rail access is available at the east end of both platforms. The gates are warped or broken.

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 with the station name should be placed at strategic locations along US Route 1 and other area roads.
- Add reverse trailblazing signage directing motorists back to the highways.
- Repair spall on platform stairs and ramps. Fix railing base connections.
- Remove vending machines and newspaper boxes from platforms and primary paths.
- Clean and paint canopy. Repair canopy roof.
- Repaint platform edge warning strip.
- Clean graffiti tags on Riverside Avenue walkway.
- Clean eastbound shelter and replace scratched glazing.
- Clean up litter.

Amenity Upgrades:

- Add a station kiosk on each side of the station.
- Place a station entrance sign at the Riverside Avenue / Corrona Place intersection and a small banner station entrance sign at the westbound lot entrance. Place small banner type station entrance signs near the eastbound driveway and the intersection of Oval and Riverside Avenues.
- Add TVM to eastbound platform.
- Replace all aluminum seats with black mesh benches.
- Add trash cans to primary platform access points.
- Construct a shelter for vending behind the platform or near primary paths, provided it does not interfere with pedestrian movement.
- Add a station clock to each platform, either wall or pedestal mounted.

Governance Improvements:

- Evaluate illumination levels in and 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 rusted 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.
- Replace any other chain link fence with black chain link fence.
- Place pole mounted light fixtures along all new concrete walks.
- Place light fixtures on Riverside Avenue pedestrian walk.
- 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 --

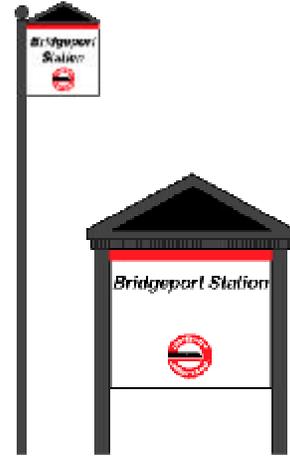
APPENDIX A



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