

# NEWSLETTER

FALL 2013



## FROM THE COMMISSIONER

The Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) High Speed Rail Program continues its vision to generate significant transportation, economic, community, and environmental benefits within the NHHS corridor and the region as a whole.

Significant work continued in 2013 as cable installation, service planning and track/station design work rapidly progressed. This work provides the foundation for the successful operation and performance of the NHHS rail line.

Public information meetings were held this summer in Wallingford, Meriden and Berlin where station upgrades and track improvements will begin next year. Each town was presented with an update on the Program and provided town specific impacts including new station amenities and safety.

As the completion of station and track design approaches and we prepare for construction in 2014, a branding effort for the new NHHS rail service is underway. This effort includes valuable insight from potential riders of the new service who are contributing to the identity of the brand.

From New Haven to Springfield, and those towns in between, citizens of the region will soon see the major benefits that the NHHS Rail Program has to offer.

We hope that you find this edition informative and useful.

*James P. Redeker*  
Commissioner,  
CT Department of Transportation



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## State Street Station Receives \$10 Million Federal TIGER Grant

On September 3, 2013, the federal government announced the award of a \$10 million federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to the State of Connecticut for the purpose of constructing a second platform at New Haven's State Street Station.

The station is a critical component of the State's plans for the expansion of rail passenger service on the NHHS rail line. This grant will enhance the NHHS Rail Program by reducing rail congestion and delays in New Haven and will provide improved access of the downtown area. The grant also allows NHHS trains to begin servicing State Street Station sooner than originally planned.



The existing station facility is a single-island platform located between tracks 6 and 4. It presents operational and physical limitations for trains coming from the NHHS line. Under the current track configuration, NHHS trains must cross over two to three Northeast Corridor main-line tracks to reach the existing platform. The addition of a second platform will eliminate a substantial amount of cross-over movements, minimizing delays and congestion.

The State Street Station Expansion Project will expand the station's ability to handle additional rail passenger services while mitigating delays and congestion on the busy NEC. The highlights of project consist of:

- Construction of a 400 foot fully ADA compliant high-level train platform,
- Full-length canopies covering the platform,
- State-of-the-art video surveillance and passenger information systems, and;
- Installation of fiber optic cabling, connecting Amtrak and Metro-North Railroad communications networks to support surveillance and information systems.

The addition of the expanded State Street Station for NHHS rail passenger service will launch new transportation options for commuters. Commuters who travel along the I-91 corridor will have access to fast, frequent train services, with new direct connections from Springfield, MA, Windsor Locks, CT, Windsor, Hartford, Berlin, Meriden, and Wallingford to downtown New Haven.

Located approximately ½ mile east of New Haven's Union Station, State Street Station was opened to passengers in June 2002 and serves Shore Line East and Metro-North Railroad rail passengers, offering convenient, direct access to downtown New Haven.

## Station Design and Service Planning Continues

The Wallingford, Meriden and Berlin station designs are approximately 90% complete and are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2013. The remaining 10% of the work includes final reviews to ensure that all Program requirements have been incorporated into the final design documents. Once completed, the documents will then be assembled and advertised for construction by CTDOT. It is anticipated that construction will begin in the summer of 2014.

Design of improvements at Hartford Union Station continues and is scheduled to be completed in early 2014. This work includes design of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible, 260 foot, high-level platform on top of the existing Hartford Station platform.

Along with station design work, service planning progressed in 2013. Service planning is a customer-centric approach to the development of the service and amenities to be provided on the NHHS rail line to ensure a safe, convenient and on-time experience. Train schedule refinement, development of a system safety plan and ticketing system development were initiated as part of service planning. Additional service planning progress for 2013 included security planning, comprehensive passenger information display systems, video surveillance systems and blue light phones at the stations and their respective parking lots.



*Rendering of proposed Wallingford Station*



*Rendering of proposed Berlin Station*

## Gearing Up for 2014 Construction

The Program looks towards 2014 to kick off major construction. From significant infrastructure work to site preparation activity at the Wallingford, Meriden and Berlin stations, 2014 promises to be one of the Program's most active years to date.

Spring 2014 will commence with underground signal work. This work includes the installation of communication and signal houses that support the upgrade of the rail line for faster service and safer travel.

Work will begin in summer 2014 to reinstall a second track in areas between New Haven and Hartford. The second track will provide enhanced service and greater capacity along the NHHS rail corridor. Prior to installation of the second track, a number of elements need to be completed beforehand, that include:

- The removal of the existing rail ballast, or the material that supports the track,
- Drainage improvements and structure work along the rail line,
- The installation of retaining walls, which allows for appropriate spacing between tracks where the existing width of the right-of-way currently would not adequately support two tracks, and;
- The implementation of safety improvements at grade crossings, where streets intersect with the railroad.

In fall 2014, site preparation and clearing at Wallingford, Meriden and Berlin begins to allow the construction of new parking lots, station foundations, platforms, and pedestrian overpasses.

2014 promises to be a year full of activity along the NHHS rail corridor, which will lay the foundation for the successful launch of service in late 2016.

## Cable Installation Project Highlights

The first construction project of the NHHS Rail Program, responsible for train safety and security, made significant progress in 2013. The Cable Installation Project, which includes installation of underground signal and communication cables along with fabrication and installation of remote signal and communication houses, is nearly 40% complete.

The installation of new power and signal cables is necessary for communications and safe operations of trains. The new cables will replace the existing cables which lie beneath the location of the second track, construction of which will begin next year. Also, the installation of new communications houses, which allows remote track switching by the dispatcher instead of physical switching in the field, progressed.

In 2014, the installation of fiber optic cables will occur and will facilitate the operation of high-tech equipment at stations and throughout the corridor. It will provide security enhancements, passenger information and, in the future, positive train control.



*Pulling innerduct and cable below the grade crossing on Parker Street in Wallingford*



*Installing innerducts and signal cable in Windsor Locks*

Ensuring that municipalities along the corridor are kept informed of scheduled work is a top priority. Through frequent planning and coordination meetings the team has communicated construction related information, particularly to first responder vehicles and school transportation systems.

John Bernick, CTDOT Program Manager for the NHHS Rail Program, states, "We also greatly recognize the importance of keeping commuters informed. Our various communication tools, including our website, email alerts and social media outlets, provide time sensitive traffic related information. Our goal is to keep disruption and detours to a minimum."

The Cable Installation Project is scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2014. It is being coordinated by Amtrak.

## Summer 2013 Public Information Meetings

The NHHS Rail Program provided an update and progress to the public and town officials in Wallingford, Meriden and Berlin. Public information meetings were held in each of these towns and attendees were given an overview presentation of the NHHS Rail Program, as well as town specific information, including station design, railroad improvements, and progress.

Following the presentations, the public was given an opportunity to comment and ask questions. Questions varied between towns and ranged among a wide variety of topics from station amenities and safety, to scheduling and frequency of train service. All comments the Program Team received were evaluated, and where appropriate and feasible, were incorporated into the design.

Overall public comments were positive for the Program and the public is eagerly awaiting the launch of service.



*CTDOT presenting a Program update to audience members in Berlin*

## Branding NHHS Rail

This summer CTDOT initiated a branding process for the NHHS rail line, which is the creative development of visual signifiers, such as logos, slogans and colors that will represent the identity of the line.

Initial brainstorming interviews with Department officials were held to collect insight into how they envision the future branding of the rail line. Public input was then gathered through focus groups held at various locations along the corridor. The focus groups included a variety of potential users of the new rail service, such as business and school commuters, leisure travelers, and those who travel for other purposes along, and beyond the corridor.

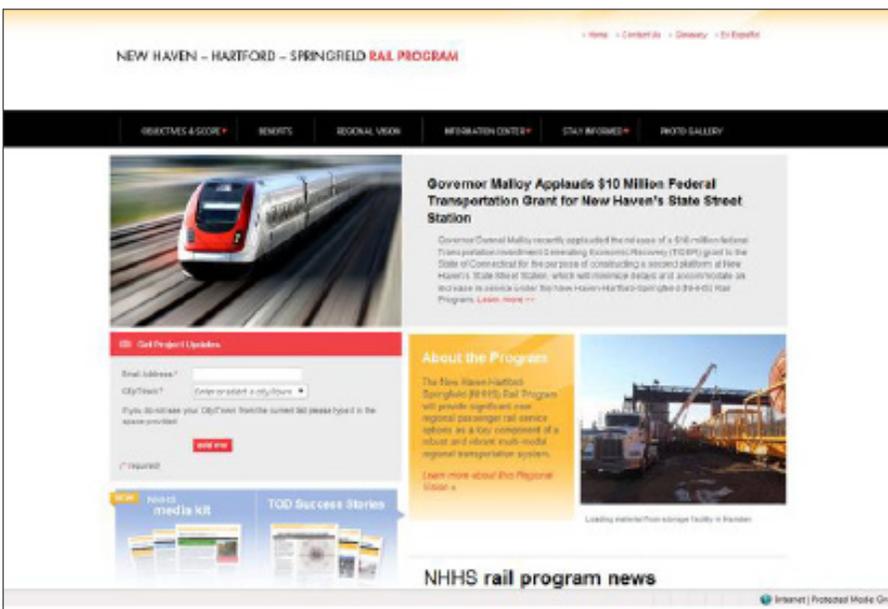
Findings from the focus groups will be presented to CTDOT and it is expected that a brand name and logo will be selected in early 2014.

## Website/Facebook/Twitter: Reaching A Wider Audience

The New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Program Website, Facebook page and Twitter are providing the public with remote and mobile access to program information. Program news is posted on the website, Facebook and Twitter regularly. Email messages of news postings and upcoming meetings are also sent to those who register for email updates on the website.

The public may submit comments or questions to the Program team via the website or Facebook.

[www.NHHSrail.com](http://www.NHHSrail.com)



## GET INVOLVED & STAY INFORMED

### NHHS Contact List

Nearly 2,000 residents, businesses, local groups and public agencies have already subscribed to the NHHS contact list! Subscribing to the contact list on the [www.NHHSrail.com](http://www.NHHSrail.com) website takes only a few minutes and ensures that you will receive:

- E-alerts with program updates, including updates on cable installation
- Notices of upcoming public meetings
- Future issues of the program newsletter

subscribe >

### Questions & Comments

The program website ([www.NHHSrail.com](http://www.NHHSrail.com)) provides an easy way to ask questions or provide comments to the program team and receive a response via email.

[www.twitter.com/#!/NHHSrail](http://www.twitter.com/#!/NHHSrail)



[www.facebook.com/NHHSrail](http://www.facebook.com/NHHSrail)

