

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2013



FROM THE COMMISSIONER

As the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) approaches the mid-point in the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Program schedule, we are moving forward on several parallel planning and engineering tasks and remain on target for completion in late 2016. This newsletter provides an update on each of the major tasks and the milestones ahead that will lead to the launch of service.

The first phase of construction, cable installation, which is necessary to provide for future upgrades to communications and signals systems, began in October and has already progressed from Hamden to Meriden. Work is advancing north to Springfield and the cable installation is scheduled for completion in 2014.

Work continues on station planning and design for Wallingford, Meriden, Berlin, and Hartford. Public meetings will be held in Meriden, Wallingford, and Berlin this spring and will present opportunities for the public to comment on station design concepts.

James P. Redeker

Commissioner,
CT Department of Transportation



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Cable Installation Advances

Cable installation, the first phase of construction of the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Program, began in October in Hamden and will extend 59 miles north to Springfield, MA. The fiber optic cables are needed for future improvements to the communications and signals systems to provide positive train control. Positive train control allows for the monitoring of train speeds and the controlling of train movements to increase safety. Installing the cable in advance clears the path for subsequent track and infrastructure improvements to re-establish the second track.

Cable installation involves “pre-ripping” by a plow train to remove subsurface obstructions, followed by the installation of the cable six feet below ground. Occasional, brief traffic interruptions are expected at roadway grade crossings as the cable installation progresses.

More than 20% of the cable installation construction work has been completed to date, including cable installation in certain sections of the railroad right-of-way between North Haven and Hartford. During May, work is scheduled in Hamden, North Haven, Wallingford and Meriden.

CTDOT issues monthly press releases to notify the public of upcoming cable installation work. These press releases are also posted on the NHHS website (www.NHHSrail.com), and announced on Facebook (www.facebook.com/NHHSrail) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/#!/NHHSrail).



Cable plowing.



Cable installation construction work in Hartford (left) and Newington (right).

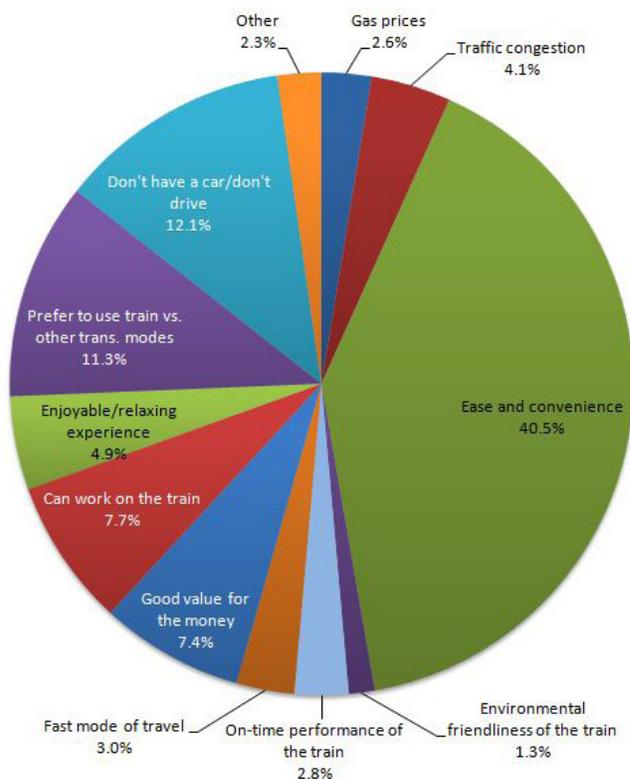
NHHS On-Board Passenger Survey Completed

In October 2012, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), in partnership with Amtrak, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the Vermont Transportation Agency, conducted an on-board passenger survey to gather information from current riders. The ridership survey findings will provide a “baseline” of information on current ridership patterns to help plan for future service improvements.

Nearly 1,250 passengers participated in the survey while traveling on Amtrak trains along the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) corridor. Survey questions addressed passenger and trip characteristics, travel patterns, satisfaction levels with current service and preferences for future service.

Most respondents reported boarding/deboarding at one of three major stations: New Haven, Hartford or Springfield. New York Penn Station was also a major destination for passengers. When asked about the major reason for choosing the train, approximately 40 percent of respondents indicated ease and convenience as the major deciding factor and another 12 percent of respondents chose the train because they don’t have a car or don’t drive. While most respondents indicated that they were riding the train to visit family/friends or for a leisure trip, approximately 33 percent of all respondents indicated they were traveling on their daily work commute or for business. On weekday peak commute trains, over half of the respondents were traveling on their daily work commute or for business. Most passengers indicated that they currently ride the train 3 days per month or less but indicated a strong interest in more train service.

Q: What is the major reason you chose the train for this trip?



GRADE CROSSING DESIGN: A CRITICAL OBJECTIVE

The New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Program is committed to enhancing safety at grade crossings in the corridor. When the new rail service launches in 2016, the number of trains will increase from 6 to 17 roundtrips per day and trains will operate at higher speeds.

Trains are required under Federal law to sound their horns four times before and while passing through a siding (two long whistles, a short and a final long). Increasing the number of trains generally means increasing the number of whistles. The impact of increased noise from train horns was analyzed as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental assessment. However, by upgrading the crossings with additional safety devices such as four gates (one for each direction of travel on either side of the crossing), median dividers, or localized wayside horns, the noise impacts associated with increased train service can be minimized.

In some locations, the NHHS crossings will meet the physical requirements for a Federally designated “Quiet Zone.” In a Quiet Zone, the engineer is no longer required to sound the train horn. Under Federal law, municipalities can seek Quiet Zone designation for crossings with such “supplemental safety devices.” The process for securing the Quiet Zone designation includes a detailed analysis of the risk of accidents at the crossing and the ability of the supplemental safety devices to prevent those accidents.

The NHHS rail corridor includes 38 public at-grade crossings. The current plan calls for elimination of two at-grade crossings near Hartford – Flatbush Avenue and Flower Street – as part of the New Britain-Hartford Busway Program (CT Fastrak). Also, the Brooks Street at-grade crossing in Meriden will be closed as part of the upgrade of the Meriden Station. The Department of Transportation will be conducting separate public hearings once the designs for the improved at-grade crossings are finalized.



Quinnipiac Street grade crossing in Wallingford.

Station Planning Moves Forward

CTDOT met with town officials from Meriden, Berlin and Wallingford in recent weeks to review the proposed station designs for each town, which are now 50% complete. Design submittals were also provided to the towns of Meriden, Berlin, Wallingford and Hartford for their review.

Coordination with each town began in the early stages of design and will continue as the station designs are finalized. In addition, public meetings will be held in each town this spring to present the station designs and to gather public comments. A public meeting to discuss the station design is scheduled in Wallingford on May 28, which will be held in conjunction with the Town Council meeting. Details for all town meetings, including meeting times and locations, will be announced on the program website, www.NHHSrail.com, when they are finalized.

Design work is estimated to be completed by early 2014, including new high-level platforms, elevators and stair towers, pedestrian bridges and increased parking and roadway access improvements.

With double tracking, new platforms will be required on both sides of the tracks at each station. These will be built at the same height as the floors of the trains, to provide level boarding, and be connected by a pedestrian bridge over the tracks, complete with stairs and an elevator for easy access.

Other station enhancements, such as additional parking, will be included as required and as developed with each town. Several stations may require relocation or other more significant upgrades based on alignment or the development objectives of the towns.

Construction activities are expected to begin in the summer of 2014 and be completed in fall 2016.



Rendering of proposed Wallingford Station.

ENGINEERING, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SERVICE PLANNING WORK PROGRESSES

Engineering work in 2013 is focusing on track design for restoring the second track and realigning the existing track; station design for station upgrades in Wallingford, Meriden, Berlin and Hartford; signals and communication design along the corridor; and the design of grade crossing improvements in Wallingford and Meriden.

Program preconstruction activities are approximately 60% complete.

Final design and environmental documentation are ongoing for Phases 1, 2 and 3A:

- Phase 1: Meriden to Newington (final design is currently at 75%)
- Phase 2: New Haven to Meriden and Newington to Hartford, as well as station improvements at Wallingford, Meriden, Berlin and Hartford (final design is approximately 50% complete)
- Phase 3A: Hartford to Windsor (final design is currently 45% complete)

The NHHS Program has obtained federal and state permits for cable plowing activities currently in construction, including approvals from the US Army Corps of Engineers, US Coast Guard and CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

Permit applications are now in preparation for the proposed mainline track, structures and stations work. Amtrak will apply for the permits required to complete the work associated with the track, bridges, and culverts while CTDOT will be the applicant for work related to the stations.

Service Planning is also progressing as the team continues work on ticketing, fare collection, reservation system development, communications and information systems, stations and parking management options, service provider analysis, an integrated equipment maintenance and operating plan, and the system safety plan.

All work is estimated to be completed by the planned launch of service in the fall of 2016.

NHHS On-Board Passenger Survey Completed (continued from page 2)...

Responses indicated that current passengers are generally satisfied with the current service and also identified priorities for improvements for future service. Among the factors ranked highly for satisfaction with current service were on-time performance, condition and cleanliness of train interiors, and personal safety at stations. Top priorities for future service improvements include value for the price paid, reduced trip times, improved Wi-Fi service, better on-time performance, and more morning and afternoon peak period service.

The survey findings provide important information as CTDOT plans for schedules, fares, and amenities to meet the needs of current passengers and increase ridership in the future.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ON-BOARD SURVEY RAFFLE WINNER!

All completed survey forms were entered into a random drawing to win a free roundtrip Amtrak ticket to New York City. Congratulations to our NHHS On-Board Survey raffle winner, Kathryn Grosso!

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 project information. Project news is posted on the project website, Facebook and Twitter regularly. In addition, email messages of news postings and upcoming meetings are sent to those who register for email updates on the website. On the website, viewers may also submit comments or questions to the project team and receive email responses.

Since the website launched in October 2011, more that 23,000 viewers have visited the website, including over 5,000 viewers in 2013.

www.NHHSrail.com

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NEW HAVEN – HARTFORD – SPRINGFIELD RAIL PROGRAM

OBJECTIVES & SCOPE | BENEFITS | REGIONAL VISION | INFORMATION CENTER | STAY INFORMED | PHOTO GALLERY



Cable Installation Update: May 2013

Amtrak continues the installation of underground signal and communication cables, the first portion of construction for the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Program. This work is required to upgrade signal and communication systems for the NHHS rail corridor and prepare for subsequent track and infrastructure improvements to re-establish Track 2. [Learn more >>](#)

Get Project Updates

Email Address:

City/Town:

If you do not see your City/Town from the current list please type it in the space provided.

About the project

The New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Project will provide significant new regional passenger rail service options as a key component of a robust and vibrant, multi-modal regional transportation system.



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 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) provides an easy way to ask questions or provide comments to the program team and receive a response via email.

 www.twitter.com/#!/NHHSrail

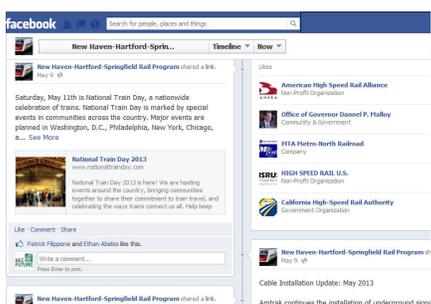


NHHS Rail Program
New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Program will be in service by 2016.
A project of Connecticut DOT
Connecticut www.nhhsrail.com

1,109 TWEETS | 654 FOLLOWING | 518 FOLLOWERS

- NHHS Rail Program @NHHSRail 18h Traffic impacts in Hamden, North Haven, Wallingford, Meriden w/ installation of cables on some streets [ow/jyKRSPX](#)
- NHHS Rail Program @NHHSRail 3d National Train Day celebration at Union Station in New Haven Sat., 11-4. Free. Family friendly. [ow/jyKRUUx](#)

 www.facebook.com/NHHSrail



New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Program

Saturday, May 11th is National Train Day, a nationwide celebration of trains. National Train Day is marked by special events in communities across the country. Major events are planned in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, &... [See More](#)

National Train Day 2013 www.nhhsrail.com

National Train Day 2013 is here! We are holding events around the country, bringing communities together to share their commitment to train travel, and celebrating the ways trains connect us all. Help keep

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Patrick Pippone and Ethan Abalos like this.

Write a comment...
Press Enter to post.

New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Program shared a link. [View 11](#)

American High-Speed Rail Alliance
Office of Governor Dannel P. Malloy
MTA Metro-North Railroad
NHHS RAIL, U.S.
California High-Speed Rail Authority

New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Program [View 5](#)

Cable Installation Update: May 2013
Amtrak continues the installation of underground signal