

Connecticut Department of Transportation

Danbury Branch Study News

September/October 2003

www.danburybranchstudy.com

Welcome to our Open House! This is an opportunity to ask questions about improvement strategies currently under consideration in the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Feasibility Study of the Danbury Branch of the New Haven Line commuter rail service.



Study Background

The Danbury Branch Electrification Feasibility Study is a result of a number of factors including the branch's past history, which provided electrified service between 1925 and 1961, the results of previous studies, which recommend electrification, infrastructure, and service improvements to the branch, and support from the two regional planning organizations (the South Western Regional Planning Agency and the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials), who are interested in bringing improvements to the branch and for its customers. A review of the previous studies that helped lead to this current effort is available on the project's website or by contacting the study team.

The Study Corridor

The study area corridor consists of 23.6 miles of existing rail line between Norwalk and Danbury, which is owned by the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and 14 miles of existing rail line between Danbury and New Milford, which is owned by the Danbury Terminal Railroad (a subsidiary of the Housatonic Railroad Company) and the Housatonic Railroad Company.



Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the Danbury Branch study is " to evaluate a range of infrastructure and service improvements to determine their potential to significantly enhance the Branch's attraction as a competitive alternative to driving in the Route 7 and other adjacent north/south corridors, or commuting on the Harlem Line in New York. The study will result in a list of recommended infrastructure and service improvements that will include an evaluation of the costs and benefits. The results of this study will provide decision makers with the information necessary to determine how the needs of the Danbury Branch fit in an overall statewide transportation strategy which must balance needs and funding ability."

Improvement Strategies Under Study

1) Track Geometry Improvements

The study is evaluating the feasibility and costs of various improvements to the track, including track curves, superelevations (banking to improve speeds), track clearances, and grade crossings. Three improvement programs are under consideration that would result in reduced travel times to South Norwalk of five (5), ten (10) and fifteen (15) minutes. If it is determined that it is not feasible to achieve these levels, then the study will determine what the maximum achievable travel time reduction is with cost estimates.

2) Potential for Double Tracking

The Danbury Branch is currently a single track railroad, which limits the number of trains that can effectively operate on the line. The study is examining the feasibility of double tracking the line from South Norwalk all the way to New Milford. It should be noted that there are significant constraints to double tracking – primarily in terms of environmental issues, geographic limitations, existing structures, and the prohibitive costs of property acquisitions. The study will expose these limitations and provide a realistic cost estimate for double tracking the entire branch and section to New Milford.



Curves through a Rock cut.



Undergrade & Overhead Bridges.



Curves through a Grade Crossing.

3 Feasibility of Passing Sidings

An alternative to double tracking is the addition of passing sidings, which allows for trains to operate in two directions more frequently. The study is determining the optimum number of sidings and their locations based on the results of the potential track improvements described above. We are considering two alternatives: one is based on a 12-car length siding; the second alternative is considering a siding of sufficient length to allow trains to pass on the move, similar to a double track alternative.



Passing Siding at a grade crossing.

4 Electrification

Once the potential improvements described above have been fully studied and results determined, we will de-

velop a complete cost estimate for electrification of the newly configured Danbury Branch. The study will also examine what travel time improvements can be achieved as a result of the electrification.



Typical single track catenary structure.



5 Innovative Technologies

The study is examining innovative technologies that may help reduce travel time on the Branch. These include tilttechnology vehicles, diesel multiple unit trains, and grade crossing equipment, as examples. Resources include the Federal Railroad Administration's Office of Research and Development and other operators of commuter rail service in the U.S. and abroad.



Study Schedule

The Study is being conducted in two phases, with the first phase scheduled for completion by Spring, 2004. It is anticipated that another set of public meetings will be held at that time to share study findings with the public. In addition, a Study Advisory Committee has been established to review reports and help provide input as the study is being prepared. The Study Advisory Committee meetings are posted on the website. A Second Phase is anticipated to begin shortly afterwards and will focus on those components of Phase 1 that are determined to improve the utility of the Branch and that are cost effective.

Danbury Branch – Fact Sheet

Danbury Branch (South Norwalk to Danbury)

- 23.6 miles
- 8 Stations
 - South Norwalk (New Haven Line)
 - Merritt
 - Wilton
 - Cannondale
 - Branchville - West Redding
 - West Redd
 - Bethel
 - Danbury

- Grade Crossings: 35

- Undergrade Bridges: 27
- Overhead Bridges: 10

- Passing Sidings - MP 0.11 to MP 0.60 - MP 7.00 to MP 7.32 - MP 12.7 to MP 13.0 - MP 23.0 to MP 23.6 (Danbury Station)

- Sidings - MP 20.4

<u>Maybrook Line (Danbury to</u> <u>Berkshire Junction)</u>

- 2.9 miles
- Grade Crossings: 2
- Undergrade Bridges: 2
- Overhead Bridges: 2

Passing Siding
 - 2.9 miles (Danbury Branch – Berkshire Junction)

Berkshire Line (Berkshire Junction to New Milford)

- Approximately 11.5 miles to New Milford Station
 1 Station New Milford (Proposed)
- Grade Crossings: 7
- Undergrade Bridges: 10
- Overhead Bridges: 5

- Passing Sidings

- 1 @ New Milford Station
- 1 @ Kimberly-Clark





Photos by J.W. Swanberg or from the J.W. Swanberg Collection.

Public Outreach Goals

- 1. Establish effective communication with the public.
- 2. Encourage early and continuing public participation.
- 3. Present complete information to the public.
- 4. Determine public sentiment.

Get Involved!

The Danbury Branch Feasibility Study can only be successful if we have your feedback and comments. Our goal is to establish effective communication with the public and to continue that communication throughout the study.

There are many ways that you can provide us with your thoughts and comments.

You can go to the Study Website, <u>www.danburybranchstudy.com</u> and click on the <u>Get Involved</u> section.

(and the	Welcome	Welcome To Danbury Branch Electrification Feasibility Study Website							
P		2	-				I.		
HOME	STUDY INFORMATION	GET DIVOLVED	STUDY	AREA	STUDY NEDBA	PELATED	and the second sec		
Study	News								
August Three to meetings s ConnDOT Branch El Feasibil	28, 2003 pcoming cheduled for 's Darbury ectrification ty Study.	Welcom To the Da Transport electrifica Branch, T well as th planning p rts decisio	to subury Branch Ele- tation (ConnDOT) tion of the Danbu- his website provid a opportunity for- process with the p m-making.	ctrification Feas launched this S ry Branch and des important in the public to ge ublic and consi	ibility Study v tudy in March other possible formation ab t involved. Ca ders the publi	Vebsite. The Conn 2003 to evaluate alternatives to im out the developme innDOT is commit c's input to be imp	ectiout Department the feasibility of prove service on nt of this study, a ted to a collaborat ortant and crucial	t of the s tive to	
Nor	a lorfu	Learn A Use the la of the Stu browse of	bout the Stud rks above to acce dy, an overview ficial Study Docu	y rss information of the Study, th met/s.	regarding the e schedule an	Study. You can le d upcoming meeti	arn about the hist ngs. You may also	Jory D	
		Click on C contact th and plenn forward to stay infor	olived Set Involved to le- le Study Team, jo ed activities. You o hearing from yo med and learn ab	am about public in the Study Mo r questions and u. We encoura out this imports	c participation sling List and comments ar ge you to visit ant Study.	components. On 1 find out about our e very important 1 the site often to s	this link you can outreach meeting to us and we look hare your though	ц.	
1		Stay In This webs facilitated regularly,	the is part of the is by the <u>ConnDO1</u> so come back of	Public Participat [. This web site ten to stay info	ion Plan being was launched med!	conducted for the on August 22, 20	e Study and is beir 03, and is updated	ig t	
100			Website is being developed for Cannection Department of Transportation by Washington Group International, Inc., Newington, Connectiout.						
			(Washin	gton Group national			

To join the mailing list:

- o Mail: Feasibility Study Danbury Branch Electrification, Care of: Washington Group International, Inc. 30 Christian Lane, Newington, CT 06111, Attention: Stephen A. Gazillo, Project Manager
- o By fax: (860) 667-7002
- o By calling Steve Gazillo, Project Manager of Washington Group, at (860) 667-7622.
- Or through e-mail: info@danburybranchstudy.com



Connecticut Department of Transportation

James F. Byrnes, Jr., Commissioner of Transportation

http://www.dot.state.ct.us



Washington Group International

Integrated Engineering, Construction, and Management Solutions

<u>n to New Milford)</u> Milford Station