



FALL 2011

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NEW HAVEN - HARTFORD - SPRINGFIELD RAIL PROGRAM

Governor Malloy Announces Release of \$30 Million in Federal Funding for High Speed Rail

Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy recently announced the release of \$30 million in federal funding for the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield passenger rail corridor. The Federal Railroad Administration announced in May that Connecticut would receive \$30 million of the \$2 billion in federal funding that the state of Florida had declined.

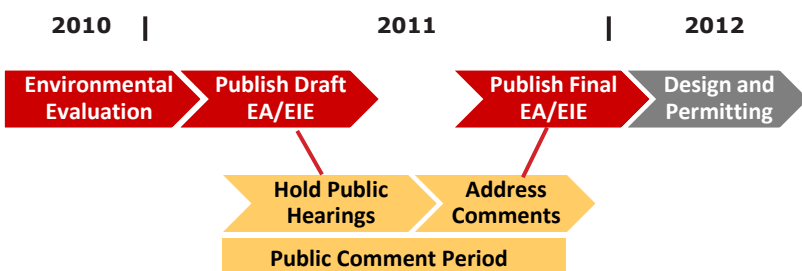
"Improving passenger rail service — and our overall transportation network — is one of the keys to improving our economy and our business climate," said Governor Malloy. "We were aggressive in pursuing these federal funds and I thank President Obama, Secretary LaHood, and our Congressional Delegation for helping us make our vision of higher speed rail a reality." The full text of the Governor's press release can be viewed on the program website at www.nhhsrail.com.

Environmental Document to be Released this Fall

The New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Program is reaching an important milestone. This fall, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) will complete the environmental reviews mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) by publishing a Draft Environmental Assessment/ Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE).

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Environmental Review Process



From the Commissioner...

I am pleased to report that we are nearing a pivotal point in our efforts to improve rail service in the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail corridor. This program is a key aspect of our transportation strategy to better position Connecticut for strong growth in the coming decades while preserving the quality of life we cherish.

Publication of the Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation (EA/EIE), a joint federal/state document, is scheduled for this fall. Approval of the EA/EIE is a critical step in moving the program forward. Following publication of the Draft EA/EIE, a series of public hearings will be held to solicit public comment. This newsletter provides more information on both the environmental review process and the upcoming public hearings.

Meanwhile, we are proceeding with a series of technical studies and preliminary engineering of the proposed improvements. This work will provide the foundation for the design of bridges, track and stations that will take place in the coming months.

At the same time, CTDOT has been actively reaching out to communities to begin planning for station improvements. Initial meetings have already identified opportunities to integrate community objectives for transit-oriented development (TOD) and economic development into the program. CTDOT will continue to work closely with communities to expand our regional passenger rail system, while strengthening our communities.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. Be sure to visit our program website (www.nhhsrail.com) for more information.

James Redeker
Commissioner,
CT Department of Transportation

Supporting Community Objectives

CTDOT is actively engaging communities along the corridor in planning for expanded NHHS rail service. Close communication with all stakeholders will ensure that the improvements support community goals for economic development and sustainable growth:



John Bernick, CTDOT project manager, has been meeting often with NHHS corridor communities.

- ▶ Since April, CTDOT NHHS project manager John Bernick and other state officials have met with local officials in each community along the corridor to provide local officials with an early opportunity to share input to the environmental review and design process. This series of meetings concluded with a meeting in Berlin on August 23rd.
- ▶ CTDOT was invited to provide a program briefing at a public meeting in Wallingford on August 4th. The briefing addressed proposed improvements within Wallingford, including options for relocating the rail station.
- ▶ In July, John Bernick was invited to present to the Greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce. A video of this presentation can be viewed at www.nhhsrail.com.
- ▶ In June, Tom Maziarz, CTDOT Chief of Policy and Planning, was invited to participate in the Regional Plan Association's forum, "Dependable Rail in 2016 – What it will mean for the Knowledge Corridor".

A regional briefing is planned for the fall to bring together public officials from all NHHS corridor communities and regional planning agencies for a program update. This briefing will provide a program update on the Environmental Assessment. An earlier regional briefing was held in March.

More detailed planning for station improvements will begin in the fall, when CTDOT holds a series of meetings with corridor towns. These meetings are intended to integrate station design plans with local objectives to generate economic development and create more livable and sustainable communities.

Public Hearings Coming This Fall on EA/EIE

A major objective of the NEPA/CEPA process is to provide the public with a forum for public comment on the program, its impacts, and proposed mitigation. Following publication of the Draft EA/EIE, there will be a 30 day comment period, during which CTDOT will hold public hearings to present detailed findings and solicit public comment. All comments received during the comment period will be addressed and included in the Final EA/EIE document.

How can you review the Draft EA/EIE ?

The EA/EIE document will be posted on the program website (www.nhhsrail.com). In addition, copies will be available for public review at town halls and libraries along the corridor. (A list of these locations will be posted on our program website when the document is released).

Public hearings will be held at three locations along the corridor. Once the dates and locations for the public hearings are determined, they will be posted on the program website and provided to local news media. We will also send e-alerts about these upcoming meetings to our growing contact list. If you are not on our contact list already, you may add yourself via the website. Soon you will also be able to track us on [Facebook!!!](#)

Program Update

Imagine inventorying 62-miles of track, along with every bridge, culvert, and wetland along the NHHS rail corridor. The Program Team is currently completing a field survey of the corridor that will provide a detailed record of existing conditions and an accurate basis for the design work that will follow. Engineers are also performing structural and hydraulic analyses to determine which bridges and culverts need to be upgraded or replaced. The 62-mile corridor has 25 culverts and two bridges which will likely need rehabilitation or replacement. An additional 40 culverts and three bridges warrant further evaluation for structural or hydraulic adequacy.

Scientists have field-delineated wetlands and are evaluating wetland functions and values, and planners and designers are collaborating on least-impact design methods to minimize potential impact on wetlands and water resources.

One section of the corridor, Meriden to Newington, had received prior environmental approval and is already advancing into final design.



At several locations, work will take place adjacent to historic station buildings. The design and construction of platforms, pedestrian overpasses, and parking facilities at these locations will need to be sensitive to the historic qualities of these stations. This photo shows the existing Windsor station.



Wetland scientists collected field data on wetlands along the NHHS corridor.



Engineers have conducted field condition surveys of culverts and bridges along the NHHS corridor.



This structure [circa late 1800's] is structurally and hydraulically sound. It will need to be extended to accommodate a second track.

Stay Informed!

Do you have a question you'd like to ask the program team?

The program website **www.nhhsrail.com** provides an easy way for the public to ask questions or provide comments to the program team and receive a response via email. Comments and questions can also be emailed directly to John Bernick, CTDOT Project Manager at John.Bernick@ct.gov.

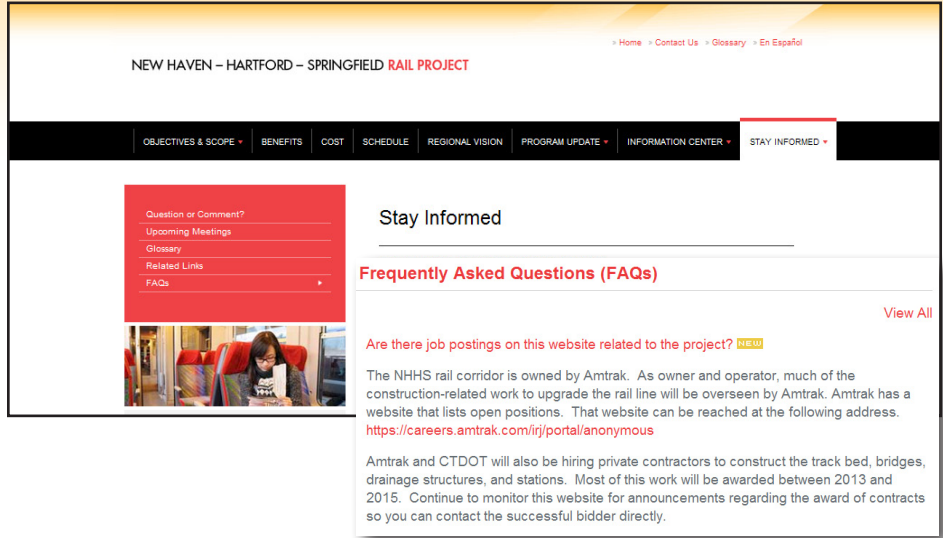
Answers to some of your frequently asked questions, are posted on the website. These questions include:

"Will the program create more jobs?"

"Why will it take so long to reinstall the second track?"

"Are there any plans for electrification of the NHHS Line?"

Click on "Stay Informed" then "FAQs".



Are you on the NHHS Contact List?

More than 1,000 residents, businesses, local groups and public agencies have already subscribed to the NHHS contact list!

Subscribing to the contact list on the website takes only a few minutes and ensures that you will receive:

- ▶ **E-alerts with program updates**
- ▶ **Notices of upcoming public meetings**
- ▶ **Future issues of the program newsletter**

"Environmental Document to be Released this Fall" continued from page 1

This joint federal/state document will provide decision-makers with the detailed information they need to determine whether to advance this program to final design and construction. Approval of the EA/EIE by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), along with concurrence from the Office of Policy & Management in Connecticut, is a crucial milestone for obligating funding that has already been awarded to the NHHS Rail Program.

This environmental document is intended to:

- ▶ Describe what the program is and what it involves.
- ▶ Identify the alternatives that were considered (including the "no action" alternative).
- ▶ Evaluate the anticipated environmental impacts.
- ▶ Develop a series of measures that will avoid, minimize, or mitigate program impacts.

After the Draft EA/EIE is published, the public will have an opportunity to review it during the public comment period and offer their comments at a series of public hearings (see sidebar on Page 2). All comments received during the comment period will be addressed in the Final EA/EIE document.

It is anticipated that the Final EA/EIE will be completed and submitted to the FRA and FTA by the end of this year. If FRA and FTA conclude that there are no significant adverse impacts or that these impacts can be adequately mitigated, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued, authorizing the program to advance to final design and construction.

Coming Soon...



You will soon be able to follow us on Facebook. We will send you an email alert when we launch that site.