

Study Advisory Committee (SAC) Comments & Responses

SAC Meeting #1: 2/7/13

Purpose & Need Statement

Comment #	Line #	Comment	Response
1	5	Add "which have been" before "identified"	This change has been made.
2	8	What is the Waterbury Secondary?	This is the Pan-Am line from Waterbury to Berlin. Because this is not commonly used terminology, it will be removed for clarity.
3	8	“Need to maintain and improve existing freight rail service on the Waterbury Secondary” (emphasis added). While we recognize the importance of freight rail to the regional economy, stating that the project needs to improve the freight rail service goes beyond the stated purpose of the study, which is to “improve public transportation options”. We believe that including the word “improve” in the needs statement, adds an unnecessary constraint to the study and could bias its findings.	The Department would like to improve existing freight rail service throughout the State to remove trucks from the roadway network. Therefore, the need to improve freight rail service will stay in the Purpose and Need statement.
4	8-14	<p>Reorder/Rephrase the Need bullets as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to improve intercity transit mobility between Waterbury, Bristol, New Britain and Hartford and to enhance intermodal connections within, to and from the corridor • The need to reduce roadway congestion in the study corridor • The need to maintain and improve existing freight service on the Waterbury Secondary in a manner compatible with passenger rail service, and • The need to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities within the study corridor and, where possible, identify locations which may offer the most promising potential. <p>• For rail service options, the study will also seek to identify optimal station locations and the attendant parking needs.</p> <p>-----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This reorder seeks to rank the points by importance. •“Automobile congestion” changed to “roadway congestion” both because literally it is the roads not the autos that are congested but also because if we can improve freight service, we might remove more than autos from the roads. •Combined the improvements to mobility and intermodal connectivity into a single bullet. •Added a bullet on station locations and parking that would apply only to the rail options. 	These changes have been made.

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5	10	Is there actually congestion in the Study Corridor?	Yes. Route 6 is very congested, especially during peak periods. Improvements to this road are scheduled. Passenger service could also potentially alleviate some congestion on I-84.

Preliminary Alternatives

Comment #	Comment	Response
1	A hybrid alternative should be considered: rail from Waterbury to Bristol then CTfastrak to New Britain.	This alternative will be considered at the alternatives workshop/charette.
2	Under the Commuter Rail Service heading, in the 7th line of the first paragraph, Shoreline East should be Shore Line East, per ConnDOT convention.	This comment has been noted. The correct naming convention will be used moving forward.
3	Under the Commuter Rail Service heading, in the second paragraph, I had been thinking about the option of extending the Waterbury Branch service to Bristol so I am pleased to see you were already a step ahead of me.	No Response Required
4	Under the Commuter Rail Service heading, I wonder if a third option merits inclusion, that being the option of a one-seat, through service between Waterbury and Hartford. Admittedly, the Berlin to Hartford part of the trip would be redundant with the improved Springfield Line service, but the one-seat trip convenience and time savings would attract an additional measure of ridership. It is probably doubtful that this incremental ridership would justify the extra route miles but it might be worth modeling to see what happens. With the excellent condition of the track on the Springfield Line and the fairly short run from Berlin to Hartford, and making this link in an express (i.e., non-stop) mode, I can conceive that there might be some merit to running at least some trips directly through to Hartford. If the incremental ridership # is not significant, then this option could be dismissed after the preliminary evaluation.	Through service to Hartford would either need to occur via the rail spur that is being used for CTfastrak or it would require a significant reconfiguration of the track to allow for the northern turn from the CCRS corridor onto the NHHS line. This option will be reviewed with CTDOT rail operations. Available train slots will need to be examined to determine whether with the AM and peak commuter service, Amtrak Service, and freight service there are any additional slots for trains coming from Waterbury.
5	It is our understanding, based on the presentation on February 7th, that there is enough right of way to accommodate a second track along the Waterbury Secondary (and that this line was formerly double-tracked). One option that was not mentioned under the alternatives, is to make no improvement to the existing freight line, and install a secondary track that would only carry passenger traffic. This could avoid disruptions to existing freight service and possibly eliminate the need for sidings. Perhaps this options has been looked at already, and been found infeasible.	Because PanAm owns the right-of-way, this option would require their approval. Preliminary discussions with Pan Am have focused on improving the existing single track first. The existing freight track would still need to be improved where sidings and/or crossovers would be needed.

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1	5	The Study Corridor is defined too narrowly.	The Study Corridor was defined based on the potential infrastructure improvements associated with CCRS. The ridership forecasts will include demographic data from the surrounding areas.
2	10	What about these studies? - Long Range Transportation Plan (2009-2035), Master Transportation Plan, Route 8 Deficiencies/Needs Study, I-84 Corridor Transportation Investment Area, I-91 Initial Corridor Plan	While there are a large number of previous studies that have dealt with portions of the Study Corridor, the Study Team chose only to analyze those that most directly speak to the concerns being investigated by the CCRS.
3	13	In Table 3, the # of residents 25 years or older per town exceeds the populations of those towns so this # is obviously in error and calls into question if the totals in the other columns are based on calculations involving the inflated #s in this column	There was an error importing the data. The numbers and graphics have been fixed.
4	21	Major employers (Theis Steel, FireStone, Clark-Dietrick, Otis Elevator) seem to be missing from this list.	This information is from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc. (CERC). This is the second negative comment on this section. It seems that this section does not add much to the Existing Conditions Report, but rather detracts from it. As such, this section has been removed.
5	21	The categories for the 5 largest employers in each municipality are not consistent. In Plymouth and New Britain, the town itself is considered a single employer. In Plainville, the school department (but not the entire municipal government) is considered as an employer. For Waterbury and Bristol, the municipalities are not listed, even though they undoubtedly would be the largest employers if considered as a single entity in each town. The Waterbury stats are also unusual in that Webster Bank employees are divided up into two separate categories. I don't know how important it is to list the largest employers but the inconsistencies in this listing are conspicuous.	As noted above in the response to Comment #4, this section has been removed from the report.
6	26	It should be noted that the Waterbury-New Canaan Branch Line Feasibility Study was developed independently of the CCRS. Thus, the future improvement plans listed in section 3.2.1.3 were developed without consideration to communities impacted by the CCRS.	The Waterbury-Berlin rail corridor was not part of the scope of the Waterbury-New Canaan Branch Line Feasibility Study. The Report does not imply otherwise.
7	30	Rail crossings do not make through shipping impractical	"Impractical" has been changed to "challenging"

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8	30	It is not true that freight railroads in Connecticut often operate at low speeds (10-25 MPH)	It is accurate to say that many freight railroads to operate at these low speeds. The term "often" has been removed.
9	30	"286,000 pounds per car" should be "286,000 pound axle loading." While this limit is below industry standards, it does not definitely limit freight capacity.	The terminology has been fixed, and the language has been adjusted to be less absolute.
10	30	Saying that the Amtrak usage fees are "high" is very subjective. Such fees are negotiated in trackage rights agreements.	The term "high" has been removed.
11	30	It is not accurate to say that "The state increasingly is oriented to business and service activities, which do not generate large volumes of freight." What about gravel, fuels, salt, MSW, plastics, etc?	While there is potential for growth in freight-based industries, the State is more focused on promoting growth in the service, financial, and high-value manufacturing industries.
12	31	PanAm and NS agreed to spend more than \$100 million, not \$87.5. Also, they merged in 2009, and NS did not contribute any property	These changes have been made.
13	31	As with Comment #6, limits are for axle loadings, not weight.	The terminology has been fixed.
14	32	PAS also has the ability to interchange with PW in Derby.	This information has been added.
15	32	The wester terminus of the Waterbury Line is at Waterbury Yard, not at Highland Junction.	This change has been made.
16	32	The Republican-American newspaper is referred to as Republic America. That error also showed up in slide 23 of your PowerPoint presentation.	This change has been made.
17	37	It should be noted that the grades and profiles of the existing freight line meet or exceed AREMA standards.	This note has been added.
18	38	It should be noted that the horizontal alignment of the existing freight line meet or exceed AREMA standards.	This note has been added.
19	48	Why is there little/no reference about NS's connections into the Connecticut market (NHHS, Knowledge Corridor, etc)?	The focus of the section in question is on the Patriot Corridor Initiative. A reference has been added to indicate that the Patriot Corridor does connect with NHHS.
20	58	Section 4.2.2 implies that Hartford is a part of the CCRS Study Area.	This error has been fixed. Berlin is the only town in the Study Corridor that has Amtrak service.

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21	n/a	While we applaud the work that has been done so far, we are unclear as to why a broader study area was not chosen. The towns of Wolcott and Southington are in close proximity to the existing freight line and they house many workers from companies within the current study area (such as ESPN). We understand that other towns will be included in any ridership projections, but we are unclear about the purpose of the more limited demographic analysis (that excludes Southington and Wolcott). We feel that a consistent study area should be used throughout the process. We also note that a spur from the Waterbury Secondary serves at least one customer in the Town of Southington and that any changes to the line would impact them.	As noted in the response to Comment #1, the Study Corridor was defined based on the potential infrastructure improvements associated with CCRS. The ridership forecasts will include demographic data from the surrounding areas. Also, per FRA guidelines, any service changes cannot have any negative affects on freight customers or operations (including the customer in Southington).

**Line and page numbers refer to the original documents on which SAC members were commenting.*