

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT RAIL STUDY

NEWSLETTER SPRING/SUMMER 2013



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT RAIL STUDY (CCRS)

STUDY OVERVIEW

The State of Connecticut, through CTDOT, has determined the need to conduct a market analysis and feasibility study regarding the implementation of fixed-guideway rail or bus transit service in the Central Connecticut Corridor, directly serving the cities of Waterbury, Bristol, and New Britain and adjacent towns of Plainville, Berlin, and Plymouth. This initiative is referred to as the Central Connecticut Rail Study (CCRS). The study also seeks to improve freight service within this corridor.

PURPOSE & NEED

The purpose of the CCRS is to identify opportunities and develop a recommended plan to improve public transportation options for the traveling public in the Central Connecticut Rail Corridor between Waterbury and Berlin, CT.

The CCRS will address several transportation-related concerns in the Study Corridor, identified through technical analysis, public input and agency involvement. The CCRS will examine ways to help meet the following:

- The need to improve intercity transit mobility between Waterbury, Bristol, New Britain, and Hartford and to enhance intermodal connections within, to, and from the Study Corridor;
- The need to reduce roadway congestion in the Study Corridor;
- The need to maintain and improve existing freight service in the Study Corridor in a manner compatible with passenger rail service;
- The need to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities within the Study Corridor and, where possible, to identify locations which may offer the most promising potential; and
- The need to identify optimal station locations and the attendant parking needs for rail service alternatives.

STUDY ACTIVITY TO-DATE

Work on the CCRS began in Spring 2012. Since then, numerous reports and other documents have been completed. The following is a list of the study documents that are available on the study website (<http://www.centraltrailstudy.com>):

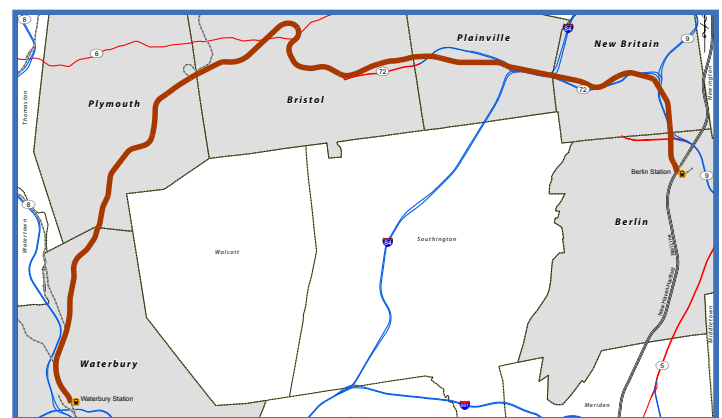
Study Documents

- Review of Previous Studies (June 2012)
- Base Mapping (September 2012)
- Existing Demographics & Transportation (November 2012)
- Survey Analysis Report (January 2013)
- Focus Groups Summary Report (April 2013)

Additionally, the following meetings with stakeholders as well as residents and employers in the Study Corridor have been held:

Study Meetings

- Study Advisory Committee Meeting #1 (February 2013)
- Focus Groups (April 2013)
- Alternatives Development Workshop (May 2013)



CCRS Study Corridor

LONG LIST OF ALTERNATIVES

The Study Team has used input from the Study Advisory Committee, technical working groups, and members of the public to develop a long list of transportation alternatives for the Study Corridor. These alternatives will be evaluated and refined as the CCRS moves forward.

NO BUILD

The No Build Alternative establishes the base scenario for the CCRS corridor if no transit improvements are implemented. The No Build alternative for the CCRS corridor between Waterbury and Berlin assumes that only planned projects with committed funds will be constructed. This includes construction of CTfastrak, the 9.4-mile bus rapid transit line connecting New Britain and Hartford, and the initiation of new commuter rail service connecting New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield, MA (NHHS). CTfastrak plans include improvements to existing fixed-route and express bus routes and the implementation of new express bus service between Hartford and Waterbury. NHHS commuter rail service includes stops at the Berlin rail station.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT (TSM)

Transportation system management (TSM) represents the “best that can be done” to optimize facilities and operations without a major capital investment. This alternative could include operational upgrades to existing transit services and low-cost physical improvements that would complement improvements identified in CTfastrak and NHHS programs. An example of improvements would be enhanced bus service connecting Waterbury, Plymouth, Bristol, Plainville, New Britain, and Berlin

BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

This alternative would extend CTfastrak from New Britain through Plainville and Bristol to Waterbury and would include construction of a dedicated busway alongside rebuilt Pan Am Railways trackage. This alternative would address the need to provide enhanced bus service between these communities by offering a one-seat ride .

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT)

The Light Rail Transit (LRT) alternative would provide service from Waterbury to Berlin along the existing right-of-way (or in close proximity) but using separate, newly constructed tracks, possibly in the abandoned second track right-of-way alongside the Pan Am Railways freight tracks. Track alignment options will be further evaluated and diesel and electric vehicles will be considered. Service would operate every 15 minutes during AM and PM peak hours and every half hour during off-peak hours.

HEAVY RAIL

Currently there is no passenger rail service connecting the existing Waterbury rail station to Plymouth, Bristol, Plainville, New Britain, or Berlin, though freight service operated by Pan Am Railways exists. This alternative would restore bidirectional passenger rail service between Waterbury and Berlin, with stops in Plymouth, Bristol, Plainville, and New Britain. Service would be operated using

diesel rolling stock along rebuilt trackage owned by Pan Am Railways. All stations would include high-level platforms. Length of platforms and equipment consist size will be evaluated pending ridership projections, existing infrastructure, grade crossings, and availability of space. Two types of rail service are included in this alternative: Commuter Rail and Intercity Passenger Rail:

Commuter Rail Service: Waterbury-Bristol-Plainville-New Britain-Berlin

- This service option would institute bidirectional service between Waterbury and Berlin along existing Pan Am trackage with connections in Waterbury to the Waterbury Branch service operated by Metro-North, in Berlin to future NHHS commuter rail service, and in New Britain to CTfastrak. A conceptual schedule would include 30-minute headways during AM and PM peak hours and hourly service during off-peak hours. Possible service segments could include Waterbury to Bristol as an extension of the Waterbury Branch or Bristol to Berlin as a connection to Hartford via the NHHS line.

Intercity Passenger Rail: Hartford-Berlin-New Britain- Bristol-Waterbury-Bridgeport

- This alternative would provide bidirectional intercity rail service between Hartford and Bridgeport via newly restored passenger service along the Waterbury-Berlin rail corridor. Based on existing open slots in the Waterbury Branch and NHHS schedules, it is anticipated that this alternative will include one thru train between Waterbury and Hartford and one thru train between Waterbury and New Haven during the AM and PM peaks. Other service would require transfers to the Waterbury Branch or NHHS, and efforts would be made to coordinate shuttle schedules between Waterbury and Berlin to allow for timed transfers.

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2013

5:30 to 7:30 PM
Silas Bronson Library
Auditorium
267 Grand Street, Waterbury

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2013

5:30 to 7:30 PM
New Britain Public Library
Community Room
20 High Street, New Britain

At each meeting, a brief presentation will be given on the purpose and need of the CCRS as well as the alternatives being evaluated to improve transportation options within the Study Corridor. Presentations will begin at 6:00 PM. Study maps and documents will be on display before and after the presentation. Study Team representatives will also be available to answer questions.

All meeting locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. Individuals requiring special accommodations, such as a sign language interpreter or other translator, to participate in the meetings should contact Mr. Judd Everhart in the CTDOT Office of Public Relations, at (860) 594-3062.

Comments may be given verbally or in writing at each meeting. Comments will also be accepted by mail or via the project website through July 20, 2013. Mailing Address: Central Connecticut Rail Study, c/o URS Corporation, 500 Enterprise Drive, Suite 3B, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.