

Discussion on New Canaan Branch Upgrade Proposal

Connecticut Commuter Rail Council

Stamford – February 19, 2020

Upgrading the New Canaan Branch Line

- Presently an 8 mile electrified branch line from Stamford to New Canaan with 3 intermediate stops – 2 in Stamford (Glenbrook and Springdale) and 1 on the New Canaan / Darien border (Talmadge Hill)
- Peak Service includes 4 morning departures which arrive in Grand Central prior to 9am (5:26am, 6:18am, 7:10am and 7:30am) and 3 departures between 5 and 7pm from Grand Central (5:13pm, 5:26pm and 6:10pm).
- First arrival into New Canaan is 8:40am and no passenger departures between 5:10pm and 7:28pm
- Off-peak service is hourly with transfers in Stamford
- Between 1.3 and 1.4 million riders each year

New Canaan is challenged in commuter rail service compared with peer towns

Town	# Arrivals prior to 9am	Earliest Arrival	# Departures 5 to 7pm	Rush Hour Transit Time (min)	Off peak frequency per hour	Off Peak Transit Time (min)
Greenwich	15	5:49	9	51	2	55
Darien	8	5:55	6	60	2	66
Westport	11	5:55	7	70	2	80
New Canaan	4	6:43	3	68	1	86
Wilton	3	7:36	5	90	0.75	100
Scarsdale	12	5:41	8	35	2	35-48
Bronxville	12	5:41	7	31-42	2	37
Mamaroneck	11	5:49	7	39-46	2	47
Rye	12	5:49	7	43-57	2	56
Great Neck	12	4:06	10	25-40	2	35
Milburn / Short Hills	11	5:44	7	39-47	2	47-60
Summit	13	5:44	10	44-51	2	50-60
Ridgewood	12	6:07	10	48-65	2	56-70
Chatham	10	5:44	7	48-58	1	55

Source NJ Transit and Metro North based schedule for Feb 5, 2020

Desire to improve the Branch Line service with investments in:

- A rail siding: This will allow twice hourly off-peak and an improved peak service
- Improved signaling: Improve arrival performance into New Canaan Station and possibly also safer for the crew
- Improved Talmadge Hill: Adding a cover similar to Glenbrook and Springdale will improve the desirability of the station
- Increased parking: Presently 430 New Canaan residents on the parking waitlist and a permanent home for New York / Wilton / Darien / North Stamford residents possible
- 5G: Ensure the Branch Line has the same upgrade as the mainline

We target upgrades to take place prior to Metro-North Penn Station Direct Service launching

What do we all get from this?

- Increased utilization of Metro North for short legs as well as to and from New York (due to twice hourly and reverse peak service where one barely exists today) - New Canaan under utilizes public transportation compared with peer towns today due to poor service & limited parking.
- Create the possibility for intra-Connecticut commuting for example between Stamford & Greenwich and New Canaan.
- Cars off the road between New Canaan / Wilton / Springdale / Glenbrook and Norwalk, Darien and Stamford with corresponding safety and environmental benefits.
- Better ability to work as you commute (5G – AT&T service)
- Improved local real estate and job market