

Wilmington to Newark Commuter Rail Improvement Project

The Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), a subsidiary of the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), is undertaking a rail capacity expansion project on the Northeast Corridor to improve local train service in Delaware.

When the project is completed in 2014, DTC will be able to add up to 10 more SEPTA train frequencies between Delaware's two largest cities, Wilmington and Newark. As a result, train schedules will be improved to offer 30-minute headways during peak travel periods.

Forecasts for growth in New Castle County compel DelDOT to look at alternatives to the busy I-95 corridor. Amtrak's Northeast Rail Corridor parallels I-95, and offers the opportunity for commuters to use SEPTA trains instead of their personal vehicles to get to work, school and recreation.



DTC contracts with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) to operate regional rail services along the Amtrak Northeast Corridor in Delaware.

The service, referred to as SEPTA "R2", began operations to Wilmington in 1989, added stops in Claymont in 1991, Newark in 1997 and Churchman's Crossing in 2000. During Fiscal Year 2008, SEPTA transported 1,073,000 riders in Delaware. The service averages 4,000 passenger trips per day. After the infrastructure improvements are added, the SEPTA service in Delaware is projected to transport 7,840 trips per day.

Eliminate a Choke Point

The SEPTA service between Wilmington and Newark is constrained because of a two-track choke point between Wilmington and Newport. As a result, Amtrak will not permit the operation of more SEPTA trains during peak commuter travel periods. The restraint also negatively impacts existing schedules, causing delays at the Wilmington station.



Northeast Corridor at Mill Creek

The goal of DTC's Commuter Rail Improvement Project is to increase the frequency and reliability of commuter rail service during peak travel periods between Newark and Wilmington, Delaware; and to increase commuter train capacity on the Northeast Corridor. To achieve rail capacity expansion, the following objectives were established.

- Add a third main track on the Northeast Rail Corridor between Wilmington Newport, a distance of 1.5 miles;
- Reconstruct turnouts and track alignments;

- Rehabilitate the Mill Creek and Orange Street Rail Bridges;
- Construct a new Newark rail station on Delaware Route 72 with expanded track capacity to accommodate two operating trains and provide rail car storage capacity.
- Purchase 4 SEPTA rail cars to support expansion of SEPTA's Delaware service;

Construct a Regional Rail Center in Newark

The current Newark station located on Route 896, South College Avenue, will be replaced by a Regional Rail Center on DE Route 72, Library Avenue. Construction of a new station in Newark is based upon the following considerations:



Proposed site at Davis/Newark

- The present South College Avenue facility has no room to expand parking, and has now reached capacity. The Route 72 site will result in doubling of parking capacity.
- There is a conflict between Norfolk Southern Railway freight and SEPTA passenger operations. N/S trains must wait until after 9:00 a.m. to operate in and out of the north end of their freight yard. With expanded SEPTA frequencies, N/S could become unacceptably constrained.
- The N/S freight yard at Chrysler is the location of trains to and from the Port of Wilmington and the Delmarva Peninsula. The N/S yard will not close when Chrysler ends operations at its plant in 2009.
- There are safety concerns about freight trains operating at inter city and commuter rail platforms.
- Improving the present South College Avenue facility to be compliant with FRA rules for ADA accessibility would require massive, expensive reconstruction.
- The Route 72 site has sufficient space to add track that will accommodate two SEPTA trains at once, or one MARC train and one SEPTA train at once. The additional track space affords the option to store trains overnight that would reduce operational cost to Delaware.
- The Route 72 site is strategic in that it has the potential to directly serve any future downstate passenger service via the Delmarva Secondary. The existing South College Avenue site is nearly a mile west of the Delmarva Secondary.

There was extensive public outreach for the plan to relocate the commuter rail station to a new facility on Route 72:

- Public Hearing Workshops were held in Newark on November 29, 2004 and June 20, 2005.
- A Newark Working Group was formed consisting of city officials, MPO, University of Delaware, Chrysler representatives and various stakeholders. The Working Group met in WILMAPCO offices on March 16, April 27 and May 25, 2005. The group recommended relocating the station.

Cost of Improvements

DTC and DelDOT invest in passenger rail improvements as a strategy to alleviate traffic congestion along the state's busiest highway corridor. Rail investments are important to the future of the state. Passenger rail expansion adds mobility and supports economic growth in Northern Delaware. The use of rail transit reduces the number of vehicles on area highways, improving air quality. By improving the rail infrastructure, freight and inter city rail services can also operate more efficiently and add more services.

The total program for the Wilmington to Newark Commuter Rail Improvement Project, 2009 through 2014, is estimated to cost \$88.11 million. The U.S. Federal government will provide approximately 50% of the funds, and 50% will come from the State of Delaware.

Third Track, Orange Street & Mill Creek Bridge Rehabilitation	\$35,639,600
Newark Rail Station	26,452,800
Four Rail Cars	8,300,000
Engineering and Design	<u>3,500,000</u>
Total	\$73,892,400

Project Schedule

Third Track:

- October 2008 - Federal Transit Administration issues approval to begin construction on the Third Track.
- November 2008 - Order Long Lead Items for Third Track (18 month fabrication)
- April 2009 - DelDOT Contractor begins Civil / Structural work on Third Track (15 month duration due to work time limitations)
- Sept 2009 - DelDOT Contractor begins civil / foundations / utility relocation at Orange Street bridge (12 month duration)
- July 2010 - Third Track roadbed construction complete (including Mill Creek bridge, scour protection, and retaining walls)
- July 2010 - Long Lead Items for Third Track delivered, track work commences (18 month duration)
- January 2012 - Third Track complete.

New Newark Station:

Phases 1 + 2: Initial Parking Lot, Platform, Waterline Relocation, Widen SR 72, Traffic Signal, Track "B", and New Crossover and Turnout

Phase 3: Construct Pedestrian Bridge and Relocate High Voltage Line

Phase 4: Final portion of Parking Lot, and opening of the Chapel Street Loop.

- December 2011 - FTA issues approval to Begin Construction
- April 2012 - Issue Notice to Proceed to DelDOT contractor for Phases 1 + 2: Parking Lot, Platform, Waterline Relocation, SR 72 Widening, Traffic Signal, Chapel Street Loop
- August 2012 - Track "B" roadbed construction complete (culvert extended, waterline moved, embankment constructed)

- December 2012 - **Commence Revenue Service** at Relocated Newark Station – Single Track (A only)
- July 2013 - Long Lead Items for Track “B”, New Crossover, and Turnout delivered, track work commences (6 month duration)
- January 2014 - Complete Track “B”, begin operation as a double track station.
- January 2014 - Issue NTP to DelDOT contractor for Phase 3: Construct Pedestrian Bridge and Relocate High Voltage Lines
- June 2014 - Pedestrian bridge fabricated, high voltage lines relocated
- July 2014 - **Pedestrian bridge opened to public**
- Aug 2014 - **Newark Station complete**

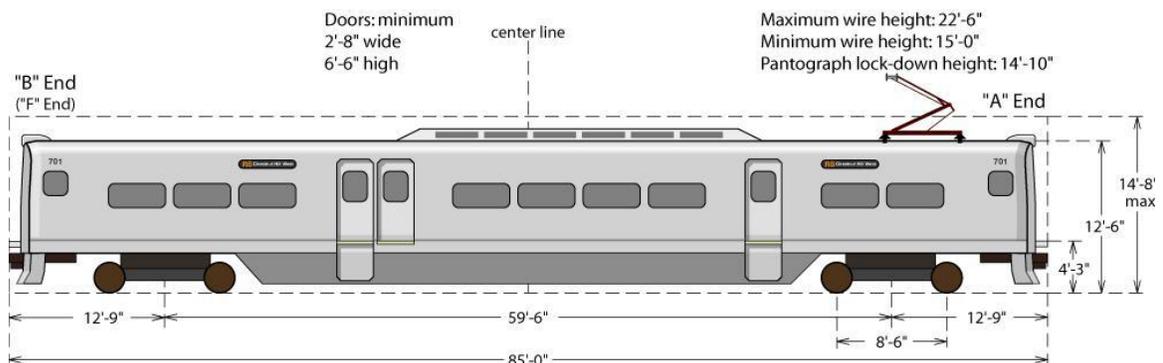
Four SEPTA Rail Cars:

- October 2007 - DTC and SEPTA contract to purchase 4 rail cars
- August 2010 - SEPTA receives cars purchased by DTC
- October 2010 - SEPTA completes inspection and testing and informs manufacturer of deficiencies
- February 2011 - DTC purchased cars begin revenue service

Engineering and Design provided by Rummel, Klepper & Kahl, LLP, Baltimore, Maryland. Project Management Oversight Program provided by Hill International, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Planning Project Management provided by the Delaware Transit Corporation. North District Construction, Delaware Department of Transportation, will provide construction management.



SilverlinerV



Wilmington to Newark Commuter Rail Improvements

Wilmington, Delaware

