



NORWALK PARKING AUTHORITY

Press Release

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SoNo Railroad Station Facelift to Begin in August

The South Norwalk Railroad Station will undergo a face lift this summer and construction is planned to begin in August. The eastbound side of the train station is rapidly deteriorating and renovations are imperative. Planned improvements include new floors, lighting, doors, seating and indoor and outdoor painting, landscaping and upgraded bathrooms. As part of the Transit Oriented Development in the City of Norwalk, the train station is the transportation centerpiece for the City of Norwalk.

The railroad station is one of several Parking Authority capital improvement projects slated to be completed this year. Capital funding for the impending facelift was approved by the Common Council for fiscal year 2008-09.

The train station was originally constructed in the early 1890's and was a critical transportation hub serving the entire Northeast region. In the 1980's, the station was condemned as result of a fire, and in 1994, it was restored to integrate the original historic Victorian charm of yesteryear with modern amenities. The past 14 years the railroad station has seen an enormous increase in parking and pedestrian demand to currently service approximately 20,000 people per month. All this activity has taken a toll on the amenities and ambience of the facility.

The improvements were always part of the Parking Authority's long range planning, but until recently, they had no funding for the project. The Parking Authority, now in a positive financial position, can reinvest net revenues back into the parking system.

"We want people to take the train and walk to their destinations, said Kathryn Hebert, Administrative Services Manager for the City of Norwalk, so that they can fully enjoy the uniqueness of SoNo experiences with a short walk, bike ride or by taking the shuttle bus."

The eastbound side is also home to the New England Fashion and Design Association located in the former Police Substation space. This summer, a new café, tied-in with a fashion theme, will also open on the eastbound side of the Station.

"Once the improvements are complete, a partnership with the Norwalk Arts Commission is planned, said Hebert. We intend to install public art on empty walls on the eastbound side. There's so much potential at the railroad station, said Hebert. "We want to turn this unpolished gem into the pride and joy of Norwalk. I want people to get off the train and say 'wow!'"

Mayor Richard A. Moccia shares this sentiment. "I anticipate the improvements will make a good first impression and will have a lasting impact on travelers. First time travelers to Norwalk will see the train station as the first official building representing the City. The upgraded and improved building will send the message that this where you want to live and do business," he said.

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