



TOWN OF GROTON

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

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April 8, 2020

The Honorable Ned Lamont, Governor of Connecticut
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Lamont:

I am writing on behalf of the Groton Town Council to request that the Connecticut Department of Transportation undertake a study of expanding passenger rail service for Groton and the southeastern region of Connecticut. Recently, Zell Steever briefed the Groton Town Council, as well as other local municipal leaders on the work he has done outlining the potential for extending and connecting existing rail lines in a way that would significantly benefit the region. It would promote transit oriented development, reduce highway traffic congestion, reduce carbon emissions, and further the state's overall policy goals. These issues are of particular importance to the Town of Groton, City of Groton and the City of New London as Electric Boat's expansion plans will translate into between six and twelve thousand additional employees, increasing traffic in an already congested area and exacerbating existing parking challenges.

The requested study would include two components. The first proposes extending Shore Line East (SLE) passenger service to Groton Center, Mystic and Westerly, R.I. This enables future connections to the east as a part of a larger regional commuter rail system that would connect and enhance service between New York, Providence and Boston. Extension of SLE passenger service is one of the Southeast Connecticut Council of Government's (SCCOG) FY 2019 - 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan's regional priorities.

The second part of the proposal is establishing a new CT rail commuter rail shuttle service using existing Providence and Worcester Railroad (P&W) (now the Genesee and Wyoming Railroad) tracks that run along the east bank of the Thames River connecting Pfizer, Electric Boat and the U.S. Navy Submarine Base. The P&W tracks extend further to Norwich and north to Massachusetts making possible future expansion of commuter service in eastern Connecticut. Existing switch and infrastructure allows P&W freight trains to access Amtrak tracks east and west. In Groton there are three

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parallel tracks that would make transfers of passengers between trains possible at a new Groton Center Station.

Eighty percent of Electric Boat's employees live outside of Groton and almost all commute by automobile. While the anticipated addition of thousands of new hires bodes well for economic growth in the area, unless it is accompanied by modern commuter rail and smart transit oriented development (TOD) plans, it will worsen traffic congestion, have a negative environmental impact and reduce its economic benefit.

In summary, the proposed connections between currently unconnected rail systems would significantly improve the movement of people from home to work (and play) with the added benefits of reducing - rather than increasing - traffic congestion, carbon pollution, commuting time and highway maintenance costs. These outcomes are a major goal of TOD, and pursuit of these transportation proposals would greatly contribute to the continued growth and success of southeastern Connecticut as a major industrial and tourism center in Connecticut. We are available to meet with appropriate staff to further discuss this proposal.

Respectfully,



John Burt, Town Manager

Cc: Bob Ross, Executive Director, State of Connecticut, Office of Military Affairs
Garrett T. Eucalitto, Deputy Commissioner, CTDOT
Thomas J. Maziarz, Bureau Chief, CTDOT, Bureau of Policy and Planning
Richard W. Andreski, Bureau Chief, CTDOT, Public Transportation
Carl L. Jackson, Rail Administrator, CTDOT, Bureau of Public Transportation
Office of Rail
Kevin Graney, President, General Dynamics Electric Boat
John Burkhardt, Senior Vice President Global-Head, Drug Safety R&D, Pfizer
Captain Todd Moore, Commanding Officer, Naval Submarine Base, New London
Mayor Keith Hedrick, City of Groton
Mayor Patrice Granatosky, Town of Groton
Mayor Michael Passero, City of New London
First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough, Town of Stonington
Mayor Peter Nystrom, City of Norwich

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