

# Commuter Train Service, Southeastern Connecticut

A proposal to meet the existing and future transportation needs in **southeastern Connecticut**

## The two sections are:

1. Expand commuter rail service from **NYC** to **Boston** (east-west rail) in both directions, from **Old Saybrook** to **Wickford Junction** on **Shore Line East (SLE)**; The final link!
2. Establish commuter train service from the US Sub Base to Electric Boat/Pfizer on a proposed **new** CT DOT **Norwich Branch Line (NBL)** (north-south rail) and then;

This then **connects** the east-west train service of **SLE** with the new north-south passenger service of **NBL** in **Groton** and **New London** where larger employers are on both banks of the Thames River.

## Proposal has Two Major Sections:

**First - Extend the existing** SLE passenger rail service east into Rhode Island for **commuters** with regular stops in:

Old Saybrook (existing)

Niantic

New London (existing)

Groton Center

Mystic (existing)

Stonington Borough

Westerly (existing)

West Kingston (existing)

Wickford Junction, R.I. (existing)

Shore Line East uses existing Amtrak tracks and facilities. Connect **CT SLE** from **NYC** with **R.I. (MBTA Commuter Rail)** to **Providence** and **Boston**, in both directions.

**Second – Establish new** passenger rail service along the east side of the Thames River from the **US Sub Base** in the Town of Groton to the south entrance of **Electric Boat (EB) and Pfizer** in the City of Groton, with **three new platforms** using the existing Providence & Worcester (P&W) Railroad (now the, Genessee & Wyoming Railroad)

Establish 3 new platform stops:

1. South end of the **US Sub Base**, Submarine Museum, with parking;
2. **Groton Station**, intersection of Route 1 and Poquonnock Road, SW side of Amtrak RR bridge with parking and;
3. Intersection of the track between the gates at **EB and Pfizer** on Rt. 349, without parking.

Appropriate **commuter train schedule** would be necessary to connect the two passenger train services, **SLE** and **NBL** for employees, commuters and the public

## Why expand train service in the region?

**Electric Boat** is expecting **5,000 – 18,000** new jobs over the next 20 years. The **Groton-New London** area **has new jobs** on the Thames River! That estimate is just for **EB!** And the **U. S. Navy?** These new jobs support economic development in Groton, New London and the entire region.

**80% of the work force** in Groton (26,000 individuals) commutes from **out of town** to work in Groton in single-occupancy, privately owned vehicles (POVs). **38%** of Connecticut's Green House Gases (**GHG**) come from motor vehicles.

The **new young workforce** is **demanding mixed-use** development near where they **work** with the ability to use modern public transportation alternatives as well as **safe bike** and **walking** routes. The proposal solves rail service's "**last mile problem**" for worker, employers, and residents.

I-95 and I-395 will become parking lots! The public needs an attractive **modern alternative** to the use of cars. Southeastern Connecticut Council of

Governments (SECCOG) estimates **\$2.4 billion** is needed for just roads and bridges by 2045!

The SECCOG estimates another **18,000 more** people will come to live in the region by 2040.

## Why Invest in Rails?

**Expanded** and **new rail** services are essentially “**shovel ready**”- no new rails, no major land acquisitions, and no major regulatory issues.

Uses **existing** under-utilized rails and transportation infrastructure – **Amtrak** and **Providence and Worcester Railroad**

Provides new and additional access to **interconnected train service**, both to local and regional communities from **NYC to Boston** and from **CT to Mass.**

Will create enhanced **Transportation Hubs** in **New London** and **Groton**.

Will **strengthen** existing and new **mixed-use development** zones in the region ready for **Transit Oriented Development** (TOD) funding.

Supports and enhances “**smart growth**” and sustainable **development** in the region.

Reduces existing rush-hour traffic **congestion** and **delays** due to **storm** events and **accidents** on existing roads and highways.

Provides a **viable, efficient, less costly alternative** to the use of autos for travel.

Requires **fewer parking** spaces around centers of employment and shopping.

Is a **safer way** to travel, **improves the quality of life** and **productivity** for employees and the public.

Provides **improved air quality, protects drinking water quality, reduces storm water runoff, reduces suburban sprawl, and reduces GHG emissions.**

Makes the region’s transportation infrastructure more **resilient.**

Proposal is consistent with local POCD, SECCOG, and Connecticut DOT plans.

## **Issues to overcome!**

Public's **resistance to change** - need to educate the public on benefits and values of **modern train** transportation.

**Cost of service** – both direct and indirect investments from both the State and the federal government will be needed.

**Coordination and cooperation** is needed between the involved parties – public and private interests.

**Planning, designing, financing, and operating** a new, reliable, modern public transit system that works well is challenging.

**Resolving regulatory** issues with bridges on the Connecticut, Thames and Mystic Rivers.

**Results** - Getting the **new passenger service** operational and producing and benefits in a **timely manner** – is key!

**Begin now! Study, plan, fund, promote, and operate - - a *modern, expanded passenger-rail commuter service* in the region.**

**Next Steps:**

First: **Letters of Support** from our local communities and partners to CT DOT and the Governor;

Second: **Support** from regional, state, federal and private entities; and

Third: Public **support** and full political **engagement**.

**The Ask:** I am requesting the **Connecticut Commuter Rail Council** send a **letter** supporting **expanded** and **new train service** for SE Connecticut to the Governor and the Commissioner of DOT with copies to the surrounding communities, the COG, our state and federal elected officials and our private partners in industry.



# Finally

**If we build a modern, reliable, efficient, cost effective public transportation system, the **PUBLIC** will come - and our **quality of life** will become **better** -**

Proposed Train Service Outline F 4 15 20  
Zsteever: doc