



I write on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, The Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, and the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce to express our strong support for the expansion of Shore Line East (SLE) rail service to Westerly, Rhode Island, including new stations in Groton and Mystic. This long-overdue transportation investment represents a critical opportunity to strengthen regional mobility, economic growth, workforce development, and quality of life throughout southeastern Connecticut and southwestern Rhode Island.

Extending Shore Line East service beyond its current terminus in New London to Westerly would significantly enhance regional connectivity, creating stronger transportation links between Westerly and New Haven while laying the foundation for future connections to Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter rail service. This expanded network would provide greater access to employment opportunities, educational institutions, tourism destinations, and cultural assets throughout the region.

The expansion of Shore Line East would deliver numerous economic and community benefits, including:

- Providing direct workforce and economic development benefits to major regional employers, including Electric Boat, Pfizer, Naval Submarine Base New London, and the extensive defense, manufacturing, and technology supply chains that support them.
- Expanding access to employment opportunities by providing reliable transportation options for workers traveling between Rhode Island and eastern Connecticut, helping employers address growing workforce shortages.
- Supporting the tourism economy by offering visitors an attractive alternative to automobile travel while reducing congestion along the Interstate 95 corridor.
- Addressing parking challenges in key destination communities such as Mystic, Groton, New London, and Westerly by providing convenient access without increasing demand for limited parking resources.
- Reducing traffic congestion on Interstate 95, which continues to be a significant constraint on economic growth, business productivity, and visitor experiences throughout the region.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS WHO CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO PROGRAMS IN SUPPORT OF THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

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Groton Utilities

Mystic Seaport Museum

The Day

L+M Hospital/YNHH

Cashman Dredging

Centreville Bank

Cross Sound Ferry

Backus Hospital/Hartford  
Healthcare

Breezeline

Enstructure

Reworld

SCADD

Yankee Remodeler



- Providing a safe, accessible, and affordable transportation option for seniors, enhancing mobility, independence, and overall quality of life for our aging population.
- Improving regional resilience by offering transportation alternatives during major highway construction projects, traffic incidents, and weather-related disruptions.

A comprehensive feasibility study completed in 2020 outlined the costs, infrastructure requirements, and implementation strategies necessary to extend Shore Line East service to Westerly. The Chamber strongly encourages state and federal leaders to prioritize the investments needed to advance this project and realize its substantial long-term economic and social benefits.

We also encourage policymakers to explore successful international models that promote public transit usage among older adults. One example is Ireland's Free Travel Scheme, which provides complimentary travel for retirees and seniors on publicly supported transportation systems. Similar programs, potentially incorporating peak-hour restrictions where appropriate, could significantly increase transit ridership, improve mobility for seniors, minimize loneliness and maximize the public value of public transportation investments.

The Chambers firmly support the Shore Line East expansion and stand ready to assist in advancing this transformative initiative. We believe this project will strengthen workforce accessibility, support economic competitiveness, enhance tourism, improve quality of life, and contribute to a more sustainable transportation future for our region.

Sincerely,

Tony Sheridan  
CEO