

Jonnycake Center of Westerly  
23 Industrial Drive Westerly, RI  
401-377-8069  
April 2026



To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of bringing commuter rails to Westerly, RI. I am the Director of Community Resources at the Jonnycake Center of Westerly. My department serves as a resource hub for the entire community- SNAP applications, legal resources, job postings, healthcare, and transportation on top of our personal resources at Jonnycake which includes our food pantry, financial assistance, and thrift store vouchers.

I understand the massive need for public transportation in Southern RI as someone who works with many people in this town with various necessities and as someone who lives here. I meet regularly with local organizations to brainstorm on how to make public transportation more accessible in the Southern RI area.

Currently, we have RIPTA Flex that runs on a minimal schedule and Amtrak, which can be very costly. The 204 Westerly Flex Van runs Monday through Friday and goes to a small list of places by reservation only. The 301 Friday Flyer operates from 9am-1:45pm and stops at 11 locations throughout the Westerly and Chariho area, consisting of grocery stores, Westerly Senior Center, and Wood River Health and again, by reservation only. The RIPTA bus to Providence has one time slot for leaving and returning, both of which are not realistic for anyone. Uber/Lyft in this area is hard to come by and can add up very quickly depending on where you need to go. There are some transportation services for elderly folks such as Westerly Village and Elderly Transportation Program, but the need for all ages is large and hard to come by. When searching for public transportation in Westerly on google, the first website to come up is RIPTA- however when you click the link, it says "page not found." Our town is in great need of adding public transportation, not taking it away.

Offering the commuter rail to the Westerly area would be extremely beneficial for folks of all ages and abilities and will reduce transportation barriers this town faces. People will be able to access New London, the New Haven area, Providence, and so many other places at an affordable price in order to access their place of work, doctors, specialists, college/universities, airports, or simply to travel to these places for leisure.

This expansion would increase foot traffic near stations, and since our train station is located in the heart of downtown Westerly, this would benefit local businesses immensely. My husband and I recently took the Amtrak train from Westerly to Mystic to get dinner. We avoided traffic, parking, and it was an 8 minute ride. With a commuter rail you would have more options instead of following the strict time schedule of Amtrak, and more locals would be inclined to visit both Mystic, Westerly, and surrounding towns without the worry of parking, drinking and driving, relying on taxis/ubers/etc.

A commuter rail would remove the limitations on those relying on unpredictable car access or those who don't have access to a reliable vehicle. When transportation barriers are improved, it allows people to pursue stable employment, continuous education, and consistent access to services outside of the town they live in. Investing in a commuter rail in Westerly would be a fantastic and vital addition to our town. I am always willing to continue this conversation, so please reach out any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brianna Lord', with a stylized, flowing script.

Brianna Lord

Director of Community Resources

Jonnycake Center of Westerly

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