

Regional Intermodal Transportation Center Master Plan

New London, Connecticut

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FACT SHEET**



*New London serves as the gateway to southeastern Connecticut for people arriving by trains, ferries and buses. The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) initiated a study of the transportation facilities in downtown New London in the summer of 2008, with a goal of planning a more seamless transportation hub for the region. Funded with a \$750,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the **Regional Intermodal Transportation Center Master Plan and Efficiency Study** is examining transportation services currently serving the city and region and developing concepts for an enhanced Center with associated economic development.*

Who is conducting the study?

The study is being managed by SCCOG staff with assistance from a consultant team headed by TranSystems. Other firms included on the consultant team are: Basile Baumann Prost and Cole & Associates, Inc., Crosby/Schlessinger/Smallridge LLC, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. and URS Corporation.

The consultant is working closely with a Steering Committee that includes representation from the transportation providers, businesses, and economic development groups, the City of New London, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and other stakeholders.

Why is the study being conducted?

Downtown New London offers a unique hub of transportation services – intercity and commuter rail, intercity and local/regional bus and automobile and passenger ferry. It is the transportation center for the entire southeastern region funneling many business and recreational visitors into the area and linking New England and Long Island and Connecticut with Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and beyond. Union Station anchors the current Regional Intermodal Transportation Center, yet it is privately owned. Its owners are exploring alternative uses for Union Station. While the various transportation modes are currently adjacent to each other, the ease of making transfers between modes could be improved.

On a sunny summer weekend, New London is a busy place. Ferries shuttle thousands of passengers between New London and the various islands. Passengers arrive and leave by Amtrak trains, Shore Line East, Greyhound buses, Casino sponsored coaches, SEAT buses, taxis, automobiles, bicycles and on foot.

This year, nine

cruise ships visited New London and docked at the nearby State Pier. It is hoped that more will come in the future.

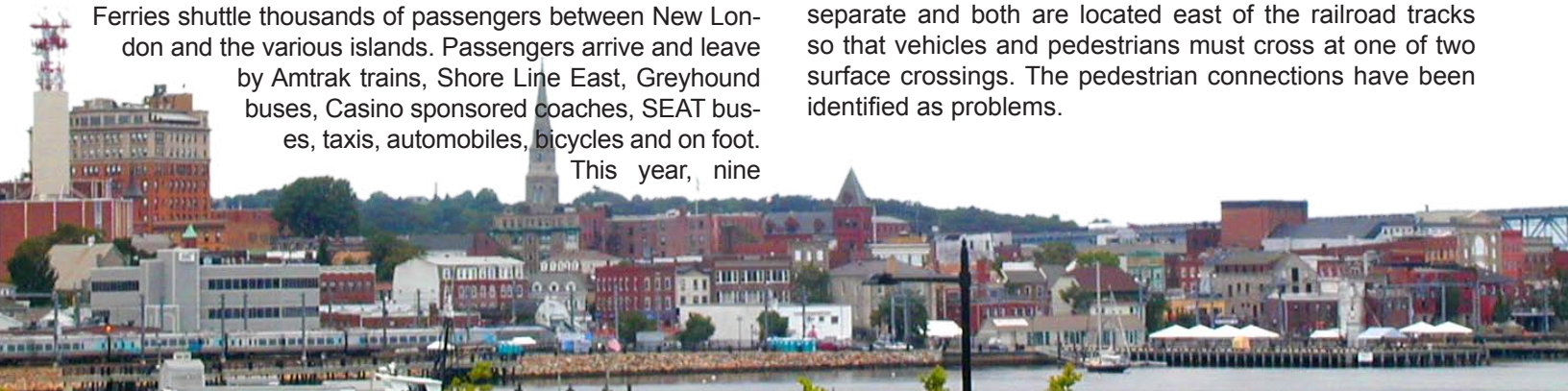
A well-functioning intermodal center is considered vital to future development in New London and the region. The City and area businesses would like to identify strategies to encourage passengers traveling through the city to shop, dine and explore local cultural attractions. It is believed that a revitalized intermodal transportation center could offer unique potential development opportunities.

The result of the study will be a Master Plan for the transportation center which will identify specific transportation facility improvements and development opportunities.

What will be studied?

The study is focusing on the Union Station area, including the rail, bus and nearby ferry and parking facilities. Currently, Union Station serves Amtrak and Shore Line East train passengers as well as passengers on inter-city and regional/local buses. The Shore Line East service is currently limited but may be expanded in the near future. Currently, the SEAT facilities are limited to one bus shelter and few benches. The Greyhound Bus Terminal is attached but separate from the rail station. There are limited amenities for passengers.

Adjacent to Union Station are active ferry service connections to Fishers Island (NY), Long Island (Orient Point, NY), and Block Island (RI). The Cross Sound Ferry (Long Island and Block Island) and Fishers Island Ferry facilities are separate and both are located east of the railroad tracks so that vehicles and pedestrians must cross at one of two surface crossings. The pedestrian connections have been identified as problems.





Parking needs are also being examined. The City of New London and private entities operate parking facilities downtown totaling around 2,000 spaces that serve travelers using the transportation services. The largest facility is the Water Street Garage located directly across Water Street from the transportation hub. Pedestrian connections to and from the parking facilities have also been identified as problems. The Parade Project, recently begun by the City of New London, adjacent to the Water Street Garage will improve sightlines, pedestrian crossings and introduce traffic calming. The study will examine the needs of each mode and ways to improve intermodal connections, The latter will include physical conditions, information and wayfinding and other factors.

An important part of the study will be an examination of the market for development at and around the transportation center. The study will look specifically at those types of development that can build on the advantages provided by the transportation facilities. Opportunities for joint development of an enhanced transportation center and other economic development will be identified and conceptualized.

Should the transportation center remain downtown?

In the initial phase of the study the Connecticut Department of Transportation asked SCCOG to evaluate the potential of moving the transportation center to the Fort Trumbull peninsula. This evaluation has concluded that it should remain at its existing downtown location.

The downtown location is better suited as a transportation center because it is a central location with good access and uniquely consolidates the ground and maritime modes in a single location. Infrastructure (station, utilities, etc.) already exists so costs would be lower.

Moving the transportation center to the Fort Trumbull peninsula would result in a less desirable location for rail, intercity bus and SEAT, high costs and cut off the existing connection to ferry services, since the analysis revealed that it was infeasible to locate ferry and cruise ships at the Fort Trumbull site due to a combination of maritime and ground access issues.

How will a Master Plan for the transportation center be developed?

The consultant will develop a master plan by following these steps:

- Review suitability of location
- Identify current and future operational issues and potential solutions - This may include, for example: pedestrian-friendly spaces and linkages, information and wayfinding signage, ticketing, passenger comfort (restrooms, seating, weather protection, lighting), amenities (food, WiFi, etc.), circulation of vehicles, parking supply and location, operator office needs, etc.
- Estimate costs of improvements
- Identify development opportunities and concepts
- Identify synergies and potential partnerships

What do travelers say about traveling to and through New London?

During the summer, study consultants talked with 469 people traveling through New London by intercity and regional buses, ferries and rail to find out what they thought about the transportation facilities and the city. Opinions were gathered from another 196 people who used nearby parking garages and lots. On the whole, responses were mostly positive about the transportation facilities, although there were many suggestions for things that need improvement. It was learned that few of these travelers visit downtown while passing through New London. Asked what would make them most likely to visit downtown, they indicated more cultural attractions and entertainment, retail shops and restaurants.

When will the study be completed?

A draft Master Plan with recommendations will be completed and ready for review by the public in late spring.

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