

= Shore Line East =

Shore Line East ( SLE ) is a commuter rail service which operates along the Northeast Corridor through southern Connecticut , US . A fully owned subsidiary of the Connecticut Department of Transportation ( ConnDOT ) , SLE provides service seven days a week along the Northeast Corridor from New London west to New Haven , with limited through service to Bridgeport and Stamford . Connecting service west of New Haven to New York City is available via Metro @-@ North Railroad 's New Haven Line .

The service was introduced in 1990 as a temporary measure to reduce congestion during construction work on I @-@ 95 . However , it proved more popular than expected , and service was continued after construction ended despite criticisms that the line was too expensive to operate . The service has been continually upgraded since its inception with rebuilt stations and new rolling stock as well as extensions to New London in 1996 and to Stamford in 2001 . Around 1 @,@ 900 to 2 @,@ 100 riders use the service every weekday depending on the season .

= = Current service = =

Most weekday SLE trains run local westbound from New London or Old Saybrook to New Haven in the morning , with some nonstop eastbound service . This traffic pattern is reversed in the afternoon and evening rush . A handful operate through New Haven as far as Stamford .

Most weekend SLE trains also run local westbound in the morning , then express in the afternoon , stopping only at Guilford and Westbrook between Old Saybrook and State Street . Eastbound service is reversed . This is because Branford , Madison , and Clinton only have platforms on the eastbound track , and thus switching is needed to platform a westbound train .

Around half of SLE trains operate to and from New London Station . New London SLE multi @-@ ride pass holders are also allowed to board selected Northeast Regional trains , or Acela Express train # 2151 . There are plans to increase the service to New London , which is limited by U.S. Coast Guard requirements regarding the bridge crossing the Connecticut River . After years with just one or two trains to New London , additional New London round trips were added in 2010 and 2013 , and weekend service began in June 2013 .

All trains that do not operate west of New Haven make a connection to a Metro @-@ North Railroad train at New Haven , for service to and from points in Connecticut , Westchester County , New York , and New York City .

Although SLE service is funded by ConnDOT , it is operated under contract by Amtrak . Amtrak owns and controls the Northeast Corridor east of New Haven . West of New Haven , the New Haven Line is owned by ConnDOT and trains are dispatched by Metro @-@ North .

During the OpSail and SailFest tall ship festivals at New London , extra Friday and weekend Shore Line East service is operated from New Haven to New London . During OpSail 2000 , through service operated from New Haven to Mystic ? the only time Shore Line East service has run east of New London .

= = Service history = =

= = = Previous service = = =

The section of the Northeast Corridor that Shore Line East operates on was once the New York @-@ Boston mainline of the New York , New Haven and Hartford Railroad . The section from New Haven to New London was built as the New Haven & New London Railroad . It was chartered in 1848 , began construction in 1850 , and opened for service in July 1852 . The line was owned by the New York , Providence and Boston Railroad ( the " Stonington Road " ) from 1858 to 1862 , and by the Shore Line Railway from 1864 until it was acquired by the New York , New Haven , and Hartford Railroad ( the " New Haven " ) in 1870 . Crossing the Connecticut River required a ferry transfer until

a drawbridge was built in 1870 .

The line was referred to by the New Haven Railroad as the Shore Line , to distinguish it from the railroad 's Main Line from New Haven to Springfield , Massachusetts . In recognition of the large role played by the New Haven in the history and heritage of the state of Connecticut , ConnDOT paints SLE 's diesel @-@ powered locomotives in the New Haven 's orange and black style . New Haven Railroad colors and emblems have also been placed at several stations , particularly New Haven Union Station .

The New Haven Railroad operated local service on the Shore Line up until its merger with Penn Central on January 1 , 1969 , when most commuter service east of New Haven was abandoned . Intercity service continued , but generally only stopped at New Haven , Old Saybrook , and New London . Penn Central continued to operate the Clamdigger , a single daily New London @-@ New Haven round trip with local stops , as well as a New London @-@ Boston round trip . Amtrak took over the Clamdigger along with most intercity passenger service , in May 1971 . In January 1972 , Amtrak discontinued the Clamdigger and Penn Central cut the New London @-@ Boston trip .

In 1976 and 1977 , Amtrak operated the Clamdigger as a Providence @-@ New Haven round trip with limited local stops ; for three months in 1978 , it was revived with additional commuter @-@ based stops . It was replaced in April 1978 by the Beacon Hill , which stopped at New Haven , Branford , Madison , Old Saybrook , Niantic , New London , and Mystic en route to Providence and Boston . The Beacon Hill ( which served the Providence and Boston commuting markets rather than New Haven ) was discontinued in 1981 due to funding cuts , ending commuter rail service in Connecticut east of New Haven .

= = = Initial service = = =

In 1981 and 1986 , legislation was proposed to restore commuter service between New Haven and New London , as well as between New Haven and Hartford . A 1986 ConnDOT study analyzed congestion on Interstate 95 , which runs parallel to the line . The study showed that Old Saybrook was a better terminus for initial service , with an expected ridership of 420 riders in each direction daily .

Based on the study , Governor O 'Neill ordered ConnDOT in October 1986 to initiate rail service on the corridor . It was established as a temporary service to newly reopened local stations between Union Station in New Haven and Old Saybrook , to alleviate traffic congestion that arose from scheduled construction work on I @-@ 95 . O 'Neill introduced a \$ 50 million transportation program that included \$ 900 @,@ 000 ( later reduced to \$ 500 @,@ 000 ) for basic stations and \$ 4 million to refurbish 12 Budd Rail Diesel Cars for rolling stock . The RDCs were found to be insufficient and two diesel trainsets were purchased from the defunct PATrain service in 1989 instead .

A second study in 1989 indicated higher potential ridership of 700 to 1350 daily riders . The state bought Amtrak 's New Haven maintenance facility in May 1989 and signed a service contract with Amtrak in November . ( Metro @-@ North Railroad was not considered for several reasons , largely because Amtrak already owned the rail line east of New Haven ) . Construction of 5 intermediate stations was completed in April 1990 .

Shore Line East service began on May 29 , 1990 , with four trains each direction during the morning and evening . The service carried the Clamdigger name during planning ; " Shore Line East " did not appear until shortly before service began . Shore Line East was threatened to be cut in 1991 by newly elected Governor Lowell Weicker , but it proved more popular than expected , and was effectively made permanent . A 1996 study found that Shore Line East captured 8 % of regional commuter trips and attracted a loyal ridership base .

In 1995 and 1997 , then Gov. John Rowland proposed to replace Shore Line East and the Waterbury Branch with bus service , citing a high subsidy of \$ 18 @.@ 70 per rider per trip , in order to decrease the unpopular gas tax . Lawmakers from the region called the proposals political and defended the line 's ability to reduce congestion and pollution , while opponents of the line called it an example of government waste . The Shore Line East Rider 's Association and other groups lobbied to save both services each time , and after public hearings a small fare increase was

enacted in late 1997 instead .

= = = Early expansions and criticisms = = =

In July 1995 , Governor Rowland signed a bill ordering various studies , including one that analyzed extending service to New London as had been originally planned . Before the study was completed , ConnDOT unilaterally decided to implement New London service , which the report commended . On February 1 , 1996 , two round trips per weekday were extended to New London . At that point , ridership was up 18 % over 1991 numbers .

In January 2001 , because of to changes in Amtrak rules , passengers were no longer allowed to cross tracks to access trains . New platforms were opened on the south side of the tracks at Branford and Westbrook at approximately the same locations .

In December 2001 , a single morning rush @-@ hour round trip branded SLExpress was extended to Stamford , with a stop at Bridgeport plus eastbound @-@ only stops at Stratford and Milford . An evening eastbound trip was also extended to Stamford with only the Bridgeport intermediate stop . This trip was intended to allow commuters to reach employment centers in Bridgeport and Stamford without having to make a transfer at New Haven . On June 24 , 2002 , additional Stamford trains were added , for a total of two westbound and three eastbound trains . When West Haven opened in August 2013 , it was added to these trips as well .

In 2003 , in order to add four additional Amtrak trips along the corridor , four of the then six round trips to New London were cut back to Old Saybrook . An agreement with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection limits service over the Old Saybrook @-@ Old Lyme bridge in order to avoid inconveniencing recreational boaters . ConnDOT 's agreement with Amtrak allowed commuters with monthly passes to ride certain Amtrak trains instead . After criticism over the service cuts , in April 2008 ConnDOT began allowing commuters with multi @-@ ride passes to board the selected Amtrak trains as well .

= = = Improved and increased service = = =

When started in 1990 , Shore Line East was intended to be a temporary service . Except at Old Saybrook and New Haven , which were already served by Amtrak , the state constructed new stations ? consisting of little more than bare wooden decks ? for minimal cost . Since the service was started two months before the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed , the platforms were not built to be handicapped accessible . After a decade of service , with Shore Line East established as part of Connecticut 's transportation system , the state began to upgrade the service . The basic stations have been rebuilt with high @-@ level platforms to provide handicapped access and level boarding , parking lots have been expanded , and more trains have been added to the schedule .

A completely new station was also added to the line for traffic mitigation as part of the reconstruction of the Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge . On June 7 , 2002 , State Street Station was opened in New Haven to provide better access to the downtown area than Union Station , which is half a mile away from the business district .

The first station to be rebuilt was Old Saybrook , the busy eastern terminus of the line . The new high @-@ level island platform and pedestrian bridge opened on November 1 , 2002 . Old Saybrook had previous had only a single side platform serving a relatively small number of Amtrak trains ; the rebuilt has two platforms serving three tracks , to allow Amtrak trains in both directions to stop or pass even while a SLE train is at the station .

Beginning on May 24 , 2004 , construction of new platforms began at Clinton , Guilford , and Branford . The rebuilt Clinton station opened on July 25 , 2005 , and the rebuilt Branford station opened on August 8 , 2005 ; both consist of a single high @-@ level platform on the south side of the tracks . The new Guilford station , which has platforms on both sides of the tracks ( connected by a pedestrian bridge ) to allow for greater operational flexibility , opened on November 28 , 2005 . Construction at Madison started on September 24 , 2007 , and finished with the opening of the rebuilt station platform on July 28 , 2008 .

On October 8 , 2007 , reverse @-@ peak and more midday service were introduced , which officials hailed as the beginning of Shore Line East as a true bidirectional system . Several existing express trains also began to stop at Guilford . Since at least 2006 , advocates had been calling for the establishment of weekend Shore Line East service . A pilot of weekend service was run from November 17 , 2007 , to December 30 , 2007 , with six " Shopper 's Special " round trips from Old Saybrook to New Haven . The trains were scheduled to connect with similar Metro @-@ North specials at New Haven . Year @-@ round weekend service began on July 4 , 2008 , with 9 daily Old Saybrook ? New Haven round trips on weekends . No weekend service was run to New London , but weekday service was increased as cross @-@ honoring of multiple @-@ ride and monthly tickets was added on two Amtrak trains .

The major obstacle preventing full New London service is the bridge over the Connecticut River between Old Saybrook and Old Lyme . The drawbridge section is closed for a certain period of time to allow trains to pass , which prevents large boats from passing under . The Marine Trades Association opposes additional service , which would mandate more bridge closings . The 2003 agreement with Amtrak limited weekday traffic over the bridge to 2 SLE and 39 Amtrak trains until 2018 , although it was revised in 2010 and 2013 . Since 2003 , New London had been served by cross @-@ honored Amtrak trains plus one or two dedicated SLE roundtrips .

On February 16 , 2010 , an additional round trip was extended to New London . Three more were extended on May 10 , 2010 . However , advocates for full service to New London said that Governor Rell failed to deliver on promises to New London , with one newspaper columnist writing that " she seems incapable of standing up to the marine trades lobby " regarding the bridge openings .

In July 2012 , Governor Malloy announced that 5 weekend round trips would be extended to New London beginning in April 2013 . However , the extension was dependent on ongoing negotiations with the marine industry over mandated closings of the Old Saybrook ? Old Lyme bridge . Two weekday midday trips were added in May 2013 , while weekend service began on June 1 , 2013 , after the application for additional bridge closings was approved by the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection . By July , New London represented 26 % of weekend ridership . In December 2013 , the state announced that ridership was up 35 % for the year as a result of the increased service . From 2009 to 2014 , monthly New London ridership increased from less than 1 @, @ 000 monthly passengers to approximately 5 @, @ 000 , accounting for a significant fraction of ridership increases on Shore Line East during that period .

Four of the five intermediate stations between Old Saybrook and New Haven were rebuilt with accessible platforms between 2004 and 2008 , but rebuilding at Westbrook was delayed due to environmental and cost issues . No site was available until Westbrook and ConnDOT traded the new station site on Norris Avenue for a highway garage site off Route 145 . The controversial land swap was begun in 2004 but was not finalized until 2006 , and town operations were not moved to the Route 145 site until September 2011 . Site clearing began in November 2011 , and ground was broken for the \$ 14 @. @ 4 million station in January 2012 . A new station with a larger 210 @-@ space lot and platforms on both tracks opened on March 25 , 2014 , with full bidirectional service to the station beginning on May 11 .

= = = Future = = =

In a 2007 report , ConnDOT outlined plans to turn SLE into a full @-@ service bidirectional regional rail line , with full @-@ day service and all trains extended to New London . This involves incremental improvements , similar to those that have already been put into place . One of the first priorities is to add a second platform at all stations , which is mandated by the 2003 agreement with Amtrak . New London , Old Saybrook , Guilford , Westbrook , and stops from New Haven Union Station west all have multiple platforms , while State Street has an island platform serving two tracks with plans for a second platform .

Branford is the first previously rebuilt station to be further renovated with a second platform . A \$ 60 million bond in February 2011 included \$ 16 @. @ 5 million for a second platform and pedestrian bridge at Branford , \$ 7 @. @ 3 million for platform extensions at Guilford , and \$ 11 million to add

catenary wires to currently unwired sidings along the line . Construction on the new platform at Branford began in September 2013 , and the Guilford work is under way as well . As of September 2015 , the new platform and pedestrian bridge at Branford were officially scheduled to open on December 18 , 2015 , but have been delayed into 2016 as a result of the previous harsh winter and other issues . Bidding on a second platform and three @-@ level parking garage at Madison , planned since 2009 , was scheduled to begin in 2013 but did not occur . Per the agreement with Amtrak , a second platform is planned to be added to Clinton station . The project was originally planned to start in early 2012 , but has since been indefinitely delayed .

Expansion of the original parking facilities is also necessary to meet demand at many stations , since many started with small lots suitable for just a few dozen cars . The rebuilt stations at Branford , Guilford , Madison , Clinton , and Westbrook have larger lots than the 1990 stations , and a second lot with 272 spaces opened at Branford in June 2011 . A 585 @-@ space , three @-@ level parking garage is eventually planned for Madison station .

Although the route east of New Haven is electrified under Amtrak 's 60 Hz traction power system , Shore Line East currently operates entirely with diesel locomotives . Once the full order of M8 railcars are in service , and Amtrak tests and approves the M8s for usage east of New Haven , ConnDOT plans to use 24 to 32 cars for electric SLE service to reduce diesel emissions . The diesel trainsets will be moved to service on the Danbury or Waterbury branches , or to the planned Hartford Line from New Haven to Springfield .

In April 2012 , state officials released a report detailing possible sites for an infill station in East Lyme . Four sites were analyzed ? two near downtown Niantic and two at Rocky Neck State Park . Niantic had previously been a stop on the Clamdigger . As part of a bonding proposal made by Governor Malloy , \$ 750 @, @ 000 would be allocated for a new station at Niantic .

The possibility of extending service eastward has also been considered . Several special trains operated to Mystic during the 2000 OpSail festival , the only such service to date . In a 2001 report examining commuter rail for Rhode Island , RIDOT considered an extension of Shore Line East to Providence via Westerly ( effectively restoring the Clamdigger service ) . Ultimately , MBTA Commuter Rail service , which already ran to Providence as part of the Providence / Stoughton Line , was extended southward instead ( although only to Wickford Junction ) . However , both RIDOT and SLE have long @-@ term plans to extend their services to meet at Westerly . Extending SLE service would require negotiations with the US Coast Guard , the Marine Trades Association , and other stakeholders for increased use of the Thames River Bridge and the Mystic River bridge . As part of Governor Malloy 's thirty year transit plan , Shore Line East would be extended to Westerly at a cost of \$ 200 million . On February 1 , 2016 , the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission issued a report recommending extension of Shore Line East rail service to Mystic and Westerly as soon as possible .

= = Rolling stock = =

In contrast to the electric multiple units used on Metro @-@ North 's New Haven Line , which are also purchased in part by the state of Connecticut , all SLE trains are diesel push @-@ pull trains .

SLE runs diesel service because Amtrak had not yet electrified the Northeast Corridor between New Haven and Boston at the time service began . The original SLE service operated with 2 F @-@ 7s and 10 Pullman @-@ Standard coaches purchased from Pittsburgh 's PATrain for \$ 1 @. @ 7 million .

In 1991 , ConnDOT purchased 10 Bombardier Shoreliner III coaches , similar to ones already used on the Danbury Branch and Waterbury Branch , and leased three additional diesel locomotives : two EMD GP38s and one EMD GP9 . In 1994 Amtrak rebuilt 11 of ConnDOT 's surplus SPV @-@ 2000 diesel railcars into coaches , dubbed " Constitution Liners . " In 1996 , SLE took delivery of six refmanufactured GP40 @-@ 2H diesels to replace the entire motive power fleet . These were supplemented in 2005 with 8 GE P40DC Genesis diesels leased from Amtrak . ConnDOT purchased the P40DCs in 2008 . To augment capacity ConnDOT acquired 33 Mafersa coaches from the Virginia Railway Express in 2004 . These began entering service in 2006 , displacing the

Shoreliners and Constitution Liners .

ConnDOT plans call for the Kawasaki M8 to replace most or all of the locomotives and coaches currently in service on Shore Line East in 2018 . ConnDOT has proposed to use up to 32 M8 's in SLE service as far as Old Saybrook ; the diesel equipment will then be used on the Hartford Line and for New London service . Limited direct service from Grand Central Terminal to Old Saybrook may be added once the M8s are in service .

ConnDOT acquired an additional four GE P40DC locomotives from New Jersey Transit in 2015 . Originally built for Amtrak , NJ Transit employed the locomotives on the short @-@ lived Atlantic City Express Service .

= = = Roster = = =

= = Station stops = =