

# NEW HAVEN ←TO→ PROVIDENCE

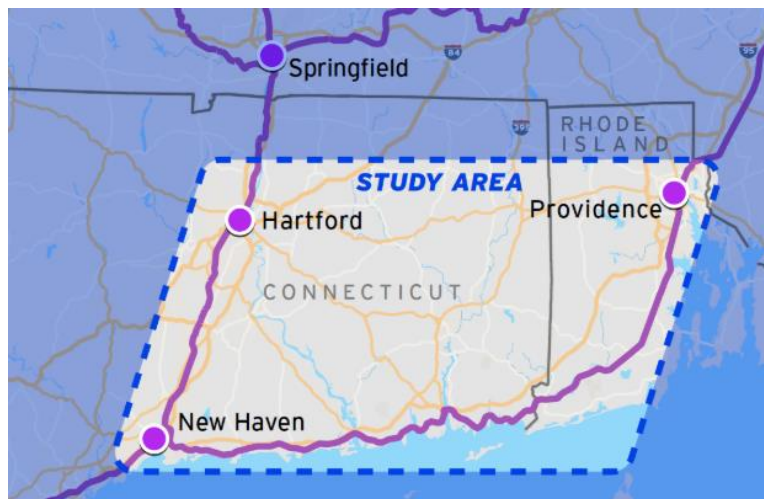
## Capacity Planning Study

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Q: What is the New Haven to Providence Capacity Planning Study?

A: The New Haven to Providence Capacity Planning Study (CPS) is an evaluation of alternatives to grow Northeast Corridor (NEC) rail capacity and improve rail performance with careful consideration of potential impacts on natural and human-built environments. The study area extends from New Haven east to New London, CT, north to Hartford, CT, and northeast to Providence, RI. The CPS will examine current and future challenges and opportunities for Amtrak, CT*rail* Shore Line East, CT*rail* Harford Line, and MBTA Commuter Rail. Passenger rail improvements will be analyzed in the context of the study area's needs and goals for long-term mobility, economic prosperity, and quality of life.

The study is a fresh approach to analyzing how to meet the service and performance goals developed during the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) NEC FUTURE program, not a continuation of NEC FUTURE infrastructure proposals. It will consider a full range of potential alignments and improvements. A robust and inclusive public engagement effort will lead the way. It will focus on the needs of and benefits for communities in the study area, as well as potential benefits beyond the study area.



#### Q: What is not included in the study?

A: This study does not include a preconceived preferred alternative alignment or set of improvements. The study also does not include any activities beyond conceptual design and analysis of alternatives:

- No detailed engineering;
- No Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA);
- No environmental permitting;
- No land acquisition; and
- No construction.

# NEW HAVEN ←TO→ PROVIDENCE

## Capacity Planning Study

### Q: Who is conducting the study?

A: The study is being administratively led by Amtrak in close collaboration with its partners on an Agency Advisory Committee (AAC) comprising representatives from:

- Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT);
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT);
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) / Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA);
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA); and
- Northeast Corridor Commission (NECC).

### Q: Who is funding the study?

A: The study is funded by a grant from FRA's Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program, with matching funds provided by Amtrak.

### Q: What are the challenges the study is seeking to address?

A: The existing NEC between New Haven and Providence suffers from several key challenges which will be explored in this study.

- **Capacity constraints.** Practically speaking, very little space remains to add future Amtrak or commuter rail service on the primarily two-track railroad between New Haven and Providence. Movable bridges that must remain open for marine traffic during the summer months are an additional capacity and speed constraint, as are several grade crossings with roadways. At the same time, demand for passenger rail service is growing and projected to continue growing over the next 20 years.
- **Proximity to shoreline.** The existing NEC in southeastern Connecticut is among the most at-risk stretches of railroad in the northeast for impacts from severe weather due to its proximity to the Long Island Sound. Its location along the coast also makes it among the curviest segments of the NEC, limiting both speed and capacity for Amtrak and commuter rail service.

### Q: How will the public be engaged in the study?

A: The study is making public outreach and engagement its top priority. Its success requires an inclusive and innovative approach to outreach and engagement and a commitment to working in partnership with all affected stakeholders, residents, and businesses. The study will convene a Public Advisory Committee (PAC) comprising key community representatives that will meet every few months to provide guidance on all aspects of the study. Direct public engagement will occur through several channels including surveys, virtual and in-person workshops, open house public meetings, and pop-up events at locations where communities gather like street fairs and festivals. The study's website will be a key two-way channel of communication. It will make available information and findings as the study proceeds and it will have tools for gathering feedback and input. The website will allow members of the public to join a mailing list to stay apprised of all study activities. The goal of all outreach will be to understand perspectives, identify challenges, and work towards areas of consensus.

# NEW HAVEN ← TO → PROVIDENCE

## Capacity Planning Study

### **Q: What is the role of the PAC and who will serve on it?**

A: The PAC will comprise approximately 15-20 community members with appropriate geographic representation across the study area. The PAC will build strong relationships with the study team (Amtrak project managers and consulting team) and the AAC. The group will begin by helping to establish goals for the study and the study area. It will then review and provide input on the drafting of alternatives for study, the findings of the alternatives analysis, and the development of recommendations. The study team, the AAC, and the PAC will aim to work on a consensus basis. The membership of the PAC will be developed in collaboration with the AAC and will also involve outreach to elected officials representing the study area.

### **Q: Will the study consider alternatives that do not pass through New Haven or Providence?**

A: No. The study will not consider alternatives that do not, at a minimum, pass through New Haven and Providence. The alternatives may vary in how they do so, but all alternatives will start and end at New Haven and Providence.

### **Q: What was the NEC FUTURE program and how does it relate to this study?**

A: The [NEC FUTURE program](#) was a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement developed by FRA that set a 2040 vision for the entire 457-mile spine of the NEC from Boston to Washington. It analyzed and recommended new alignments in several geographies, including a new segment between Old Saybrook, CT and Kenyon, RI. Due to its extensive study area, the NEC FUTURE program was unable to undertake the levels of public engagement necessary to respond to concerns raised by the public regarding that proposal.

The 2017 NEC FUTURE Record of Decision (ROD) ultimately removed the Old Saybrook-Kenyon segment and instead recommended this “New Haven to Providence Capacity Planning Study” to “consider inland as well as shoreline routes (both on or off the existing NEC) and include the Hartford/Springfield Line, for providing passenger rail service between New Haven, CT, and Providence, RI.” The New Haven to Providence CPS is not a continuation of NEC FUTURE infrastructure proposals. It is a fresh approach to analyzing how to meet NEC FUTURE service and performance objectives with a robust and inclusive public engagement effort leading the way.

### **Q: What are the CONNECT NEC program and the NEC Capital Investment Plan (CIP), and how do they relate to this study?**

A: The [CONNECT NEC program](#) and the CIP are ongoing, iterative service and infrastructure planning processes led by the NECC that implement the NEC FUTURE vision. CONNECT NEC covers a roughly 15-year time horizon and the CIP covers a 5-year time horizon. Both plans include some investments in the NEC between New Haven and Providence to maintain existing Amtrak and commuter services. Both plans point to the New Haven to Providence CPS as the process for analyzing and recommending any expansions or improvements to Amtrak and commuter services.

# NEW HAVEN ←TO→ PROVIDENCE

## Capacity Planning Study

### **Q: What is the timeline of the study?**

A: The study began in early 2025 and will include approximately 24 months of engagement, coordination, and analysis.

### **Q: What happens after this study?**

A: The recommended improvements identified in this study will be folded into the CONNECT NEC and CIP planning processes which build a pipeline of projects proposed for future federal funding. FRA defines several project lifecycle stages. The phase of this study is project planning, which includes conceptual design and alternatives analysis. Funding has only been allocated for project planning at this time, so any future steps would be dependent on future funding allocations. The subsequent stage would be project development, which includes preliminary engineering and environmental review. Stages beyond that would be final design and construction. Stakeholders and the public will continue to be engaged thoroughly during every stage of the project lifecycle.