



## Connecticut Department of Transportation

# VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY

## TIGER Discretionary Grant Application

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### Project Information (K)

- i. Type of Project  
**Freight Rail**

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- ii. Project Location  
**Old Saybrook, Essex, Deep River, Chester, Haddam, and Middletown, Connecticut within Middlesex County and within the 2nd Congressional District**

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- iii. Project Area  
**Suburban and Rural**

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- iv. Amount of Grant Funds Sought  
**\$15,500,000**

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- v. DUNS Number  
**807854583**

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- vi. Central Contractor Registration Confirmation Number  
**QZX9NA**

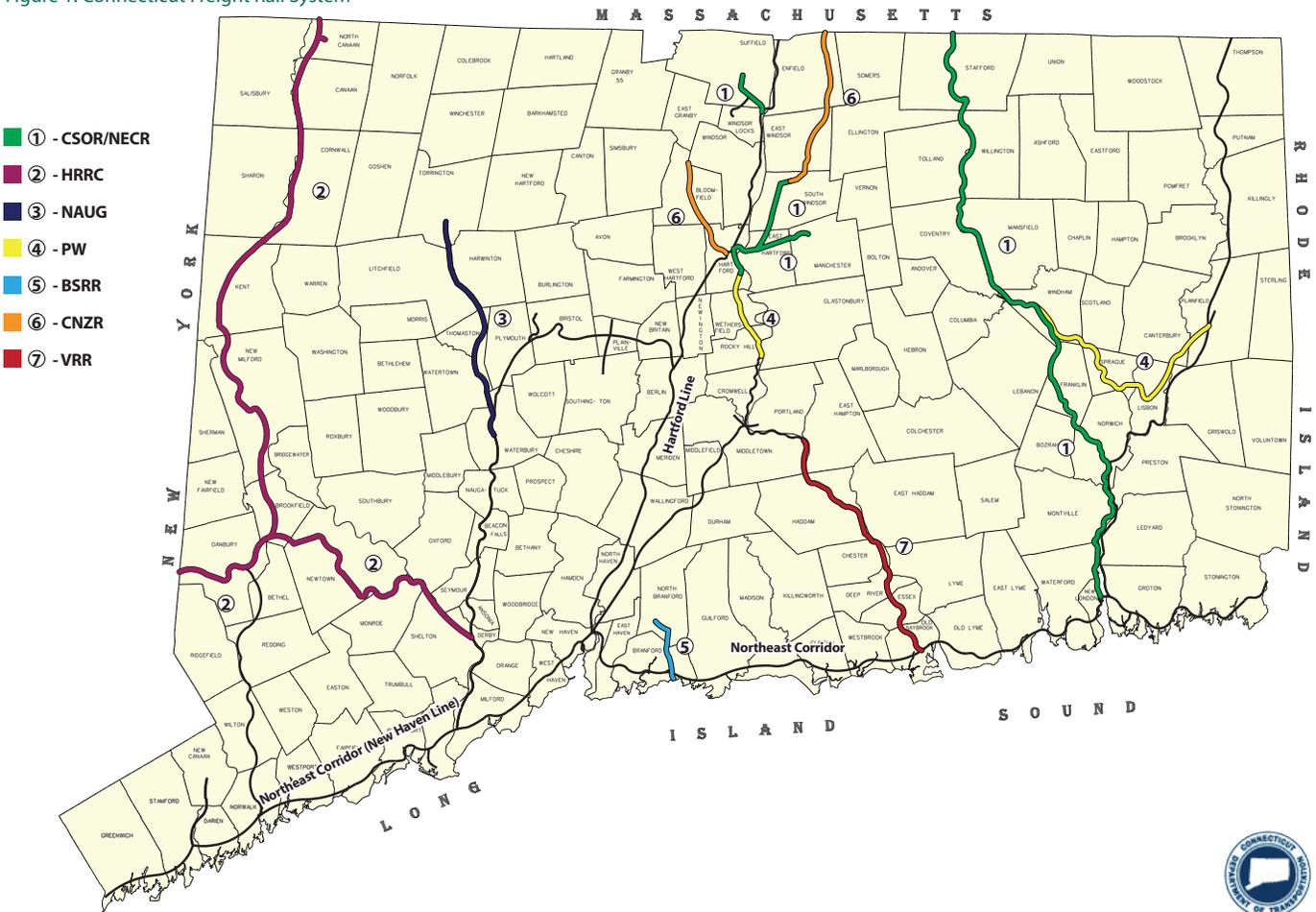
*Ladies and Gentlemen of the Selection Committee:*

Thank you for the opportunity to request ARRA TIGER Discretionary Grant funding (TIGER funding) for Connecticut’s continuing efforts to improve our statewide freight rail network. Over the past ten years, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) has directly invested over \$282.5 million into the freight rail network. This investment has allowed ConnDOT to incrementally improve the rail infrastructure. In addition, the State has invested over \$1.56 billion in the New Haven Main Line (NHML), a key segment of the Northeast Corridor. The NHML investments, targeted for passenger rail service, also secondarily benefit freight rail by permitting increased freight train speeds. Numerous upgrades and improvements are still necessary however, to make the overall system economically viable for the future. In some cases, urgent repairs and upgrades are needed in order to provide a more cost effective, safe, and sustainable means of efficiently transporting goods.

The receipt of the requested funding from the TIGER Discretionary Program, which is significantly less than the investment already made by the state, will provide the much needed incremental funding to completely address priority improvements in the system. To ensure that the greatest needs are addressed, ConnDOT has partnered with seven of the freight rail operators in the state to determine which projects have the highest priority and ability to leverage past investment in the network. The projects associated with each of these freight rail operators will be submitted as a separate application, for a total of seven applications. These projects, which are in keeping with the intent of the TIGER Grant program and will benefit operations on over three-quarters of the state freight rail system (Figure 1), are:

- › Central New England Railroad (CNZR): Rail improvements to Armory Line and Griffin Line to increase operating speeds.
- › Housatonic Railroad (HRRC): Replacement of track and crossings, bridge modifications, upgrades to crossings, and access to businesses along several key segments of their 83-mile system.
- › Naugatuck Railroad Company (NAUG): Upgrades to the 19.5-mile Torrington Line, including culverts, ties and ballast, and grade crossing improvements.

Figure 1. Connecticut Freight Rail System



- › Providence & Worcester Railroad (PW): Rail improvements to Willimantic and Middletown Branches to increase operating speeds.
- › RailAmerica’s Connecticut Southern Railroad Company (CSO) and New England Central Railroad (NECR): Bridge work, replacement of ties and ballast, surfacing, and switch rebuilding over 76 miles of track.
- › Tilcon/Branford Steam Railroad (BSRR): Replacement and repowering of locomotives and replacement of hopper railcars.
- › Valley Railroad Company (VRR): Resurrection of a key dormant section of the line and track rehabilitation along the remaining segments.

These upgrades and improvements will:

- › Reduce the number of truck trips and amount of carbon emissions associated with cargo shipment
- › Create new jobs throughout the state
- › Not require any additional environmental permits
- › Not be contingent upon the completion of any other projects
- › Be immediately ready to begin work with all funds being utilized prior to February 2012.

This application specifically addresses the Valley Railroad Company project, which includes resurrection of key out-of-service portion of the rail line at the north end and the rehabilitation of the remaining portions. The sections of the statewide freight rail network included in this application are shown in Figure 2.

### Application Overview

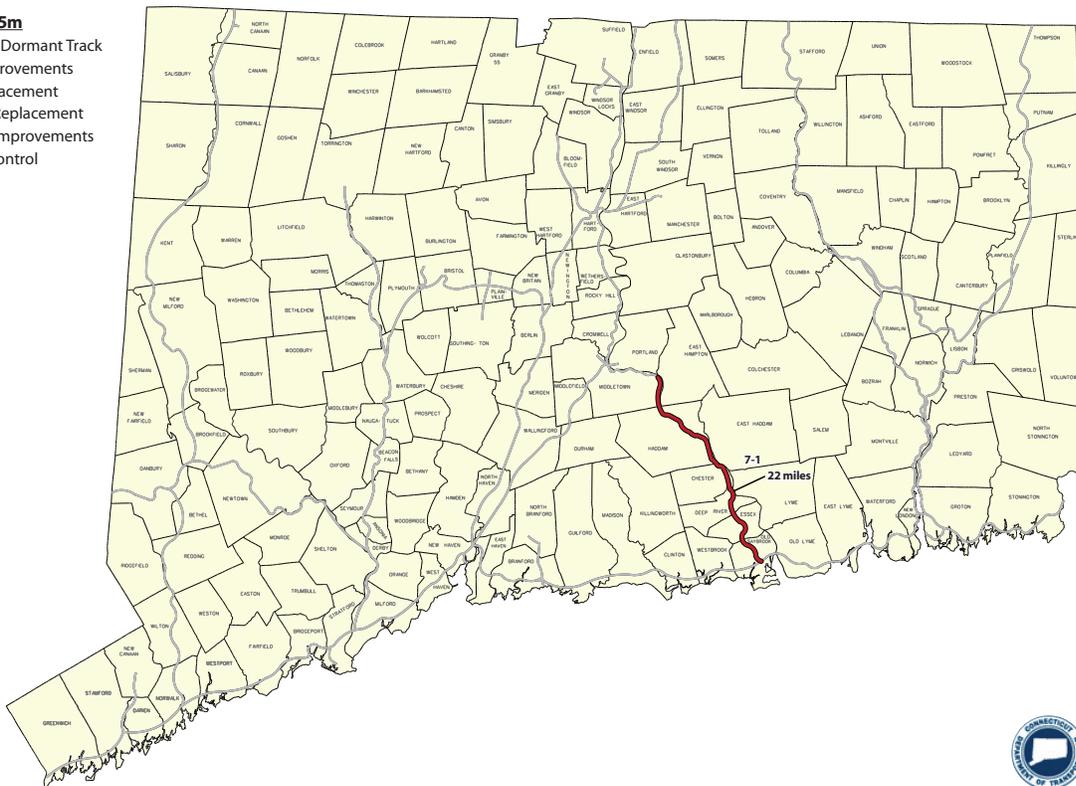
The application document responds specifically and in detail to the interim notice published in the Federal Register on May 18, 2009 and the operative notice published June 17, 2009. This application consists of two parts.

1. The first describes the needs of the state freight rail system and the broad-based resultant benefits from TIGER funding for the entire State of Connecticut.
2. The second addresses the Valley Railroad Company project and its specific application for the TIGER Grant funding. This project will cost \$15,500,000 and is a critical piece of the repair needed for the statewide freight rail network.

Figure 2. Valley Railroad Company

**7-1 \$15.5m**

- Reopen Dormant Track
- Rail Improvements
- Tie Replacement
- Ballast Replacement
- Bridge Improvements
- Brush Control



### Background of Project and Existing Condition of Freight Rail Network

The Connecticut freight rail network is a critical component of the northeast regional rail system. Freight rail service is an important component of the American industries supply chain and a vital component to Connecticut's economy. Connecticut moves 3.6 million tons of freight over 10 freight railroads annually. This network connects with the Ports of New York and New Jersey, which are critical to the continued economic growth and success of the Northeast region.

The Connecticut freight rail system needs infrastructure upgrades and repairs immediately in order to meet the need to move freight more efficiently and ensure its continued role in the movement of goods throughout the state and the northeast region. Portions of the rail lines are so severely worn that they are at the end of their serviceable life. Older, under-maintained tracks result in reduced operating speeds, which slow the movement of cargo and ultimately increase costs for the consumer. Bridges and track structure require strengthening and clearances increased to meet the demands of today's higher capacity rail equipment. Inadequate grade crossing protection systems create conditions that are less desirable for pedestrians, vehicles, and trains and result in unnecessary delays to both vehicular and train traffic.



This image shows the relationship between the freight rail network and the regional electric grids. NAUG is hauling over-dimension and over-weight electric transformers to Northeast Utility's Watertown Substation, which feeds Fairfield County. Repairs and improvements to the network are imperative to ensure the ability to move over-size loads.

### Project Benefits

The combined benefits of these seven initiatives include reducing truck trips and carbon emissions, creating jobs, providing economic growth opportunities, and improving safety measures within the statewide freight rail system. Each rail car carries the equivalent of four trucks. Enabling the increased use of freight rail will reduce the number of truck trips necessary along the roads of New England, thereby reducing traffic congestion, reducing crashes and saving lives, and reducing carbon emissions.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our submission.

Sincerely,

James P. Redeker  
Bureau Chief – Public Transportation

## C. Project Description

### Overview

Connecticut plans to increase rail freight shipments by 25 percent over the next two decades to support economic growth and reduce the volume of truck traffic. The state currently moves 3.6 million tons of freight over 10 freight railroads annually. To realize a 25 percent increase, upgrades and improvements are urgently needed to repair or replace aging infrastructure and equipment.

Connecticut is strategically located between the major northeastern urban centers of New York City and Boston, offering the state unlimited opportunities for shipping cargo. Its rail system also assures workable freight rail access to the Ports of New York and New Jersey, as well as the corridor related to the North American

Free Trade Agreement. Over the past ten years, the state has invested over \$282.5 million in the network to improve the movement of freight rail. Among the many projects is the reconstruction and relocation of the main rail spur on the east side of the Port of New Haven to achieve a direct rail connection to this strategic port. Direct port to rail connections in the state will serve the rapidly growing container segment of rail traffic to help remove long-haul trucks from highways and deliver products to consumers faster, as well as offer an alternate to the larger ports (New York and New Jersey).



This image shows a track worker conducting much needed maintenance. An NAUG track worker is jacking and leveling the track in preparation for the tamping machine to vibrate and compact the stone ballast around and beneath the wooden crossties.

Implementing the proposed upgrades and infrastructure improvements to the state's freight rail network will allow the continued growth of the freight industry and will result in a reduction in the number of truck trips made on the regional highways. Trucks have a significant effect on highway traffic conditions, particularly along the highly congested I-84, I-91, and I-95 corridors in Connecticut. Much of the congestion occurs at the bottlenecks in the Hartford and New Haven areas. The congestion results in increased fuel usage, increase green houses gas emissions, increased travel time, and thus increased cost to the consumer.

The freight rail network improvements will also result in fewer carbon dioxide emissions being released. The movement of cargo by rail produces much lower emissions than the movement of the same amount of cargo by truck. On average, it takes four trucks to move the same amount of cargo that one rail car can move.

There are a number of jobs that would be created as a result of these infrastructure improvements. In addition to new positions within each freight rail company, there would be a number of construction positions, for both the rail construction and any subsequent induced developments, as a result of the improvements. Using the standard formula for stimulus job creation, where a \$50,000 investment creates one full-time job (2080 work-hour per year basis), 2,180 jobs will be created by the proposed improvements and repairs for the statewide freight rail network. Follow-on jobs will also occur in other regions and businesses, fueled by the growth of transport throughout the state. These follow-on jobs will include positions in the manufacturing and supply industry. Private companies are increasingly seeking to transport cargo via rail due to its cost savings and environmental benefits. The improvements and upgrades to the statewide freight rail system are required to stay competitive with the market.

## Detailed Description of Statewide Rail Infrastructure Improvements

ConnDOT has partnered with seven freight rail operators to determine the most critical repairs that need to be made to improve the network. These freight rail companies and their projects include:

- › Central New England Railroad is a short-line railroad that operates in Connecticut over the Department's Griffin Line between Hartford and Windsor (8.7 miles) and over the Department's Armory Branch Line between South Windsor and the Massachusetts State Line in Enfield (13.5 miles). CNZR priority projects include rail improvements to the Armory Line and the Griffin Line to increase operating speeds.
- › Housatonic Railroad Company (HRRC) is a regional short line that operates in the western part of Connecticut and in Massachusetts and New York along the Berkshire Line (50.0 miles) and the Maybrook Line (33.5 miles). These two lines form a portion of a critical rail route in western Connecticut. Priority improvements for HRRC include replacement of track and crossings, bridge modifications, upgrades to at-grade crossings, and improved rail access to businesses.
- › Naugatuck Railroad Company (NAUG) is a shortline railroad that operates over the Department's Torrington Branch Line between Waterbury and Torrington (19.5 miles). Torrington Line improvements include repairing or replacing culverts, ties and ballast, and grade crossing improvements.
- › Providence and Worcester Railroad Company (PW) is a regional Class II railroad that operates in southern New England, and as far south as New York City. In Connecticut, PW operates over 238.5 miles of track. Priority projects for PW include track improvements to the Willimantic Branch and the Middletown Secondary to increase operating speeds and improve system interconnectivity.
- › Rail America, Incorporated has two subsidiaries that operate in Connecticut: the New England Central Railroad (NECR), and the Connecticut Southern Railroad (CSOR). NECR operates on their own line between New London and Stafford (55.8 miles) and on to East Alberg, Vermont where they connect with the Canadian National Railroad. CSOR operates on CSX from West Springfield to Springfield, Massachusetts, and on Amtrak from Springfield to North Haven (53 Miles). CSOR owns and operates the Manchester Secondary Line (9.6 miles), the Armory Branch Line (6.8 miles), and the Sufield Branch Line (4.4 miles). They also operate on the spur track to Bradley Airport that is owned by the state (2.4 miles). Work for NECR and CSO includes bridge improvements, replacement of ties and ballast, surfacing, and switch rebuilding to improve operating speeds and rail areas to existing and potentially new customers.
- › (Tilcon) Branford Steam Railroad (BSRR) is a subsidiary of Tilcon Connecticut, Incorporated, and provides service between their trap rock quarry in North Branford and their

barge loading facility on Long Island Sound in Branford (7.2 miles). Priority projects for BSRR include replacement and upgrade of locomotives and replacement of hopper railcars.

- › Valley Railroad Company (VRR) operates between Old Saybrook and Haddam along the right-of-way owned by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. Priority repairs for VRR include the restoration of a 10-mile dormant segment of the line and track and bridge improvements along the remainder of the corridor.



This image shows NAUG crosstie insert machine making repairs.

The proposed projects for VRR and the PW Middletown Secondary are along the same freight rail corridor and when completed, will provide an alternate route for freight rail movements between Old Saybrook and Hartford via Middletown that does not currently exist. This new route will remove freight rail traffic from the Northeast Corridor between Old Saybrook and New Haven as well as along the Hartford Line between New Haven and Hartford. It will also reduce freight shipment miles by 22.7 miles by traveling from Old Saybrook to Middletown to Hartford (44.6 miles) versus Old Saybrook to New Haven to Hartford (67.3 miles). This will not only reduce the short line operating cost as a result of reduced travel miles and avoidance of access fees on the Northeast Corridor, but it will also reduce congestion on the Northeast Corridor and benefit passenger rail that shares that corridor.

This application addresses improvements and repairs for portions of the statewide freight rail network operated by Valley Railroad Company. The proposed improvements and repairs include reopening/rehabilitating a dormant section of the 22-mile section of leased and operating track from Old Saybrook to Maromas (in Southern Middletown) to accommodate modern freight rail and expanded tourist/passenger service. The project will also establish an interchange at Old Saybrook with Providence and Worcester Railroad (PW) and an interchange at Maromas for freight trains to/from Middletown, Hartford, and on, also with PW. The project will also improve the entire Valley Railroad operating line by

completing track, ballast, brush control, and bridge improvements, which will result in the designation of FRA Class 2, as well as being in a State of Good Repair.

### Addressing Urban and/or Rural Area Needs

The statewide freight rail system navigates through both urban and rural populations. The projects address needs critical to both areas through implementing quick turnaround strategies for modernizing operations, thereby creating a more efficient system and improving safety. These steps will ensure the continued movement of freight into and out of urban and rural areas in Connecticut and throughout the surrounding region.

Freight rail improvements will foster economic growth and development in the state. Connecticut has nine municipalities that are categorized as Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) within the eight Comprehensive Economic Development (CED) regions. The municipalities include Bridgeport; New Britain; Waterbury; New Haven; New London; Hartford; East Hartford; Torrington; and Windham. Per the U.S. Census Bureau Factfinder (2007), these municipalities either have a per capita income that is less than 80 percent of the national per capita income or have unemployment rates that are at least 1 percent greater than the national unemployment rate. Four of the seven projects serve an EDA. Furthermore, the freight railroad industry as a whole is in distress and needs the proposed improvements and upgrades to regain its place in the market and be able to maintain its current levels of employment.

### Transportation Challenges that the Project Aims to Address

The infrastructure improvements to the freight rail system seek to address the transportation challenge of moving freight in a cost effective, sustainable, and timely manner. Achieving this includes:

- › Increasing load-bearing capabilities of rail bridges
- › Decreasing travel times and operating costs
- › Improving rail-to-rail connections
- › Improving port-to-rail connections

Attaining travel time reductions and increases in load-bearing capabilities of rail bridges to be competitive with alternate modes of freight movements, specifically trucking goods on congested highways, is critical to the growth and success of the state's freight rail network. The proposed improvements and repairs will enable portions of the rail network to handle a 286,000 pound rail car load, while ensuring that the remaining portions of the network will continue to handle this load. While some vertical clearance projects have been funded by the freight operators, RailAmerica

completed one on the NECR Palmer Line and PW completed one on the Norwich Line (Plainfield Secondary), additional increases to vertical clearances are needed within the network to accommodate modern loading practices and will be included as part of this project. Connecticut's freight rail system needs updates and infrastructure improvements in order to be economically competitive in facilitating the movement of goods into and through the state, specifically in comparison to transporting cargo via trucks.



This image shows the first Connecticut double-stack container, operated by RailAmerica, Inc. Increased vertical clearances enable double-stack containers, which increase shipment volumes.

Transportation is a major consumer of energy and a significant contributor of carbon dioxide emissions, both of which are a factor in the rise in green houses gases and resultant climate changes that are increasingly causing concerns globally. Moving freight by rail results in fewer carbon emissions and green house gases due to the amount of truck trips one freight train can displace. This then results in decreased congestion on the highway network and improved safety measures on the roadway. The roadway network becomes safer as a result of less traffic congestion overall, as well as fewer trucks.

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## D. Project Parties

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The primary project parties are the State of Connecticut and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The Valley Railroad Company is another important project party since they own and/or operate freight rail over the portion of the state's freight rail network that is being considered. The State of Connecticut ([www.ct.gov](http://www.ct.gov)) would be the official grant recipient, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) ([www.ct.gov/dot](http://www.ct.gov/dot)) would be administering the grant funds and managing the project in partnership with the Valley Railroad Company.

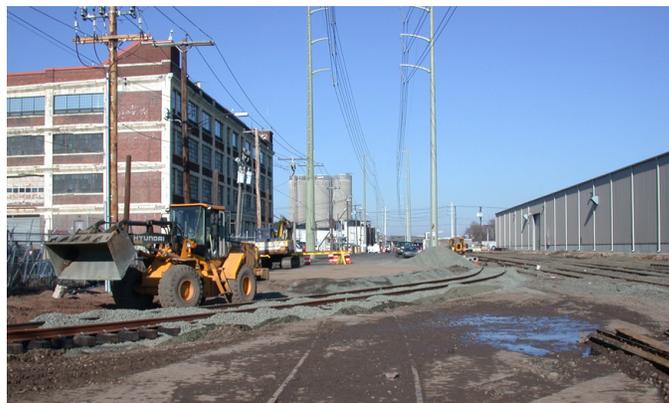
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## E. Grant Funds and Sources and Uses of Funds

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The Connecticut Department of Transportation is seeking 100% funding for the proposed improvements and repairs identified in this application for each of the seven freight rail operators. These funds are intended to leverage the \$282.5 million the state has invested in the freight rail network over the past ten years. The receipt of the requested funding from the TIGER Discretionary Program, which is significantly less than the \$282.5 million investment already made by the state, will provide the much needed incremental funding to completely address priority improvements in the system.

Another \$1.56 billion has been invested by the state in the New Haven Main Line for infrastructure improvements, such as track, signals and power, and bridges. This work provides a secondary benefit to freight rail because it allows the freight rail trains that operate on the New Haven Line to increase their operating speeds, reducing transit times. In total, the TIGER Discretionary Program requests represent a small portion of the total state rail investment but will provide tremendous benefit through renewed connectivity and increased productivity to the state rail freight system.



This image shows the construction work on the Waterfront Street Rail Extension at the Port of New Haven.

The improvements and repairs proposed for TIGER funding will benefit approximately three-fourths of the statewide freight rail network at an investment that is significantly lower than previous investments made by ConnDOT for the freight rail system.

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## F. Selection Criteria Compliance

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Continuing to improve the statewide freight rail network is consistent with the goals and objectives of the TIGER Grant funding.

## 1. Primary Selection Criteria

### a. Long-Term Outcomes

- › **State of Good Repair:** The proposed repairs and/or improvements to the statewide freight rail network will minimize life cycle costs, as operational efficiency will be improved and new equipment will require less fuel and maintenance. Right-of-way work and tie and rail replacements will return portions of the network to a State of Good Repair. In addition, the removal of trucks from the state highway system will extend the life cycle of roads and bridges by reducing the wear and tear caused by frequent truck traffic. These improvements coincide with the State Rail Plan and rehabilitate portions of the rail line that urgently require attention to avoid threatening their economic future.
- › **Economic Competitiveness:** The projects proposed for the statewide freight rail network will provide long-term contributions to growth in employment, as well as the more efficient movement of goods, which results in cost competitiveness. Repair and replacement of equipment and track will increase operating speeds and reduce the cost of moving freight. The connection of the Middletown Secondary and the Valley Railroad will reduce operating costs via reduced travel miles and access fees by avoiding a section of the Northeast Corridor. These changes will reduce costs for the freight operator and the supplier, thereby making goods more cost competitive in the marketplace. Job growth will continue beyond the duration of construction, as the improved operations will result in additional positions with the freight operator, positions with suppliers who will be able to move more cargo, and follow on positions in other regions as a result of increased operations.
- › **Livability:** The repairs and/or improvements to the statewide freight rail system will significantly improve the availability of goods to the state, including nine municipalities designated as EDAs. The proposed projects will take truck traffic off of the roads on the arterial and interstate roadway system, thereby reducing congestion and emissions. This will also make the roadway network safer for drivers, particularly senior citizen drivers who may be averse to driving alongside trucks. The engines on the proposed new equipment will exceed the Tier II emissions standards and also reduce noise associated with the movement of the freight trains. The combined efforts of VRR and PW will provide an alternate route for freight rail movements between Old Saybrook and Hartford, which will reduce freight rail traffic on the NEC, thus benefiting passenger rail traffic on that corridor.
- › **Sustainability:** The proposed repairs and improvements to the statewide freight rail network will improve energy efficiency through improved operating speeds and by permitting the through routing of the modern rail car. Replacing outdated and inefficient equipment will reduce the operators' depen-

dence on oil, since they will be traveling the same distance using less fuel. The projects contribute to a decrease in the movement of goods by less energy efficient vehicles by providing strengthened bridges and cleared routes for 286,000 pound rail car loads and double stack shipments. The proposed projects also avoid adverse environmental impacts since they are simply replacing or repairing existing infrastructure and equipment. Environmental benefits include decreased green house gas emissions and improved air quality, as a result of replacing old and inefficient equipment, and the subsequent reduction in truck trips from the highway network.

- › **Safety:** Removing truck traffic from the arterial and interstate roadway system will improve the overall safety of the roadway system. Studies have shown and concluded that a reduction in truck traffic will increase the overall safety of roadway facilities. Improvements and repairs to at-grade railroad crossings throughout the statewide freight rail system will make these crossings safer for pedestrians, vehicles, and trains.
- › **Evaluation of Benefit Cost Analysis:** The benefits associated with the proposed improvements and repairs will result in travel and transit time savings, improved operations and safety, removal of trucks from highways, reduced emissions and green house gases, and an increase in the use of freight rail, more than substantiating the costs associated with the project.
- › **Evaluation of Project Performance:** Key criteria will be tracked and reported accordingly to effectively evaluate the performance after the proposed repairs and improvements have been implemented.

### b. Job Creation and Economic Stimulus

Using the standard formula for stimulus job creation, 2,180 new jobs will be created as a result of the total project investments on the statewide freight rail network. The majority of the created jobs will be in the construction trade workforce. Additional positions will be created within the freight companies as a result of expanded coverage or and increased volume of shipments. Follow on jobs within and outside of the region as a result of the increased operations will also be created, although these are not accounted for in the estimated total.

- › **Project Schedule:** The projects are ready to start construction immediately upon receipt of a TIGER Grant, and the monies will be steadily spent throughout construction, with the projects being completed by February 2012.
- › **Environmental Approvals:** All work will be completed within the existing right-of-way; no new approvals are anticipated as part of the proposed work.
- › **Legislative Approvals:** Legislative approval is not needed for the proposed work.

- › **State and Local Planning:** The proposed improvements are consistent with the Statewide Rail Plan and the business plans for each of the individual freight line operators. Furthermore, the improvements are being incorporated into the Connecticut TIP per the Commissioner's letter located at: [http://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dcommunications/stimulus/tiger/freightrail/Inclusion\\_Document\\_for\\_STIP.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dcommunications/stimulus/tiger/freightrail/Inclusion_Document_for_STIP.pdf).
- › **Technical Feasibility:** All of the projects consist of typical railroad construction techniques, materials, and equipment. None of the proposed repairs or improvements is contingent upon the completion of another project. The projects coincide with the State Rail Plan and are ready for immediate implementation.
- › **Financial Feasibility:** Cost estimates have been prepared as shown in each application. TIGER Grant funding is necessary for the implementation of each of these projects.

## 2. Secondary Selection Criteria

- › **Innovation:** The proposed improvements include replacing outdated locomotives and rail cars. This will not only ensure significantly reduced emissions, but it will also reduce fuel consumption. The new locomotives are innovative in their design, featuring power on demand engine systems, regenerative dynamic braking, a smokeless start engine, and clean emissions through a clean-burning MOH Tier 3 Engine with self-cleaning ceramic particulate filters.
- › **Partnership:** The State of Connecticut is fully supportive of each individual project and has worked individually and collaboratively with each of the freight rail operators towards the overall goal of creating an efficient and effective regional freight rail system that plays an integral role in the overall transportation infrastructure and Connecticut in the region.

## G. Federal Wage Requirement

ConnDOT certifies that it will be in compliance with the requirements of subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code (Federal wage rate requirements), as required by the Recovery Act. A letter from the Commissioner, stating ConnDOT's compliance with the Federal Wage Requirement, is located at: [http://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dcommunications/stimulus/tiger/Federal\\_Wage\\_Certification\\_082509.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dcommunications/stimulus/tiger/Federal_Wage_Certification_082509.pdf).

## H. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Requirement

None of the proposed improvements or repairs will significantly impact the natural, social, and/or economic environment. As the projects involve replacement of existing equipment or track components and repairs to existing structures, they are anticipated to fall within Federal Railroad Administration's Categorical Exclusion (CE) category under the NEPA protocol.

## I. Environmentally Related Federal, State, and Local Actions

None of the projects for the statewide freight rail network will require actions by other agencies, as the projects include replacement and/or repairs to existing rail equipment and infrastructure.

## J. Protection of Confidential Business Information

Information provided in ConnDOT's TIGER Discretionary Grant application is public information and is not considered confidential.

## IX. Reporting Requirements

ConnDOT understands that entities receiving TIGER Discretionary Grants will be required to report on grant activities on a routine basis. Reporting categories include maintenance of effort, reports on use of funds, and environmental reporting. ConnDOT ensures that the appropriate reporting would be submitted in conjunction with the Grant Funding.

## X. Certification Requirements

ConnDOT understands that it must comply with the Certification requirements of the Recovery Act.

**The following section includes the project specific portion of the application for the Valley Railroad Company.**

## **TIGER Discretionary Grant Application**

**Valley Railroad Company  
1 Railroad Avenue  
Essex, Connecticut 06426**

### **Project Type**

The Valley Railroad Company is making application for a TIGER Discretionary Grant to be applied toward railroad infrastructure improvement on the Connecticut Valley rail line. This project will include upgrades to the right of way, rebuilding a portion of the right of way currently out of service and improvements to the locomotive and car maintenance facilities.

### **Project Location**

The project is located in the State of Connecticut and includes the towns of Old Saybrook, Essex, Deep River, Chester, Haddam and Middletown. Each of these towns is located in Middlesex County and all are within the boundary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Connecticut Congressional District (See Attached Map).

### **Project Area Population Density**

The project area has a varied population density which meets the classification of suburban and rural. None of the area is classified as urban.

### **Amount of Grant Funding Requested**

The project proposed has an estimated cost of **\$15,500,000**. As a result we are seeking a TIGER Grant in that amount.

### **Contact Information**

Valley Railroad Company  
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(860) 767-0103  
FEIN – 06-0861178

### **PROPOSER'S REPRESENTATIVES**

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## Project Description

This project covers the existing rail right of way formerly described as the Connecticut Valley Line. It consists of a rail right of way beginning at the AMTRAK line in Old Saybrook, Connecticut northward to Middletown, Connecticut connecting to the rail line operated by the Providence and Worcester Railroad (see attached map).

This project proposes that the Valley Railroad Company spearhead a multi agency, public and private effort to reopen dormant sections of, and rehabilitate for combination modern freight and expanded tourist/passenger service, the entire 22 mile section of leased and operated track from Old Saybrook to Maromas (in Southern Middletown). In addition, the project will establish interchange at Old Saybrook with the Providence and Worcester Railroad as well as to establish interchange at Maromas for freight trains to/from Middletown, Hartford and beyond with the Providence and Worcester Railroad.

At the present time the Valley Railroad operates steam and diesel trains from MP 0 in Old Saybrook to approximately 150 yards North of the Connecticut Route 82 crossing at MP 12.75 in Haddam. The operating track is currently at FRA Class 1 and 2 standards.

This project proposes to improve the entire Right of Way to FRA Class 2 standards. This will be accomplished by completing track, ballast, brush control and bridge improvements to the entire Valley Railroad operating line. At the completion of the project, with routine maintenance and barring any major events of nature, the track will be in a “State of Good Repair” for the next 15 years. Also included in the project are improvements to the locomotive and car maintenance facilities to enable safer operation and improved environmental conditions.

Ultimately, when complete, this project will enable the Valley Railroad to carry freight over the right of way connecting to both the AMTRAK line to the South and the Providence & Worcester Line to the North. The Company sees this rail corridor as playing a pivotal role in solving solid and liquid waste issues for towns and cities throughout the river valley. Materials such as household waste, construction/demolition materials, bulky waste, sewage waste, commercial freight, commuter passengers and tourist passenger will likely be carried on the reconstructed line. Incinerated ash from the Hartford CRRA Trash/Energy plant, in unit train form, heading toward landfill sites in eastern Connecticut is also anticipated. Traffic of recycled/processed metals to the Midwest and beyond would also be available. A re-routing of stone and aggregate trains to the Tilcon plant in Old Saybrook (direct shipment from Wallingford to Old Saybrook via Middletown on the Valley line), to remove such traffic from the vital Shore Line Route of Amtrak, are still another probable traffic source. This project will allow freight customers to reduce distances now required to haul rail freight in the Northeast due to the lack of available track. In addition it will make rail freight available to operations in the region that are now forced to haul freight by truck on overly burdened highways. An additional benefit of this project would be the possibility of commuter passenger service between Old Saybrook and Middletown. This type of passenger service has long been a stated objective of political and business leaders in the area. The Company envisions an opportunity to operate passenger rail excursions over the subject track when lucrative to do so.

The Valley Railroad holds passenger rights to its leased property, as well as the line from Maromas to Hartford via the original sale agreement between the Company and the former Connecticut Central Railroad (now Providence and Worcester). Many opportunities exist due to the line’s proximity to Riverfront Recapture and the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford, the TPC at River Highlands in

Cromwell, the bustling river port at Middletown, and the Haddam Meadows State Park in Haddam.

The Company sees re-opening of this line for freight and tourism as an incremental step in eventually running freight and commuter trains from Middletown to Hartford, or perhaps even from the shoreline to Hartford.

### Project Timeline

Upon approval of the grant this project will proceed as follows:

- 1). Construction and improvements as defined in the November 7, 2006 analysis of existing track from MP 0.0 to MP 12.75 by Stone Consulting and Design, Inc. will commence immediately.
- 2). The Valley Railroad Company will immediately and simultaneously commission a study and plan for improvement, similar to the November 2006 plan developed by Stone Consulting and Design, Inc., for the right of way North of MP 12.75 to the end of the line at Maromas in Middletown.
- 3). Valley Railroad will immediately secure engineering and architectural services for the expansion/modification of the locomotive and car repair facilities. Construction will begin as soon as those plans become available.
- 4). Upon completion of the plan for improvement of the northern portion of the right of way construction will commence to implement the improvements defined in the plan.

## **Project Parties**

All activities and outcomes of this project will be under the authority and responsibility of the Valley Railroad Company.

The Valley Railroad Company is a company chartered by the Connecticut General Assembly to operate on the rail line from Old Saybrook to Middletown. Operating in cooperation and under the authority of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, from whom the track right of way and buildings are leased, the company has developed multiple water/railroad products for public enjoyment. In the 40 year existence of the company, it has engaged in historic preservation and development and has gained significant community support. In addition to running a historic steam locomotive railroad, the company also operates riverboat excursions on the Connecticut River from a dock in Deep River. In addition to the train/riverboat, the Valley Railroad Company also:

- Operates The Essex Clipper Dinner Train and North Pole Express Christmas Excursion Train
- Sponsors appearances of “Thomas the Tank” engine.
- Is the home of the new PBS series “Lomax the Hound of Music.”
- Maintains and restores railroad rolling stock and historic railroad equipment.

The Valley Railroad Company and its products are among Connecticut’s top 5 visitor attractions and is a financially stable organization with gross annual revenues of over \$3 million. In addition, the activities of the Valley Railroad Company generate over \$4million annually in economic activity in the state.

## **Additional Organizations**

Integral to this proposal, the Valley Railroad Company intends to develop agreements with other companies and organizations to fulfill the total responsibilities of the project. It is anticipated that the following organizations will be consulted with or affiliated with this project:

- Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
- Stone Consulting and Design, Inc.

- Tran Systems
  - Construction and Engineering Firms relevant to the project
  - Connecticut Department of Transportation
  - Department of Economic and Community Development
  - Middlesex and Hartford County Chambers of Commerce
  - Connecticut General Assembly
  - Office of the Governor
  - Selectmen and Mayors of the communities of Old Saybrook, Essex, Deep River, Haddam and Middletown
  - Providence and Worcester Railroad Company
  - AMTRAK
  - Connecticut Southern Railroad Company
- In addition other organizations and companies will be parties to this project on an as needed basis determined as the project progresses.

## **Grant Funds and Sources and Uses of Project Funds**

This grant request is for funding of **\$15,500,000**. Initial costs for the assessment of the track and right of way have been fully funded from the operating revenues of the Valley Railroad Company. It is understood that the initial costs for the project proposed will be funded by the Valley Railroad Company with reimbursement from the TIGER Discretionary Grant funds at 100%. Grant funding will be apportioned as follows:

- \$3,500,000 – Construction and Upgrade of Right of Way MP 0.0 –MP 12.75
- \$300,000 - Engineering and Inspection of Right of Way MP 12.75 – MP 22.0
- \$11,000,000 – Construction and Upgrade of Right of Way MP 12.75 – MP 22.0
- \$700,000 - Improvements to Locomotive and Rolling Stock Maintenance facilities

## **Selection Criteria**

### **Primary Project Outcomes**

#### **Long Term Outcomes**

##### **► State of Good Repair**

The currently active railroad line is fully operable, with good crossings, adequate crossing signals, excellent bridgework, and functional structures. Some areas will require the installation of stone ballast, additional crossties, and heavier rails. A recent independent survey (Stone Consulting and Design, Inc. November, 2006) of the line indicated a cost of about 3.5 million dollars to put the currently active line in a state of excellent repair for the next 15 years. The currently inactive portion of the line has been cleared of brush and trees, and is under a regular program of pesticide vegetation control. Drainage facilities are kept clear. Crosstie and rail upgrades would be necessary to support freight and passenger traffic. There are four bridges; none considered major spans or structures, which are in varying states of repair although an initial observation indicates that all four may be restored to service with repairs. A large (110' long, 15' deep) washout in Haddam would likely need a pre-cast box culvert and fill, and a filled-in overpass in Haddam would need either a new driveway overpass or rerouting onto an adjacent private grade crossing.

The proposed project will place the entire rail line in a “state of good repair” for the next 15 years and beyond with normal routine maintenance.

To the north, the 5 miles of track between Maromas and the current operations of the Providence and Worcester Railroad in Middletown is “stored-nearly serviceable”. This section was reopened to FRA Class 1 standards in the mid-1990’s, with many crossings rebuilt. It is heavy rail (107#) in its entirety, suitable for freight and passenger traffic.

#### ► Economic Competitiveness

Over the past two decades a major focus of Connecticut state and regional government has been to improve and maintain the economic competitiveness of the region. In 1999 a study conducted by the “Connecticut Regional Institute for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” cautioned that the state transportation infrastructure did not support future economic growth. In fact they stated that Connecticut was in danger of becoming “*an economic cul de sac*” because of the transportation systems in the northeast that bypassed the state. The report specifically called for an examination and revitalization of rail transportation in order to keep the state in the transportation mainstream.

In 2003 the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission reported “*The Commission Continues to believe that the State of Connecticut needs to aggressively promote a favorable climate to encourage rail inter modal freight into and through this state, as an alternative to increasing congestion of our highways caused in substantial part by the movement of freight by trucks.*” The Department of Transportation responded that it “...*has and will continue to participate locally and regionally, in efforts to explore opportunities to improve the movement of goods in Connecticut and the region.*”

In another policy statement the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, which serves as executive support for the Governor, indicated in the official “Connecticut Plan for Conservation and Development – Policy Plans for Connecticut 2005-2010” that the state should “*Support a viable rail freight system that meets the needs of the state and is fully coordinated with existing and planned rail operations. Encourage potential rail using activities to locate along existing freight lines.*”

Clearly both the public and private economic development organizations recognize the utility and economic benefit of using rail as a means of transporting people and goods. Detailed examination of the various studies and reports reveals strong encouragement for the preservation and revitalization of rail lines to promote and encourage economic growth and vitality.

It is certainly reasonable to ask-does a proposal like this make economic sense? Simply stated, the future of this line is like nothing what it has seen in its past 137 years. Almost all of the “rules” and “givens” for freight service have changed since the last freight cars were cleared off the line in 1968. Rules for all types of business are changing. To wit:

- The cost of transportation of goods by truck is crippling the nation and the economy. Trucking costs, traditionally always somewhat higher than rail, are going out of sight with diesel fuel prices fluctuating beyond \$5.00 per gallon.
- Railroads are rebounding, and lines are at or reaching capacity. The Northeast Corridor is peppered with ever-increasing Amtrak and commuter trains. Amtrak keeps freight tonnage charges on the corridor artificially high to dissuade freight from those tracks.
- Towns and cities used to have landfills and “dumps”; now they have “transfer stations”. Simply, the waste is transferred from one truck to another with no gains in efficiency. Nearly all of the towns and cities in the river valley are grappling with solid waste issues.

- Bulky waste, and construction/demolition waste, used to be buried in landfills. Now it is processed and waste products shipped by rail to the Midwest. There is no such facility in the lower valley, the nearest being in Portland. Therefore all such material now is trucked to Portland, or beyond.
- Garbage is now converted to heat energy in Hartford at a CRRA plant. Its ash currently goes atop the old Hartford landfill, but the end is near for that. Sites in eastern Connecticut are being eyed, and an initial estimate is 60 truckloads per day, everyday. This is unit-train traffic.
- Recycled metals have been traditionally been gathered up by small operators, thence resold to major scrap dealers along the major rail lines. Trucking costs are making this a wasteful endeavor. A major scrap dealer with rail access in the river valley makes us more competitive in the recycled steel markets.
- Global energy markets are exploding. The era of cheap U.S. fuel is over. The inherent inefficiency of the river valley's truck-based transportation, and its lack of competitiveness, will stifle the entire region as other communities re-organize around the active lines.
- Environmental issues are in the forefront today. A national attitude toward conservation is upon us. The railroad is the most efficient user of energy when hauling the bulk materials of which are herein spoken. The efficiency of the steel wheel upon the steel rail is currently unparalleled in the heavy-haul market.
- Rail operators have traditionally sought out interchange partners based more on price than cost-effectiveness or even common sense. Even in compact New England, there are trains that succumb to extremely circuitous routing all in the name of "the rate". With fuel costs skyrocketing and global energy supply in question, direct and sensible routes have become a necessity. It has become irresponsible for trains to travel 300 miles in search of "a better rate" when a 100-mile rail route exists.
- State governments now look to the rail lines to relieve burden from the chronically over-used highway systems. In the past the relationship between the railroad moguls and the governments was acrimonious at best; during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century government's role became that of the undertaker, trying to stem off economic collapse as Railroad Company after Railroad Company went into bankruptcy. The relationship has changed-in Connecticut; efforts are underway to split the Department of Transportation in two, such that it can better focus on mass and systemic transportation, not just highways. Railroads have begun to "matter" again, even in Connecticut.

The less-than-carload lot, loose boxcar railroading that was the staple of the original railroad here and throughout the country is, for all intents and purposes, relegated to the history books. In its place is a new type of railroading, whereupon companies and communities are partnering with railroads to take appropriate traffic off of the highways and put in on railcars.

The Valley Line from Old Saybrook to Hartford can be just such a vital connection for a more efficient, effective, and environmentally friendly Connecticut River Valley, securing the economic viability of the region and it's inhabitants.

#### ► Livability

The right of way for the Valley Railroad Company travels along what many describe as the most beautiful valleys in the country. In fact the Nature Conservancy has named the Connecticut River

Valley “*one of the last greatest places on earth.*” The natural beauty of the area is one of the reasons that the Valley Railroad Company has been so successful in operating a scenic tourist rail operation for over 40 years. In fact the passenger operations of the Valley Railroad Company provide many people the only opportunity available to see and explore this magnificent river valley and as such offers a major contribution to the quality of life residents and visitors enjoy.

The right of way for the Valley Railroad Company was established in 1871. Although the level of activity on the line has varied from fully active, to non active, to the current status of partially active, the right of way has been continuously maintained. Since the early 1960’s the right of way has been owned in it’s entirety by the State of Connecticut with no encumbrances upon the line. Rehabilitation of the line to increase the availability of passenger service and to introduce freight service will not have a negative impact on the area. There is no land to be taken, right of ways to be established or current access to be terminated. This project only proposes the upgrading and rehabilitation of what already exists.

Once the entire line is upgraded and operational the livability of communities in the Middlesex County area is significantly improved. New options for commuter transportation, options to locate municipal services along the rail line, opportunities to more fully utilize state parks along the right of way all become possible and available with a fully active rail line.

#### ► Sustainability

Movement of goods and materials over rail is much more efficient than transporting the same material by truck over roadways. A common measure states that 1 railcar eliminates the need for 4 over highway trucks. It is not unreasonable to assume that the completion of this project will likely remove a minimum of 100 trucks per week from the highways. Once operational and agreements and connections are established with other rail carriers the number of trucks removed from the highways could reach a level of 1,500 per week. In addition, because of the interconnectivity of the rail lines, thousands of track miles currently utilized will be reduced due to the availability of shorter routing through the Valley line. See Attachment #2.

#### ► Safety

Congested highways promote accidents. In Connecticut Interstate Highways 95, 84, 91 and 395 are among the most congested Interstate roadways in the country. This is due, in large part, to the need for trucks to move goods because alternative transportation options due not exist. Removal of over 1,000 trucks per week to alternate freight rail service will significantly reduce the statistical likelihood of motor vehicle accidents. In addition, the movement of freight by rail has been proven to be a safe and economical means of transport.

#### **Job Creation and Economic Stimulus**

Using the US Department of Commerce methodology it is estimated that this project will create 150 primary and secondary new jobs. On commencement of the project it is expected that 30-40 new jobs will be created in the construction field.

#### **Workforce Expansion**

Since the project proposed is geographically centered between the major metropolitan areas of Hartford, New Haven and New London the workers, and resulting job creation, is likely to benefit these

Urban areas. Using the **Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, As Amended – Title, III- Eligibility** as a standard the likely labor pool will come from these communities. The most recent data from the Connecticut Department of Labor *Labor Force Data for Labor Market Areas and Towns – July 2009* indicates the following unemployment data:

Hartford – 13.9%

New Haven – 11.1%

New London – 9.2%

Overall the Connecticut unemployment rate is reported at 8% and growing. In a small geographic state like Connecticut job creation cannot be viewed by a single community but should instead be looked at by region. The project proposed here is likely to immediately impact employment in the entire region immediately and the central corridor of the state in the long term.

In addition to the construction jobs, it is estimated that 3-5 technical positions will be created for the project phase of evaluating and determining the work to be accomplished in rehabilitation of the currently inactive rail line. Since this phase of the project is expected to commence immediately the job creation will be immediate as well.

In the third and final phase of the project, which is the construction work required to rehabilitate the currently unused portion of the rail line an additional 40-45 new positions are likely to be created.

### **Project Schedule**

\* Construction and Upgrade of Right of Way MP 0.0 –MP 12.75 – Commence on Grant receipt and continue for 5 Quarters

\* Engineering and Inspection of Right of Way MP 12.75 – MP 22.0 – Commence on Grant receipt and continue for 3 Quarters

\* Construction and Upgrade of Right of Way MP 12.75 – MP 22.0 – Commence on completion of engineering study and continue for 8 Quarters

\* Improvements to Locomotive and Rolling Stock Maintenance facilities – Commence within 90 days of receipt of grant and continue for 4 Quarters

### **Environmental/Legislative Approvals**

Because this project is located on an existing state owned rail right of way it is anticipated that some environmental approvals will be required. Since the requirements only recently changed for this type of project on state owned land the extent of the application and approval process is not known at this time. No legislative approvals will be required in order to initiate and complete this project.

## **Secondary Project Outcomes**

### Partnership

#### **Jurisdictional & Stakeholder Collaboration**

As indicated in other sections of this application, this project proposes improvements on a rail right of way that is solely owned by the State of Connecticut and leased to the Valley Railroad Company on a long term lease. As a result the improvements made to facilities within that right of way become the property of the State of Connecticut. Each year the Valley Railroad Company invests in multiple improvements and upgrades in addition to providing annual maintenance. Since its incorporation in 1968 the Valley Railroad Company has invested millions of dollars in improvements, upgrades and maintenance of the right of way.

In 2003, in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) the Valley Railroad Company utilized DECD funds to manage and supervise the rehabilitation of a series of bridges on the rail line. This nearly \$1million project included engineering studies, contractor selection, construction supervision and final inspections of 3 railroad overpass bridges. All of the work was supervised by Valley Railroad personnel. The outcome of this project met with the total satisfaction of the DECD and the Connecticut Department of Transportation as well as the Federal Railway Administration.

The project proposed in this application will place the right of way in a “state of good repair” for the benefit of all of the citizens of the Connecticut and the region.

This project also introduces new collaborations and partnerships to the operations on the rail line. With improved and serviceable rail lines other organizations like AMTRAK, Providence and Worcester Railroad, Connecticut Southern Railroad, local communities seeking solutions to trash and waste removal, as well as issues regarding the transportation needs of the regions residents will be opened for new approaches and solutions. In addition the high profile of this project attracts the interest of many community and business leaders who will be consulted and collaborated with in the creation of jobs resulting from the project as well as the long term opportunities that will be created.

It is important to note that the project proposed here, while small in the scope of the parameters of the TIGER Grant program, is a very significant program for the region and the Valley Railroad Company. As a small operating company the Valley Railroad has in the past and continues to invest in the infrastructure of the Valley Line. The size of our investment is determined by our income. Over the course of the past 20 years the State of Connecticut has made limited financial contributions to the infrastructure improvements and repairs put in place by the Valley Railroad Company. It must be made clear, however, that the project proposed here could not be undertaken without the resources available from a TIGER Grant. While the Valley Railroad Company has clearly demonstrated in earlier projects, as evidenced by the bridge repair project with the DECD, that it has the personnel and experience necessary to lead a project such as the one proposed, it does not have the means to raise the capital necessary for a project of this magnitude.

#### Disciplinary Integration

For the past two decades political leaders in the immediately adjacent communities have expressed strong encouragement and support for a project of this scope on the Valley Line. In addition, the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, the largest Chamber of Commerce in Connecticut, has strongly supported and encouraged the Valley Railroad Company to pursue the project proposed in this application. As a result we look forward to the strong support and collaboration with the regions leadership in making the proposed project a reality.

#### **Federal Wage Rate**

The Valley Railroad Company certifies (see attachment) that it will comply with subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code.

## **National Environmental Policy Act**

It is not anticipated that this project will be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act requirement and it likely falls under the *Categorical Exclusion* provision of NEPA.

## **Environmentally Related Federal, State, Local Actions**

The proposed project is entirely included within a right of way owned by the State of Connecticut – Department of Environmental Protection. In addition it is currently classified as a railroad right of way. As a result the proposed project is not likely to require any action, approvals or permits by other agencies in order to complete the project.

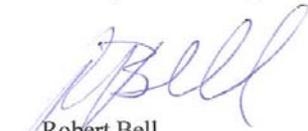


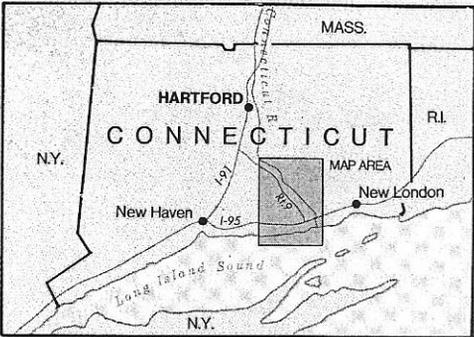
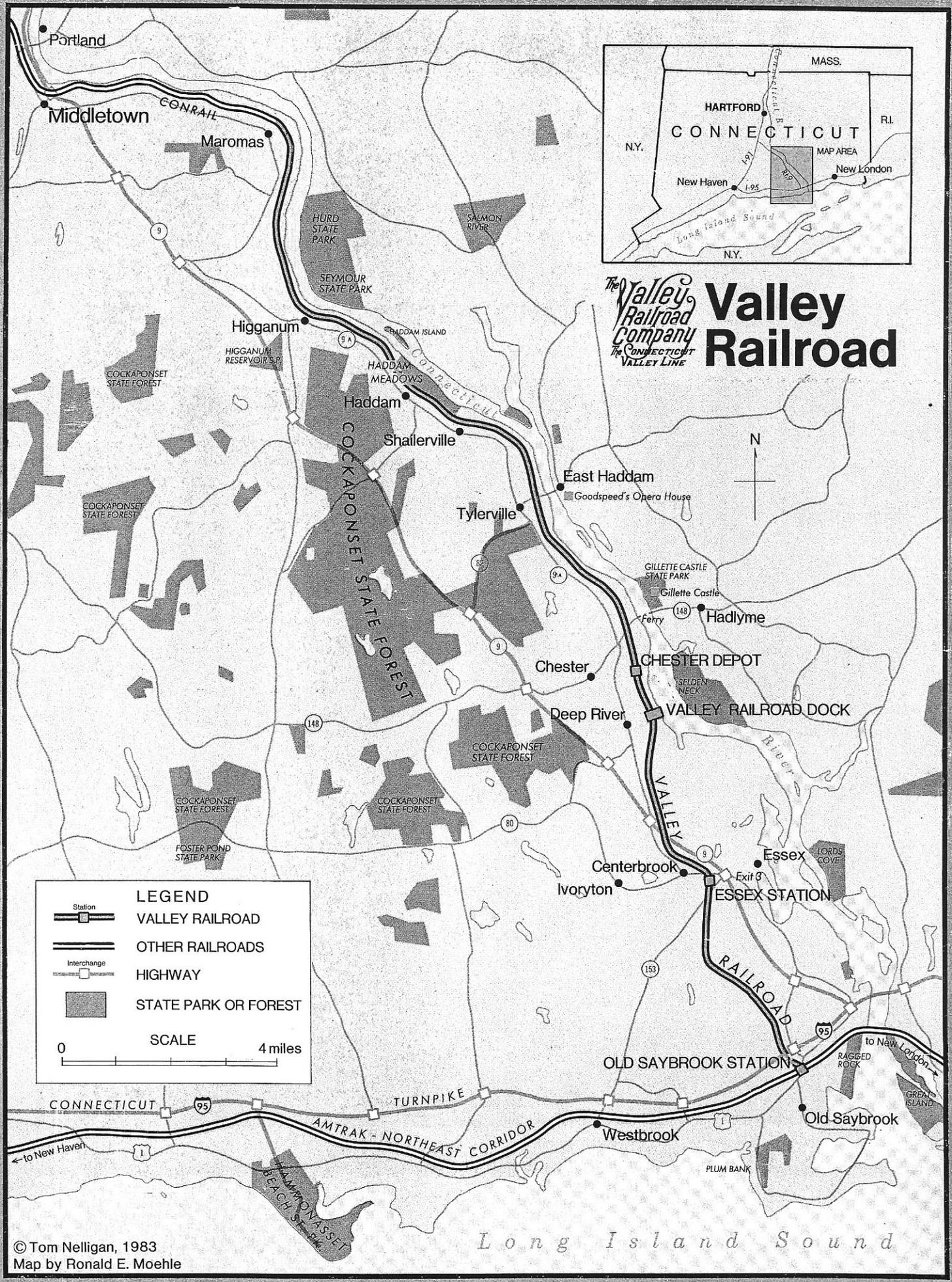
THE VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANY  
1 RAILROAD AVENUE, PO BOX 452, ESSEX, CT 06426  
PHONE: 860-767-0103 FAX: 860-767-0104

September 4, 2009

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that the Valley Railroad Company will comply with the requirements of subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code as required by the Recovery Act.

  
Robert Bell  
President



*The Valley Railroad Company*  
**Valley Railroad**  
*The Connecticut Valley Line*

**LEGEND**

- STATION
- VALLEY RAILROAD
- OTHER RAILROADS
- INTERCHANGE
- HIGHWAY
- STATE PARK OR FOREST

**SCALE**

0 ————— 4 miles

*Long Island Sound*

# Valley Railroad Company TIGER Grant Application

## Attachment #2

Response to Questions Re Tiger Grant Applications

Track Length: 13 miles (coal hauled 5 miles, diesel hauled 9 miles, diesel switching 2 miles)

Average Annual Mileage: 7,500+/- (coal 6,000 miles, diesel 1,300 miles, plus 200+ switching miles)

Average Fuel Consumption: Coal - 300 tons/year (600,000lbs divided by 6,000 miles = 100lbs/mile average (including firing up and banking). Diesel – 2,000 gallons divided by 1,300 miles = 1.5 gallons/mile average (switching = 2 gallons/mile average).

*Anticipated number of railcar shipments annually that are/will be diverted from truck to rail?*  
Unknown at this time.

*Are current truck trips one – way, two way.....?*  
Unknown at this time.

*Number of new/additional rail cars added to start this service?*  
No new cars at this time. Freight to be hauled by other railroads. Currently 9 Coaches, 2 Dining Cars, 1 Parlor Car, 1 Kitchen Car, 1 Open Car in service.

*Number of gallons per day for freight service?*  
None at present.

*Speed of line.*  
Freight not offered at present time.

This project upgrades a portion of the rail line (12.75 miles) and places currently unused rail line (not maintained) back in service