



# News From The Rails

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## Diesel Locomotive Overhaul Program Rolling Ahead

During 2018, Shore Line East's aging fleet of diesel locomotives has been a factor in poor SLE service reliability. The six GP-40 and twelve P40 diesel locomotives that make up the CTrail fleet are showing their age from years of service along the Shore Line East corridor. There is hope for riders, in that the extensive GP-40 locomotive overhaul program for the CTrail fleet is coming to a close and the overhauled locomotives are re-entering service. The GP-40 locomotive overhaul program is just one of the ways CTDOT is working to provide safe and reliable Shore Line East service. We spoke with Marci Petterson, CTDOT's Supervising Rail Officer for Mechanical/Capital Equipment to learn more about the six GP-40 locomotives going through the program and how that affects Shore Line East riders.

CTDOT's GP-40 locomotives started service in the state back in 1996 as fully re-manufactured locomotives, chosen for their reputation as being "relatively low-tech and having high reliability," as Petterson states. Though the locomotives originally entered service hauling freight several decades before their 1996 remanufacture, Petterson explains that a "remanufacture takes everything out right down to the structure, and rebuilds from there. It's not new, but as close to new as you can get." Additionally, modifications for head end power had to be made for the freight locomotives to be used in passenger service.

The overall goals of the current overhaul program aim to increase reliability, performance, and safety while reducing time out of service. Petterson believes this overhaul program was the right choice, due to several factors. The first big advantage to overhauling versus purchasing new locomotives is the cost; locomotives can cost 10 million dollars or more to purchase brand new.

In addition to the reduced cost, an overhaul can be the quicker option in terms of getting a locomotive back into the fleet. "Right now there is a large market for locomotives," Petterson states. "With a lot of authorities looking, which pushes the schedule [for delivery] out even further." As opposed to a full remanufacturing, the current overhaul replaces much of the moving parts including the main engine, turbocharger, rotating parts, as well as upgrading the current safety equipment to state of the art standards.

With all of this equipment overhaul affecting service,



*Locomotive #6699 during reassembly, Spring 2018*

the timeline has been a big topic of discussion among Shore Line East riders. Fortunately for riders, the last two GP-40s out for overhaul are expected to return to the CTDOT fleet: one in December, the other in February 2019. Also, six of the twelve P40s have already started their own overhaul program. The first GP-40 locomotive that came back in June 2018 set the benchmark for expected performance of the subsequent overhauled locomotives. "There is some very rigorous testing with the first unit, including [having to] run 500 miles without failure, and checking every single system as much as we can within a variety of different parameters," Petterson says. "Usually it will be 4-6 weeks on average before we finish testing and put a prototype unit back into service to ensure it will perform reliably and *(continued, page 2)*

operate safely." When the subsequent overhauled locomotives make their way back to the fleet, they typically undergo testing for around a week before entering back into regular service. Testing all six locomotives in this manner is shaped by industry best practice and federal regulations. Petterson aims to see another "8-10 years of reliable service" before another overhaul is needed, or newer equipment can take the place of the GP-40s.

## Monthly Pass Extension and Expanded Cross-Honoring

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) announced on October 17 that CTrail Shore Line East (SLE) November monthly passes will be valid through December 31, 2018.

CTDOT also announced an expansion of Amtrak's cross honoring program, which entitles Shore Line East monthly, weekly and ten-trip multi-ride ticket holders to ride Amtrak trains between New London, Old Saybrook and New Haven.



MTA, Amtrak, and SLE trains at NH Union Station

In addition to existing Amtrak cross-honored trains, the Amtrak trains below will provide cross-honoring service for Shore Line East Customers with a monthly, weekly or ten trip ticket between 10/22-11/16:

### *Trains to New Haven*

- 173 - Departing New London at 1:05 pm
- 137 - Departing New London at 3:07 pm
- 175 - Departing New London at 4:52 pm
- 177 - Departing New London at 7:15 pm
- 179 - Departing New London at 8:17 pm

### *Trains to New London*

- 172 - Departing New Haven Union Station at 12:57 pm
- 86 - Departing New Haven Union Station at 2:10 pm

Passengers are advised to visit [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) for detailed scheduling information.

## New Rider Alerts System

At recent customer forums, Shore Line East customers have requested alternative options to get service alerts sent to their phones rather than having to seek out the information. In response, CTDOT recently launched an entirely new Service Alert System at the end of October. Customers may sign up at [shorelineeast.com/service-alerts](http://shorelineeast.com/service-alerts) for either text or email alerts for specific trains that they regularly use. Customers can also designate stations for which they would like to receive service updates. Alerts are also available on the Shore Line East homepage ([www.shorelineeast.com](http://www.shorelineeast.com)) as well as through Twitter @SLEAlerts. Please contact CTrides at 1-877-CTrides (1-877-287-4337) or at [info@shorelineeast.com](mailto:info@shorelineeast.com) with any questions or comments.

## Shore Line East Notes

- New Shore Line East timetable took effect on Monday, October 29, 2018.
- Shore Line East will run on a holiday schedule on November 22 and November 23. Visit [www.ShoreLineEast.com](http://www.ShoreLineEast.com) for more detailed information.
- Follow Shore Line East on Twitter at @ShoreLineEast and @SLEAlerts and Facebook @ShoreLineEast for further news and alerts.

