

The New England Rail Coalition

Mission & Statement of Principles

The New England Rail Coalition (NERC) is a broad-based alliance of

- businesses,
- municipalities,
- elected officials,
- planning entities,
- environmental groups, and
- transportation organizations

that recognize the importance of substantially reinvesting in rail – both passenger and freight – to build a balanced and sustainable transportation system that will safeguard and enhance New England’s economy, environment, and quality of life.

NERC’s Mission

The mission of the New England Rail Coalition is to develop, and establish the political and governmental infrastructure and funding needed to implement, a vision for a vastly improved network of passenger and freight rail services that better connects the New England states with one another and with other regions, and that promotes sustainable economic development, enhances the movement of people and goods, reduces the costs of living and doing business in New England, minimizes greenhouse gases and other pollutants, and improves the quality of life for people throughout the region.

NERC’s Statement of Principles

- NERC believes that a balanced and regionally integrated transportation system is the lifeblood of New England’s economic future, and of maintaining the quality of life that has made the region such an attractive place for people to live, learn and work, and for businesses to invest, innovate and grow. A substantially greater investment in passenger and freight rail is essential for New England to restore balance to its predominantly highway-oriented, single-mode system, and to build and maintain a sustainable transportation network.
- NERC believes that improving and expanding the region’s network of passenger and freight rail is essential to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and to New England’s efforts to tackle climate change. New England’s transportation sector is the region’s single largest and fastest growing source of global warming pollution, adding to the urgency of investing in rail.
- NERC believes that passenger rail can and must serve as a powerful engine to promote and support compact, economically and socially vibrant communities. Rail can play a critically important role in linking transportation investment with desired

land use goals, and avoiding costly sprawl development – and associated traffic and pollution – so often caused by highways and roads.

- NERC believes that increased investment in passenger and freight rail is essential to reducing congestion and wear-and-tear on our region’s highways and bridges, and avoiding the need for costly roadway and bridge expansions. New England’s unbalanced transportation system has become an enormous financial burden for states and municipalities as they struggle with inadequate funds to address the high costs of maintaining, fixing and expanding roads. Rail investments can play an important role in reducing these costs.
- NERC believes that passenger rail can and must play a role in enhancing transportation choice, including better access to jobs, and reducing the proportion of household income spent out of necessity on transportation. The region’s unbalanced transportation system – by perpetuating dependence on private vehicles and providing inadequate transportation choice – has become an enormous financial burden for many individuals and has contributed to the problem of unaffordable housing. Investments in passenger rail, particularly when linked with transit-oriented development, can help relieve these burdens.
- NERC believes that enhancing freight rail opportunities is necessary to provide businesses with more transportation options and to improve economic competitiveness. The region’s heavy reliance on trucks to move freight puts New England businesses at a competitive disadvantage. Shifting more freight to rail is essential to supporting businesses in New England.
- NERC believes that the New England states must come together and – through close, transparent, sustained collaboration – develop and implement a New England blueprint for a vastly improved regional network of passenger and freight rail. To date, the New England states – as a region – have not collaborated enough to establish and advance a truly regional plan or vision. To effectively compete with other regions of the country for growing – yet still limited – federal funds, the New England states must “speak with one voice” in communicating and implementing a regional rail vision.

Achieving Our Mission

NERC believes New England has a number of important rail successes upon which to build, but that significant opportunities exist to develop a rail network that strengthens New England as a region. Such opportunities include:

- Improvements to the speed, frequency and reliability of existing passenger and freight services.
- Relief of chokepoints that interfere with freight rail operations, and which undermine the efficiency of both freight and passenger movement.

- The expansion of critical rail infrastructure, including but not limited to the following projects (listed from north to south):
 - Extension of **The Downeaster** north of Portland, Maine, and achieving high speed service from Portland, through New Hampshire, to Boston.
 - Establishment of high-speed rail on the **Boston-to-Montreal Corridor**, linking Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont with one another, and with Canada.
 - Upgrade of track and facilities on Vermont's **Western Corridor** to accommodate freight and expand passenger rail to Burlington, VT.
 - Establishment of the **Knowledge Corridor**, with the rehabilitation of track infrastructure from Springfield, MA to White River Junction, VT, to improve the Amtrak's Vermonter service, enable future commuter rail, and access three major western MA population centers (Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield).
 - Establishment of the **New Hampshire Capitol Corridor**, linking three major New Hampshire cities (Concord, Manchester and Nashua) with Boston, and providing access to Manchester-Boston Regional Airport.
 - The **North-South Rail Link** connecting North and South Stations in Boston, eliminating the last 1-mile gap on the Eastern Seaboard's Northeast Corridor and greatly enhancing the value of other projects located to the north and south of Boston.
 - Enhancement of service on the "**Inland Route,**" connecting Boston and New York through Worcester, Springfield, Hartford and New Haven.
 - Establishment of **Blackstone Valley Commuter Rail**, with service between Woonsocket and Providence, RI, to T.F. Green Airport in Warwick, and with potential service to Worcester, MA.
 - Establishment of **New Haven-Hartford-Springfield** commuter rail service, serving population centers in CT and MA.
 - Improvements to the **Northeast Corridor**, particularly in CT, to reduce trip times on Amtrak's high speed Acela service.

Join Us!

If your public, private or non-profit organization agrees with NERC's Mission and Statement of Principles, and you want to lend your voice to building a sustainable, balanced transportation system that grows the region's economy in a way that enhances the unique sense of place and quality of life that makes New England special, **we hope you'll join us**. There is no cost to join NERC. As a member, you will be invited to participate in all NERC meetings (approximately every two to three months) and will be given the opportunity to shape and sign on to specific policy positions.

To add your organization to the coalition, please complete the form below and send it to Dorene Hartford either at dhartford@clf.org, or 27 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301.

Name of Organization: _____

Name, Title and Email Address of Contact Person:

Mailing Address:
