



January 23, 2017

Ms. Rebecca Reyes-Alicea  
Program Manager  
Federal Railroad Administration  
One Bowling Green, Suite 249  
New York, NY 10004

Subject: NEC Future Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Ms. Reyes-Alicea,

On behalf of the Hodges Square Village Association, we would like to take the opportunity to submit feedback in opposition to the proposed Old Saybrook to Kenyon high-speed bypass.

The Hodges Square Village Association represents businesses, residents, and property owners within the Hodges Square National Register Historic District in New London, CT. Our mission is to revitalize the Hodges Square neighborhood through a concerted community effort that works collaboratively with local, regional, and state partners.

Much of the struggles that our neighborhood have faced over the past 40 years have been a result of the construction of the second span of the Gold Star Bridge and the I-95/Route 32 interchange in the 1970s. These projects created physical barriers between Hodges Square and the rest of the city, contributing to disinvestment in the neighborhood. Our work has been focused on developing ways to encourage reinvestment within our neighborhood. Central to this work has been an effort to reconnect the neighborhood with the rest of the city.

Our neighborhood lies directly in the path of the proposed bypass. If built, the bypass is likely to include land acquisitions within our neighborhood, causing irreparable damage to our residents and businesses while further eroding the City of New London's small tax base. It will further isolate the neighborhood, repeating the cycle of disinvestment that took place as the result of the highway construction projects in the 1970s.

We believe that the Old Saybrook to Kenyon bypass causes more harm to our neighborhood, city, and region than can be offset by the purported benefits of its construction, and we strongly encourage removing the bypass from your plans as you move forward with a Record of Decision.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Cathi Strother, Forrest Sklar*

Cathi Strother and Forrest Sklar, Co-Chairs, Hodges Square Village Association