

A Train on Rodney French



What impact, positive or negative, do you feel a rail will have on greater New Bedford?

by Patrick Correia

I noticed a satirical article from the Rottenscallop.com about an intra-city tram coming to New Bedford and another that [listed the city](#) in the top ten destinations for creative, young people to relocate. At some point in the indeterminate future New Bedford will be the proud recipient of a train line to Boston and clipper to sunny Spain. It's an amazing time to be a New Bedfordian, but you guys need better transit. You have to get that trolley! In my head that sounded cooler. Like I was in Boardwalk Empire. What? Like you're always funny?

Tourism will increase to the area with the commuter rail line, but that tourism will be severely limited by the lack of real public transit. King's Highway, to those on foot, is a glorified Airport station with a Wendy's down the street. I doubt they'd have heard of Billy Boy Candy. We are still keeping that gem a secret, right? The only other station in

the city will be where the current parking lot is for the Martha's Vineyard Ferry.

The Downtown area will keep tourists in the pocket we've labeled historical. They will not take a bus to the forts, restaurants, parks, beaches, or Gary's Best. Tourists fear buses like I fear nuns. The bus stops don't have shelters and the system as a whole shuts down at 8:30. It's like asking an entire city to drive drunk. That or you walk home and ruin someone's comfortable lawn.

The country is turning rapidly back to walkable cities and passenger rail. The younger generation is less likely to own a car or even get a license. I imagine SRTA would not be on board with this idea. In fact, I don't think the city or residents would be all that keen on a concept that may steal parking places and cost precious tax dollars. It's a small price to pay for increased infrastructure. We're a nation lacking in this faculty to a disgusting degree. Ever looked up the state of American bridges? That's scary. Nun-scary.

A trolley could cover a huge swath of the population by simply running one line north to south. Let's remember that the residential area is basically 1 mile wide. Imagine a trolley running from Coggeshall Street in the North, along Rt. 18, down Rodney French Boulevard past the beaches, and looping back at Fort Rodman.

Having a reasonable number of stops along the route would spawn commercial interests. There could be a revitalization of the Orpheum theater and rapid increase in downtown's already impressive growth. Shops would return.. Real, honest-to-god shops! You could cover your Christmas shopping without the sadistic lighting of the Dartmouth Mall.

Jobs and affordable transit to said occupations could facilitate an economic boom for New Bedfordites. The line could be built by New Bedford unions and stations designed by

area artists, partially funded by local businesses. As it stands a majority of the population travels outside of the city to work. This is a great strain on the individual, environment, and local economy.

A rail isn't a bus for a lot of reasons, but, most importantly, it's a solid commitment to a neighborhood and its people. New Bedford is a population struggling and stubborn. This isn't a magical dream. This is a foundation that brings foot traffic. It's something our grandparents road around town. You could save money on gas! And you could power the whole thing with a wind turbine off the coast... 0 shit. One thing at a time.
