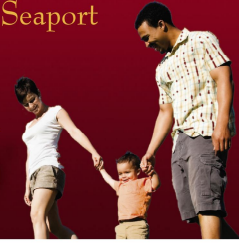




# Mystic Mobility Study



## TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

**Client:** Stonington and Groton, CT  
**Project Name:** Multi-Modal Transportation Study for the Mystic Seaport Area  
**Location:** Mystic, Connecticut  
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### Task 8 – Draft Strategy for Establishment of a Mystic Trolley Shuttle Governance Structure

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The purpose of this memo is to present what steps must be taken to establish an effective governance structure for managing a Trolley Shuttle service for the Mystic area. This service, called the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service, would connect Downtown Mystic with the Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic Aquarium, and the numerous hotels in the northern section of Mystic and the Route 27 corridor. The purpose of the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service is to provide an attractive alternative to the automobile for residents, visitors, and workers in the Mystic area. While the Mystic area has recently experienced an overall decline in the number of tourists visiting the region each year, the need for alternative transportation modes continues to be a serious issue during the tourist season from May to September, for the following reasons:

- Traffic congestion in the Downtown Mystic area with lack of sufficient parking to accommodate demand
- Need to establish a financially sustainable transportation system that improves air and environmental quality for the region
- Declining image of the tourist area, in part resulting from the lack of quality transportation infrastructure and modal alternatives, forcing dependency on the automobile
- Need to develop a pedestrian and bike friendly environment to reflect the high quality and livability of the area
- Continued upward pressure on the price of gasoline due to exponential third world demands, necessitating revisiting of alternatives to the automobile

This strategy memo addresses the steps necessary to implement the proposed Mystic Trolley Shuttle system, including personnel, organizational, and operational needs. It is intended to guide the decision-making process.

## **Results of the Mystic Mobility Study**

The Study has determined that an effective trolley shuttle system could feasibly be established to transport tourists from the more than 10 hotels along Route 27 and Coogan Boulevard to area attractions. Although the shuttle has an undeniable focus on tourist trips in the area, it could also improve mobility for the many employees of the hotels, Mystic Seaport, Olde Mistick Village, Mystic Aquarium, and the restaurant and commercial establishments in Downtown Mystic. This will require effective integration of the shuttle service with existing SEAT commuter service to the area. It will also require that the shuttle be attractive enough to be a “first choice” for visitors and therefore be incorporated into the very fabric of the Mystic experience.

Based on site investigations and an analysis of past shuttle services that were unsuccessful in the area, the Study has determined that a 35-minute round-trip route, beginning just north of the Route 27/I-95 Interchange, could operate with 10- to 15-minute headways, and provide a maximum one-way trip length of about 20 minutes (see attached *Trolley Shuttle Route* map). It would service the hotel area, the major attractions, Olde Mistick Village, Downtown Mystic, and the railroad station.

## **Options for Governance of the Mystic Trolley Shuttle Service**

In order for the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service to be successfully initiated, and sustainable, the following issues must be addressed:

- A. *Under what conditions should the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service be implemented?*
- B. *Which agency(s) will sponsor the shuttle service, who will operate it, and what will be the organizational structure and management approach?*
- C. *What will be the source(s) of the required local funding?*
- D. *How and when will initial Mystic Trolley Shuttle organization, service, and phasing implementation be adopted?*

The following sections address these issues in greater detail:

### **A. *Under what conditions should the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service be implemented?***

From a global perspective, there are many benefits to be accrued from the implementation of a Mystic Trolley service. These include physical benefits such as the reduction in traffic, congestion and fuel consumption; redistribution and better management of parking demand; and better use of natural resources. They also include less tangible benefits such as increasing the attractiveness of Mystic, providing better cohesion between the attractions and tourist destinations, and improved support of local businesses.

Nonetheless, it is imperative that the challenges associated with the service be thoroughly understood and adequately addressed so that the implementation can be successful and sustainable. Among these are the implementation of a durable governance structure, procurement of start-up funding, and structuring sustainable funding for continued operations. In addition, the very real issue of creating and maintaining an attractive service (relative to the automobile) and fully integrating the service into the “Mystic Experience” requires a sustained level of commitment on the part of many individual stakeholders.

As a result of our research and study, we have concluded that, from a technical standpoint, the service can be made to operate well, and to serve Mystic (Stonington and Groton) for many years to come. However, it is not possible to embark on this strategy without a serious and substantial commitment on the part of the community.

The Study Team recommends that following an initial review of route, costs, funding, and governance with the Project Management Team, the plan be presented to the study's Advisory Committee. Based on input from the Advisory Committee, a decision will be made regarding whether or not the service should be implemented, who should be considered the sponsor, and what avenues to pursue for funding.

***B. Which agency(s) will sponsor the shuttle service and what will be the organizational structure and management approach?***

Two related issues in determining the optimum governance structure for the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service are, first, to determine who will be the sponsoring agency for the service, and second, to determine who will be the actual operator/service provider. The sponsoring agency/entity will be responsible for issuing the Request for Proposals (RFP) for service, and for the management structure of the service. They will have overall financial responsibility for the service. They may, or may not, own the actual vehicles. The operator will provide the actual operation of the service and they may or may not own the vehicles. Typically (but not always) the operator also has the maintenance responsibility for the vehicles.

Options for choosing an entity to serve as the sponsor include:

- a. The Town of Stonington
- b. The Town of Groton
- c. An inter-town joint agency
- d. Any of the major area "attractions", or an agency combining them
- e. An agency consisting of the business community leaders
- f. An agency consisting of the political community leaders
- g. A quasi-public agency consisting of the Town(s) and businesses/attractions.

There are several options available to Mystic in setting up the sponsoring organization and operator, which are briefly outlined as follows:

- a. **Local Transit Agency (SEAT)** – The Mystic Trolley Shuttle service could be sponsored by the local transit agency, the Southeast Area Transit District (SEAT). SEAT is currently responsible for transit service in the Stonington and Groton area, and could also be selected as the manager/operator of the service. In fact SEAT has the exclusive right to operate this service unless it subrogates that right to another entity. It is noted that SEAT previously provided the Mystic shuttle service within the Stonington/Groton area through a program grant, and then as an extension of regular transit service (at regular SEAT fares and schedules).

The advantage of SEAT as the sponsoring agency for the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service is its access to funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding assistance

grants, although there would still be a requirement for local operational subsidies. Under this approach, a staff position to manage all aspects of the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service could be created. All personnel and equipment required for the provision of services would be acquired by SEAT, which would be responsible for directly operating the service. However, certain functions such as maintenance could be obtained through a separate contract arrangement.

Certain issues remain unresolved at this time and will require further exploration with SEAT. For example, the use of SEAT as the service provider may lead to some loss of direct control over the function of the shuttle. However, preliminary discussions with SEAT have indicated that they would be willing to undertake the operation (either as sponsor or contracted service provider) on the condition that funding for the service has been secured and is sustainable from some other source.

- b. Contract Management** – A second option would be for SEAT to act as the sponsor with overall responsibility for administering the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service, but contract with a private service provider that would be responsible for operating the system, including any or all required facilities. A number of private transit management firms specialize in the operation of this type of service, so this approach would require the sponsor to contract service through a qualified firm under a competitive procurement process. The sponsoring entity would also have an administrative staff position to coordinate the program. The vehicles and operating facilities could be furnished by SEAT, or, as an alternative, furnished by the contract service provider, a sub-contractor, or even through an agreement with another agency.
- c. Turnkey Operation** – Generally, this option involves the establishment of a Mystic entity that would serve as the sponsor with overall responsibility for administering the program, but would contract with a private service provider who would provide some or all aspects (operations & maintenance facility, employees, and vehicles) of the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service. The cost of this service would typically be a contracted rate per vehicle revenue hour plus an administration cost to oversee the contract. SEAT would have the right to be the contractor for this service. However, if they declined, another operator could be chosen through a bidding process.

When deciding which services will be provided by the contractor under a turnkey operation, there are several options. The contractor could be required to provide:

- i. All services, operations, maintenance, facilities, vehicles, personnel, and fare collection and reporting
- ii. All services, operations, maintenance, facilities, personnel, and fare collection and reporting for vehicles owned by the sponsor
- iii. All operations, facilities, personnel, and fare collection and reporting for vehicles owned and maintained by the sponsor
- iv. Operations, operating personnel, and fare collection and reporting only

v. Operating and operating personnel only

- d. Completely in-house operation** – It is possible, of course, for an entity to be established within Mystic that would also be the operator, and would actually operate the shuttle using vehicles owned and maintained by the entity, personnel employed by the entity, and facilities controlled by the entity. The entity could be any of those described in the previous section and specific services, such as vehicle maintenance, could be contracted out. The entity could be autonomous, private, quasi-public, or public and would have the greatest flexibility in determining the operations of the system.

**C. What will be the source(s) of funding for the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service?**

The Mystic Trolley Shuttle service must be financially sustainable. Past experience has shown that the ability of the service to continue into the future will depend heavily on the types and sources of funding that are established. When funding stopped, the trolley service stopped. While a number of sources are available to fund the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service, the ability to sustain funding for the long term, funding flexibility, and the magnitude of the funding required for the service are typically the key concerns. Federal/state participation is not typically sufficient to fully support the program, and the present Federal funding landscape is bleak. Unfortunately, the sources of non-federal share are also under strict fiscal constraints. A subsidy, perhaps a substantial one, will continue to be required from local sources. Additionally, since this is a seasonal service, the potential for federal funds is diminished as it is not typical practice for federal funding to be applied to seasonal transit service. Nonetheless, this avenue and others must be fully explored.

The potential federal, state, and local revenue sources that may be available include the following:

**a. Federal Sources**

- i. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 Urban Area Formula Program
- ii. Section 5309 Funding to refurbish vehicles
- iii. Clean Energy Funding
- iv. Livable Community Grants
- v. Mobility/Circulation Programs
- vi. New Freedom Programs
- vii. Tiger Grants
- viii. Other

**b. State Funding**

- i. Connecticut Department of Transportation
- ii. Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
- iii. Regional Planning Agency Pass-throughs (actually federal programs)

**c. Local Funding**

- i. The local share of funding for the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service capital and operating costs can come from a variety of sources provided that they did not originate from a federal source. Local share is normally made in the form of cash. However, in some cases the local share can be made in the form of in-kind services or contributions. In-kind services are those services which may be used by the shuttle operation but paid for from another local source and not directly by the shuttle operation. For example, shared use of a garage facility may be counted as in-kind contribution because the value of the service provided by the use of the garage could be paid from another source, such as the Stonington Department of Public Works. For transit services, typically the local share comes from three main sources: general fund, ad valorem taxes (property taxes), or sales taxes dedicated specifically to transit. For capital improvements, general revenue or capital improvement bonds may be considered as a local share source.
  
- ii. Local funding can also come from public-private partnerships, such as a Mystic Special Services District. Other options include local taxes, special benefit assessment districts, and advertising revenues. Typically, a special services district is authorized by local government to define special areas (districts) in order to assess taxes or fees to participants within the district. (Downtown New London, or Stamford Downtown Special Services District are examples). It is likely that a mixture of several sources of local funding will ultimately be utilized for the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service, including:
  1. Public-Private Partnerships – Private funding could result from partnerships with the Mystic area business interests, such as the Chamber of Commerce. Funds may also be available from the Seaport Museum, Mystic Aquarium, or Olde Mistick Village.

A variety of special fee structures can be established to provide revenue from such tourist oriented sources as:

- a. Room taxes
  - b. Meal taxes
  - c. Parking fees
  - d. Admission fees
  - e. Car rental fees
2. Local Taxes – Local taxes are primarily collected in the form of property taxes. An overall property tax with a dedicated millage levy could be applied specifically for the shuttle service operations and capital improvements, much in the way that many towns assess specific fire district taxes. Alternatively, a special services use tax could be assessed to target the tourist related properties and uses.

3. Advertising Revenues – While trolley shuttle related advertising is not usually a large revenue generator, it can still be used to help with operating and maintenance cost. Advertising revenues can typically be generated from display signage applied to vehicle exteriors or interiors, through shelter/mobility hub display programs, and by selling the rights to naming stops, stations, or even vehicles.
4. Farebox Collection – Historically, farebox collection has generated only a small portion of the revenue needed to operate a transit service. Other tourist oriented shuttles in New England have been seen to generate less than 25% of the total operating cost, and in some cases only a few percent of the cost. Although the gross revenue is insignificant, the cost associated with the fare collection itself is not. Some studies suggest that the cost of establishing ticketing systems, maintaining fareboxes, handling receipts, accounting, reporting, security, and administration render general fare collection for these types of systems to be a net loss. Coupled with the need to keep fares to a minimum amount (see discussion of ridership, below), it appears likely that the recommendation will be to operate the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service with a zero fare.

***D. How and when will initial Mystic Trolley Shuttle organization, service, and phasing implementation be adopted?***

**Implementation Plan Considerations**

The Study Team recommends that the Mystic Trolley Shuttle be implemented in a phased-in approach that could occur over a relatively short period of time. The first step for implementing a trolley shuttle service is for the Mystic Mobility Study Project Management Team and the Advisory Committee to review the options and determine the best structure for the sponsoring entity for Mystic. It will then be necessary to take the required steps to formally establish the Mystic Trolley Shuttle sponsoring entity to provide guidance in the implementation process and to determine many of the necessary policy issues. The recommended shuttle service should be finalized and presented at a public meeting, with subsequent formal adoption. Preliminary decisions on many of the options discussed above should be reached, including items such as selecting vehicle, facility, and equipment types, the method for obtaining a service provider, and the types of grant applications that are considered to be relevant. A Request for Proposals (RFP) to obtain a contract service provider is in development in conjunction with the Mystic Mobility Study. It should be finalized with the support of the governing agency. Ongoing coordination with SEAT and SCCOG is required to ensure proper grant and technical support.

Following the establishment of the governing entity and a decision on which type of operator will be chosen, the establishment of the service can proceed, as follows:

- a. **Establish Grant & Funding sources** – The Management entity must identify likely funding sources to obtain operating revenue for the service. This could include local revenue sources as discussed elsewhere in this document. Without knowing that a

relatively secure source of funding is available, it would be impossible to correctly define the service so that an operator can be procured.

- b. Marketing Plan** – Although funding is critical for the viability of the operation, the success of the shuttle is ultimately dependent on the acceptance of the service into the Mystic community and the gradual absorption of the shuttle into the fabric of the “Mystic Experience”. The shuttle must be perceived as an indispensable part of the operations of the area, and must be accepted as the preferred choice for movement throughout Mystic. Tourists must find a cohesive attitude on the part of hotels, restaurants, the “Big 4” attractions, shopkeepers and even fellow tourists that you would always use the Shuttle as your first, best choice. It should be featured on the websites of all area merchants and businesses. This can only be accomplished through a comprehensive marketing plan.

This plan should initially be developed to assist in implementing the new service. It is also crucial for establishing the foundation for future marketing strategies, once the implementation of the Shuttle is completed. Items to be addressed could include:

- i. Overall system image
- ii. Graphics
- iii. Community and tourism outreach
- iv. Advertising
- v. Coordination techniques with other organizations
- vi. Internal efforts to promote the service (hotels, restaurants, attractions)

It is important to note that the timing of marketing strategies must be taken into account far in advance of the tourist season. Tourism Brochures for Mystic and strategies for marketing Mystic outside the region are frequently completed many months prior to the tourist season. The governing entity will have to work closely with the local and State tourism bodies to create a timely plan.

- c. Branding** – A distinctive system logo, vehicle paint scheme, signage, and theme for the new service are elements of the branding program that need to be developed. This will be an essential component to the success of the system.

Branding creates a cohesive presence for the facility and gives a feeling of establishment that is critical for users, especially tourists who are unfamiliar with the service or the area, to comfortably use the system. It generates a positive image for the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service. A key recommendation is that the image (logo/graphics) created be unique to the Mystic area and avoid the more conventional or institutional look often assumed by transit systems. It is important that the public has convenient access to information about the new trolley shuttle services. The Mystic Multi-Modal Study website was created to provide basic information about the study; this website will be extended into the future to become the website for the new service, displaying the hours of operation, route schedules and maps, and other relevant rider information.

- Elements of the mobility hubs that have been discussed in the Mobility Study also address this issue, and apply branding to the hubs themselves. Thematic elements should continue with the vehicles, web pages, placards, advertising, etc. Route information signing (static and graphics) needs to be similarly branded and should include information that connects the operation seamlessly to the physical structure of the system.
- d. Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP)** – Issue an RFP to qualified firms who would develop and submit technical and cost proposals for a pre-determined level of service (schedule, duration, headway), vehicle type and maintenance arrangement as specified in the RFP. SEAT would have the exclusive right to provide this service unless they choose not to participate.
  - e. Receive proposals, evaluate, and select the best qualified service provider based on a set of pre-determined evaluation criteria** – Due to the small size of the recommended system, the need for transit specific expertise in administration, training, and operational support, and to ensure a timely/orderly implementation process, consideration should be given to utilizing the Contract Management or Turnkey Operation options.
  - f. Establish a facility for storing, fueling, dispatching, and maintaining the vehicles** – If the vehicles are owned and/or maintained by the governing entity, then this becomes a critical element of the trolley shuttle service. The facility should include a paved parking surface and provision for secure storage of the vehicles. In addition to maintenance related cleaning, servicing, and repair areas, the facility should include adequate space for administrative and transportation functions. This facility could be provided through a lease agreement, contract arrangement, or inter-governmental agreement. If the ownership/maintenance of the vehicles is provided by the operator as part of the operations contract, then the agency should define the requirements of the facility in the RFP, and it will then be up to the operator to provide adequate facilities.
  - g. ADA Compliance** – The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law on July 26, 1990, established a clear and comprehensive federal prohibition on discrimination against persons with disabilities in private sector employment, and ensures equal access for persons with disabilities to public accommodations, public services, transportation, and telecommunications. Major impacts of this legislation on the providers of public transportation services include the following provisions:
    - i. New public transit vehicles ordered after August 26, 1990 must be accessible to individuals with disabilities;
    - ii. Transit authorities must provide comparable paratransit or other special transportation services to individuals with disabilities who cannot use fixed route services, unless an undue burden would result; and

- iii. New transit facilities (e.g., transfer centers) and alterations to existing facilities must be accessible.

On September 6, 1991, the USDOT published final ADA regulations. These regulations require public entities operating fixed route transportation service to provide complementary paratransit within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of each fixed route and during the days and hours of the fixed route operation. SEAT operates transit service within the Mystic Study area boundaries and provides complementary ADA paratransit service which should be sufficient to cover the complementary paratransit requirements of the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service

- h. Maintenance and responsibility for mobility hubs, shelters and other system elements** – In addition to an operating facility, other system infrastructure elements would include the mobility hubs established as part of the Mystic Mobility Study recommendations, a communications system, small passenger shelters and stops, other amenities such as service information, and trash receptacles. A maintenance plan for these elements should be developed, and maintenance responsibility should be included in the operations contract, provided by the managing entity, or merged into some appropriate organization such as the Department of Public Works.

## Other Considerations

### Vehicles

In deciding upon the type and size of vehicle to be utilized in this service, there are a number of factors that should be considered. These include:

- **Size** - The vehicle should be large enough to accommodate the likely ridership without causing riders to wait for a following vehicle because the first is full. However, if vehicles are too large, they will not fit well into the Mystic character, and will be too large for easy operation on some of Mystic's streets.
- **Character** – Past experience has shown that the type of vehicle has been met with strong public reaction, especially in cases where the vehicle is perceived as being too commercial and not fitting in with Mystic's character. Along with "branding" comments noted above, it is important that the vehicles have a cohesive appearance and that they fit well with Mystic's character. It has been suggested that the use of "heritage" type vehicles, which are small bus bodies designed to look like vintage trolleys, would be appropriate for this use.
- **Ownership** – Vehicles could be owned, leased, or included in the contract operation. Vehicles could be leased or purchased new or used from other communities or agencies in the region that currently own them but that are not in service. For example, New Haven has electric trolley bus vehicles that are not in service but could potentially be leased. Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA) in western Massachusetts also has several trolley style buses currently not in service that

might be available for lease.

- **Environmental Considerations** – There have been several suggestions that the proposed vehicle should be an environmentally progressive vehicle, both for general environmental considerations and because it is felt that this type of “statement” fits into the Mystic character well. This should be given serious consideration as the type of vehicle is selected. However, there are several issues that must be considered:
  - Among the present manufacturers of small, heritage type vehicles, most are designed to be used on regular small truck chassis. These are predominantly gasoline or diesel powered vehicles.
  - Low sulfur diesel engines are now standard for these vehicles.
  - Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles are generally available, but hybrid drive trains are only available on a limited basis at the present time. (The availability of alternative fuel vehicles is a rapidly evolving situation, and changes on a very rapid basis.
  - There are a small number of small chassis all-electric (battery) buses presently on the market. However, their operational characteristics are still not good. Reliability issues have plagued buses operating in Sacramento, California (“least reliable in our fleet”) and at Boston Logan International Airport in Massachusetts (less than 50% reliability). The operating range is still very limited at 45-60 miles between charges, with a required charging time of eight hours.
  - Hydrogen Fuel Cell buses are not presently available on a small chassis, but may become available in the future. They have exhibited fair reliability and good range between refueling stops. However, the general unavailability and expense of hydrogen fuel is still an issue, as is the technical problem that it requires more energy to produce hydrogen than it releases in the “engine.” Maintenance costs are very, very high at this time.
  - The premium price for the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles is substantial. On full size buses, a diesel bus can be purchased for approximately \$300,000.00 and a CNG powered bus will cost about \$350,000.00. A hybrid bus is \$500,000.00 and a hydrogen fuel cell bus is as much as \$1.5 million. Small chassis electric/battery buses are about double the cost of a similar diesel fuel bus. Additional maintenance costs associated with the complexity of the drive train, fueling options, and maintenance must also be considered if alternative fuel vehicles are chosen for Mystic. Table 1 contains a summary of the vehicle costs and availability.

Table 1: Summary of Vehicle Costs and Availability

<i>Type of Bus</i>	<i>Purchase Cost per unit</i>	<i>Operating Costs (by Rank*)</i>	<i>Maintenance Costs (by Rank*)</i>	<i>Fuel Availability in Mystic</i>	<i>Reliability</i>
<i>Diesel</i>	\$300,000	3	2**	Yes	Proven
<i>Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)</i>	\$350,000	2	1**	No	Proven
<i>Hybrid – Diesel Electric</i>	\$500,000	1	3	Yes	Limited availability in small chassis
<i>Hydrogen Fuel Cell</i>	\$1,500,000	5	5	No	Prototype – not available yet in small chassis
<i>Electric (Battery)</i>	\$600,000	4	4	Yes	Less than 50%

\*Ranked lowest cost to highest cost    \*\*approximately equal

### **Parking**

Inherent in the discussion of the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service is providing an operation that will enhance the use of the system. Without ridership, it is difficult to support any expenditure to operate this service.

System users choose to ride the shuttle instead of using an alternate mode, such as driving. This choice is influenced by several factors. Among them are such elements as:

- Relative convenience
- Ease of use
- Travel time savings
- Accommodation of users’ needs
- Cost savings
- Perception that use of the shuttle is “easier”

Most transit users choose to do so because other alternative modes are less attractive. For example, in many cities, the use of a private automobile is considered to be substantially more difficult. In tourist areas, parking may be restricted and/or expensive, roadways are generally not well known, circulation may be poor, congestion may be high, and there may be a general willingness to use a shuttle system. For example, fares for the service (discussed earlier) must be kept to a minimum so that they are not a disincentive to ridership.

An additional incentive to increase ridership can be created by making parking, and therefore driving, less attractive. One way to do this is by creating fees for parking. While it is recognized that parking fees are generally feared by business owners, it should be noted that fees are not unexpected in a tourist environment. For those who choose to drive, fees are a way of paying for the infrastructure that supports them. For shuttle riders, it is a way to keep the fare at a minimum. An equitable fee system also has the advantage of reducing multiple vehicle movements as tourists move from location to location, and can also provide protections for shopkeepers (no meter feeding!) and businesses (no employees blocking the close spaces for the entire day!)

It is important that both towns, all three “major” attractions, and the business community all agree to accept parking fees, so that a comprehensive fee system can be investigated for all.

## **Conclusion**

From an operational standpoint, it is fully expected that with the appropriate political and local financial commitment the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service can be instituted and will operate in a fully functional manner, provide good service, acceptable headways, and a reasonable length of ride on an attractive, friendly looking, environmentally appropriate vehicle, at an affordable cost. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, using a combination of “in-house” forces and/or contract services.

In order to maintain decent ridership, it is necessary to provide the maximum amount of incentives for riding the vehicle, and dis-incentives for using the automobile alternative. This could include a parking fee system, among other things. It is vital for the long-term viability of the Mystic Trolley Shuttle that ridership be strengthened through measures such as these.

Equally important is the establishment of a plan for long-term funding of the operational needs for the system. All types of funding should be explored, but renewable funding sources and self-sustaining programs are very important in creating a sustainable program that will last into the future.

With a management strategy, a funding program, and ridership plan in place, there is no reason that the Mystic Trolley Shuttle service will not be a successful tool in the overall plan to enliven Mystic and strengthen the area’s economic viability for the foreseeable future.

