

## 9 Town Transit Bus Route Changes

Haddam is served by two bus routes operated by 9 Town Transit; Route 644 along Saybrook Road and Route 645 along Route 81. 9 Town Transit just merged with Middletown Area Transit to form River Valley Transit (RVT). As part of the merger, RVT is seeking public input on proposed route changes. The proposed changes only affect one of the routes in Haddam, Route 644. The proposed change would have the bus use Route 9 and 81 instead of Route 154 (Saybrook Road) to travel from the Chester town line to Higganum Center. This change eliminates bus service from Tylerville to Higganum Center. I met with RVT's Executive Director and expressed Haddam's strong objection to the change. Bill Warner, our town planner, submitted written comments which are below. Please use the link that follows Bill's comment to submit your comments. Even if you don't ride the bus, it's an important service for our residents who do.

The Town of Haddam is deeply concerned with the changes to "9 Town Transit Route 644" along CT Route 154 Saybrook Road. The changes completely by pass the Town and specifically our 3 villages Tylerville, Haddam and Higganum. These are the places where the infrastructure is in place, shopping and affordable housing exists in small rural towns. We are making significant improvements to all of these village centers with millions in state and federal money. Including the construction of sidewalks and the remediation of brownfields. All of our applications for state and federal funding require reference to being on a transit route and the states own goals are to revitalize Village Centers on transit routes where shopping and affordable housing already exist. It hardly seems appropriate that the transit district is now proposing to completely by pass our town via Route 9. Our low to moderate income residents, our growing senior population (the Senior Center is on the existing route) and our younger residents will all be adversely affected. All of the investment and progress the town has made and is making is being ignored. There is also very real private investment occurring. Including 82 new apartment units right on Route 644 in Tylerville another 42 apartments just broke ground on Bridge Road. These apartments are now connected to Route 644 via new sidewalks which will eventually connect to East Haddam Village Center. In Higganum we have a developer in place for a \$4 million redevelopment of the former Scovil Hoe and just acquired and received \$1.5 million in funding for the redevelopment of the Rossi property right on Route 644. We are looking into a new Senior/Community Center at the former Haddam Elementary School and the possibility of desperately needed affordable senior housing access to transit will be critical. These changes are short sighted, ignore Haddam's low-income populations and completely abandon the idea of revitalizing village centers where infrastructure and affordable housing are already in place. Again, we strongly oppose this change. William Warner, AICP, Haddam Town Planner

You can review the proposed changes and make comments at <https://estuarytransit.org/servicechanges/>. If you hover over the map you can scroll down to see the Route 644 change.