



Fort Trumbull Vision
New London, CT

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Yale Urban Design Workshop





The Yale Urban Design Workshop is a community design center based at the Yale School of Architecture, providing urban design assistance to communities in the region.

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On the cover: A depiction of Fort Trumbull by painter Seth Eastman (1808-1875), part of a series of 17 images of US military fortifications executed between 1870 and 1875. The painting, commissioned by the House Committee on Military Affairs, hangs in the US Capitol. (United States Senate Art Collection)

Above: 1781 Map of Fort Trumbull and New London Harbour showing the attacks made on the Fort by the British under Brigadier General Benedict Arnold on September 6, 1781. (Library of Congress Geography and Map Division)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the culmination of many months of effort by dedicated members of the New London community. The story of Fort Trumbull has grown larger than New London and as such, those seeking significant forward movement in its development include more than just New London residents. Many thanks are extended to everyone who provided input, attended public forums, participated in the public charrette, and who has an interest in the success of the Fort Trumbull peninsula, for their patience during the development of this report.

The Yale Urban Design Workshop brought together individuals with divergent backgrounds and produced a final product that everyone should be proud of. Members of the project's steering committee deserve special acknowledgement for their consistent and quality work since the effort began. Thank you Alan Plattus, Andrei Harwell, Kathleen Mitchell, John Brooks, Sandra Chalk, Frank McLaughlin, Robert Stillman, Former City Manager Martin Berliner, Interim City Manager Denise Rose, and Mayor Martin Olsen.

Finally, this effort could not have been possible without the support of the 2009-2011 New London City Council and as such, they too deserve special thanks. The next chapter in the Fort Trumbull story is currently unwritten, but with this plan and the continued support of dedicated individuals such as those who made this project a success, Fort Trumbull will realize its potential.

Adam T. Spreccace, P.E.

City Councilor, New London, CT







1. INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

This Concept Plan for Fort Trumbull, prepared by the Yale Urban Design Workshop in collaboration with the City of New London, the New London Development Corporation and a diverse group of New London citizens and stakeholders, aims to build upon, update and add concrete detail to the previous plans for the area. The goal is to create the framework for a shared vision that can help the community move ahead through a constructive dialogue about the direction and actual shape of future development on the site. The following are the main recommendations of the report:

- » Building upon the schematic framework of parcels and uses provided by the Municipal Development Plan, move towards a **comprehensive urban design concept** for the Fort Trumbull area that anticipates the creation over time of a distinctive mixed-use urban neighborhood, creating economic development opportunities built around the historic and scenic resources of the site.
- » Position Fort Trumbull as **a unique regional destination**, development opportunity and mixed-use neighborhood linking to and complementing, but not directly competing with, Downtown New London and the Bank Street corridor, using distinctive architecture and landscape, as well as programming and special events to enhance the identity of the area.
- » Strengthen and multiply the **connections** of the site to the City of New London, particularly its historic Downtown, and to the region, using pedestrian and bicycle networks, vehicular corridors and public transit to re-connect the relatively isolated peninsula, including:
 - ◇ Pursue a new pedestrian bridge connecting Fort Trumbull to the Waterfront Park across the entrance to Shaw's Cove, either connected to or parallel to the railroad bridge. The importance of this link for the development and public accessibility of Fort Trumbull cannot be exaggerated, as it will link residents and employees to the Downtown, the train station and ferry pier, as well as making the waterfront continuously accessible from the Parade to Fort Trumbull State Park. The bridge should also provide a distinctive and dramatic image that contributes to the image and identity of New London from both the land and the water.
 - ◇ Improve the Howard Street corridor as the major vehicular gateway to the Fort Trumbull area, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access to and along the corridor, while directing future commercial development towards the creation of an urban streetscape that will eventually link to the Downtown via Bank Street through one continuous corridor of built-up, street-oriented, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development.
 - ◇ Consider additional pedestrian connections that might help to provide access to the Fort Trumbull site in addition to the existing access points at Walbach Street and Shaw Street.
 - ◇ Pursue through Amtrak and the CT Department of Transportation a secondary train stop at the Fort Trumbull site, with platforms, a pedestrian overpass, related commercial development and connections to structured parking (Parcels 5A and 1B), turning the entire Fort Trumbull project into a model of transit-oriented development.
 - ◇ Explore a seasonal water taxi network connecting Fort Trumbull, Downtown New London, Groton and possibly other destinations as an attraction and amenity for residents and tourists.



Aerial Views of Fort Trumbull. Two artist's renditions of what Fort Trumbull might look like if all of the recommendations of this plan carried through.

- ◇ Develop stronger pedestrian connections to the Shaw's Cove area, emphasizing continuous pedestrian and bicycle routes along the waterfront wherever possible.

- ◇ Reinstate and reinforce the street grid as the principal structuring armature for development in the Fort Trumbull area, avoiding wherever possible cul-de-sacs, parking oriented development, and in general the feel of a suburban neighborhood or office park; and, wherever possible, relate new development directly to public streets, with sidewalks and streetscape that emphasizes the role of the local street as the connective tissue and public realm of the community.

» **Preserve and enhance views and access to the waterfront** and to Fort Trumbull as an important secondary structure for the urban design of the area, while also preserving and enhancing the natural topography of the site, with its dramatic rock outcroppings, wherever feasible. Emphasize water-related (and dependent) uses and experiences

» Structure new development around existing and **proposed anchor uses** and elements, including Fort Trumbull itself as the signature anchor and icon for the site, and eventually including any or all of the following:

- ◇ A destination New England style seaside resort hotel with small conference center, banquet facilities and spa serving the City and the region, as well as immediately adjacent uses such as Fort Trumbull State Park and future waterfront and recreational uses (Parcels 1A and 1B);

- ◇ A cultural institution, ideally related to the history of the site, complementing and relating to Fort Trumbull State Park (Parcels 1A and 1B or Parcels 4B and/or 4A)

- ◇ A revitalized commercial fishing pier with public access and restaurant facilities (Parcel 1B)

- ◇ A marina adjacent to the fishing pier and related to future hotel and residential development (Parcel 8A)

- ◇ A new pedestrian bridge connected to the Downtown portion of the Waterfront Park (Parcel 1B)

- ◇ A public band shell for outdoor concerts and other events (Fort Trumbull State Park or Parcel 1B)

» Treat other development, primarily commercial and residential, as appropriately scaled **neighborhood fabric** in relation to anchor uses, keeping that fabric street-oriented, rather than parking-oriented, wherever possible.

» Develop Parcel 4A in relation to its significance, its unique and somewhat difficult **topography**, and to Fort Trumbull as a carefully calibrated combination of public open space connecting development to the north to the Fort, incorporating cultural, entertainment, restaurant and recreational uses as appropriate.

» Develop Parcel 5C as **commercial recreational development**, possibly including a hockey rink, tennis courts, and health club, oriented toward Howard Street, with parking in the rear screened by the buildings.

» Locate and **develop structured parking** to serve current and future development on the site (Parcel 3C, Parcel 4A, and/or corner of WWPCA site), ensuring that parking lots and parking structures are, wherever possible, located in the middle of blocks and behind buildings with significant street frontage, and are based on the concept of shared parking serving all of the uses within a walkable Fort Trumbull neighborhood.



Fort Trumbull. This aerial view depicts the Fort Trumbull area as it appeared in the late 2000's.

» Develop the Hamilton Street corridor as **arts oriented mixed-use development** (per earlier plans), including studio space, galleries, live-work units, and related commercial development, preserving existing buildings wherever possible, and using the corridor to link to the Shaw's Cove area, especially the eastern side of the Cove and any potential connection to the Fort Trumbull waterfront.

» Develop a **Heritage Trail** linking Fort Trumbull with key historic sites in the City via a combination of public transit, pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and water taxi networks, and using Fort Trumbull State Park as both an anchor destination and a starting point for heritage tourism.

» Establish a **Fort Trumbull Action Committee and Design Review Board**, including representatives of the City, the local stakeholders, the NLDC, preservationists and local design professionals, to provide stewardship for recommendations of this report and review any future development proposals for compliance with this Plan.

» Actively publicize, promote and **market the Fort Trumbull area** and this Plan through a media campaign, public events, a web site, and meetings with State and national economic development, transportation and tourism officials. Organize meetings and visits for developers to view the site and be introduced to the plan. Work with local legislators and other public officials to put a constructive image of Fort Trumbull back into the forefront of the regional and State agenda. Review potentially available State and federal (H.U.D., E.P.A., N.E.A., etc) programs for applicability to various aspects of this Fort Trumbull Plan.

Many of these recommendations can be achieved through a range of optional strategies with respect to site and specific character. The report describes some of the options discussed for various uses and sites with reference to the guiding principles of the overall plan. This report prioritizes recommendations in terms of both importance to the overall plan and logical phasing, as well as identifying potential partners/funders for each key component of the plan. Just as this plan builds upon and updates earlier plans, these recommendations should be periodically revisited and reviewed, updated and revised when necessary, and checked for progress and performance as they are implemented.



Panoramic View of Fort Trumbull, 1911. This lithograph made by company Hughes and Bailey depicts the Fort Trumbull area, Shaw's Cove, and downtown New London around 1911. The form of the peninsula by this time had already undergone many changes, with areas being filled in to create larger developable plots of land, areas being dredged for boat basins, and the shore changed by pier structures and bridges. (Library of Congress Geography and Map Division)

2. SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

Project History

The Fort Trumbull peninsula is one of the most historic sites in the historically and culturally rich New London region. Originally inhabited by Native Americans, the strategic value of the site with respect to the Thames River estuary and the New London harbor meant that it has played a role in most chapters of the region's history since European settlement. In particular, the military history of the site, as exemplified – and now presented so beautifully – by Fort Trumbull itself, but also including the intensive use of the site by the Coast Guard as a base and the original site of the Coast Guard Academy and by the U.S. Navy in the development and testing of SONAR, is an unavoidable part of the experience and significance of the area. An important goal of this plan is to build upon and enhance the experience and accessibility of this history, while shaping new development to respect and leverage this important cultural resource.

In May of 1998 the New London City Council adopted a resolution directing the New London Development Corporation (NLDC) to prepare a Municipal Development Plan (MDP) for the redevelopment of the Fort Trumbull area. This MDP was completed by January of 2000 and approved by the City Council and the Connecticut State Department of Economic Development. By that time Pfizer had already broken ground and was well underway on the construction of its new research facility, which was to serve as a development

anchor for the site. The Pfizer facility opened in June of 2001. Fort Trumbull State Park had opened in 2000. In the midst of these developments, controversy enveloped the project as a result of the displacement of local residents and the demolition of their houses as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the area. This controversy came to a head, with considerable national attention, when the case of *Kelo v. City of New London* was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court on June 23, 2005. The harsh feelings associated with these events are still a very real aspect of the Fort Trumbull site and life in New London and will remain part of the history of the site going forward. This plan is not intended to either redress grievances or make people forget the events and battles surrounding the proposed redevelopment of Fort Trumbull, but rather to restart and move forward the actual development process in as inclusive and constructive a manner as possible, so that the site can be a productive and attractive part of the New London community, while acknowledging all aspects of its history.

The City of New London approached the Yale Urban Design Workshop precisely because of its experience with complex and contested sites and projects. The working method of the YUDW is to make both people and history an integral part of the design process and to use design as a means of community organizing. That process, which began in May of 2010 and is described in more detail below, has become part of the ongoing history of the site.



Urban Diagram of New London. This diagram shows the relative size and proximity of New London’s Downtown and Fort Trumbull, as well as connections to transit and transportation, and major concentrations of use. The circles indicate 15 minute walking radii, and the tan toned area at Fort Trumbull is the extent of the MDP.

Community Assets and Connections

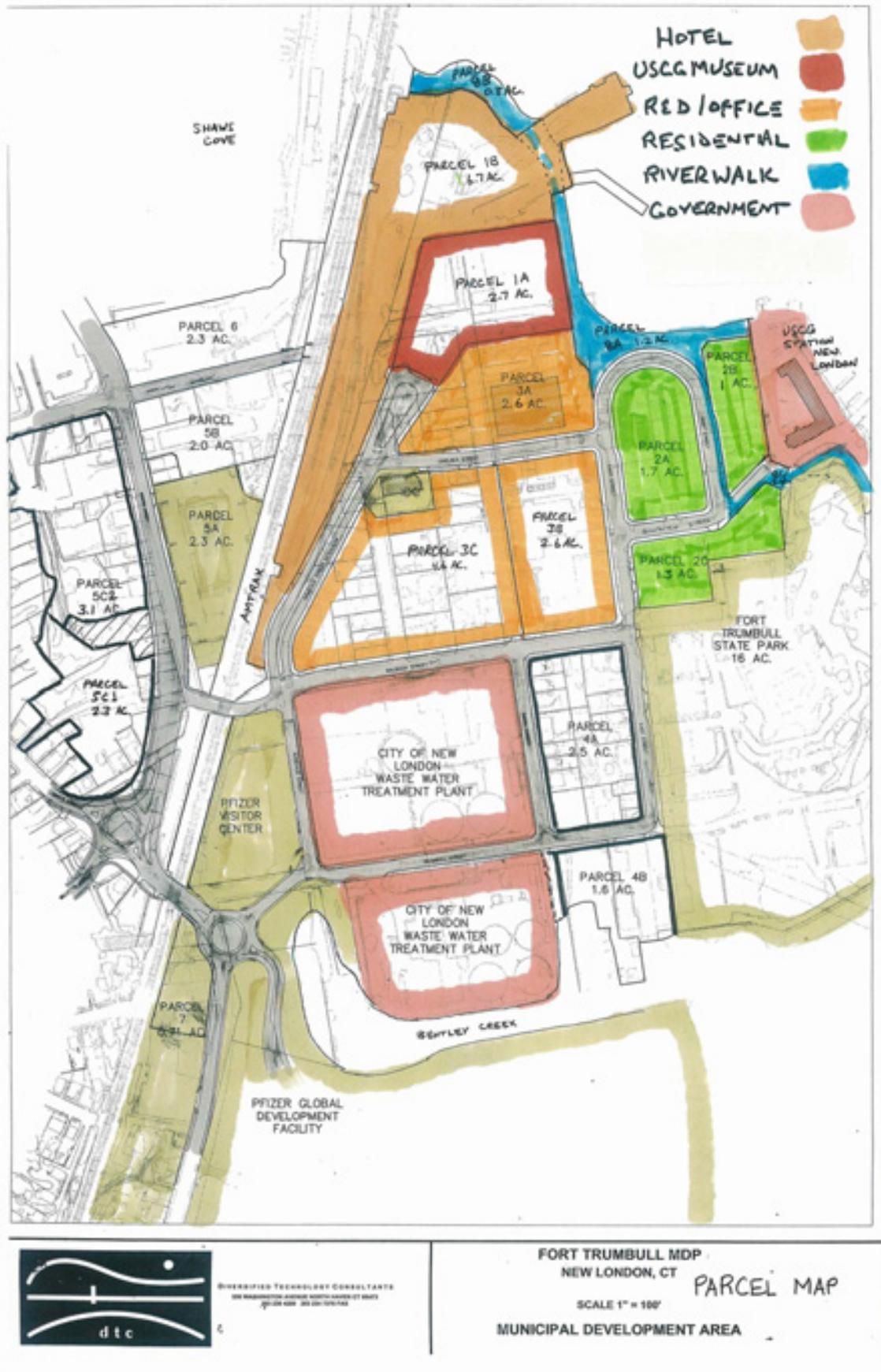
New London, with a total area land area of only 5 1/2 square miles, is one of the smallest towns in Connecticut, but within that limited area boasts a dense and diverse urban landscape of considerable architectural and scenic interest. Thanks to the efforts of local citizen-driven programs such as the New London Landmarks and New London Main Street program, much of that urban landscape has been both protected and redeveloped as the basis of an exceptional downtown district and lively urban neighborhoods. Indeed, the outstanding commercial and institutional fabric of the downtown centered on State Street, the Parade and waterfront, and Bank Street, is immediately adjacent and seamlessly linked to well-preserved historic residential areas such as the Starr Street neighborhood.

All of this makes New London a remarkably compact of thoroughly walkable city, in a way that many larger and more sprawling cities around the country are trying hard to capture in an era of increasing awareness of the health and economic benefits of sustainable, pedestrian-friendly patterns of development. In addition, through its extensive and exceptionally accessible waterfront, now enhanced by the addition of the Waterfront Park in the downtown area, New London's compact and reasonably dense traditional center also connects to amazing and expansive views, not to mention recreational opportunities.

The center of New London is also served by exceptional public transportation, including AmTrak, Shoreline East, busses and ferries, all of which have easy pedestrian access from the downtown area and adjacent neighborhoods. This makes much of New London automatically transit-oriented development in a way that so many cities, old and new, are struggling – often against considerable obstacles – to recapture or create.

Obviously Fort Trumbull needs to connect to all of this, but also to aspire the sound urban design principles and high quality of public space and architecture that are exhibited by the historic center of New London. That does not mean that Fort Trumbull, with an area almost exactly the same as the core area of downtown New London, should attempt to duplicate or compete with downtown in most respects. There are significant differences, most of which work to the advantage and reinforce the distinct identity of each area. In the first place, as the historic core, the downtown area is far more densely developed, to the extent that its natural topography is largely obscured or altered by the built landscape, and it is and will remain the cultural, institutional and symbolic center of the city. Fort Trumbull is, by contrast, much more dramatically a peninsula with a more powerful and exposed topography, which should be preserved and enhanced wherever possible, and incorporated into new development – as it has been in the Fort itself – rather than obscured by building. Also, while the main rail line runs on grade along the waterfront at the edge of downtown, when it gets to Fort Trumbull it is inland and above grade, largely cutting off the Peninsula and making it once and for all a somewhat separate and special site: more of a destination than a crossroads.

It seems clear that new development in the Fort Trumbull area should complement, not compete with, Downtown New London, connecting to and building upon the strengths of the downtown, learning its lessons of street-oriented, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented, mixed-use development, as it creates its own distinct and unique sense of place.



Fort Trumbull MDP. This plan, part of the Municipal Development Plan, indicated the parcelization of the peninsula and the distribution of uses called for by the original plan (Image: NLDC).

Understanding the Municipal Development Plan

The Municipal Development Plan prepared by the New London Development Corporation and completed in January of 2000 is a planning tool developed in accordance with Chapter 132 of Connecticut General Statutes. Having been adopted in 1969, this authorizing legislation was designed to enable and assist cities in undertaking projects with economic development goals, but was very much a product of its time, reflecting the transition from the Urban Renewal era of massive infrastructure and public housing projects to an idea of urban planning driven more by a desire to stimulate private investment in commercial development that would pay off in the form of an increased non-residential tax base for cities. As such, the terms of the statute stipulate that “the land and buildings within the project area will be used principally for industrial or business purposes,” rather than residential development.

Except for the limitation on residential development, reinforced and made even more restrictive in the case of Fort Trumbull by requirements for safe evacuation of an area with limited access, the MDP is a relatively open and potentially flexible document that could theoretically produce a wide-variety of built outcomes. Since the emphasis of the MDP is on economic development, the core of the plan is the assignment of certain projected uses and square footage to specific parcels. The parcels are generally defined as blocks, and so the dividing line between uses is often a street. This is a perfect example of the limits of the MDP from the point of view of urban design, which would now more often take the street as a unit of design (as opposed to a unit of development) and give primary consideration to the creation of a balanced, attractive, safe and productive public space as defined by building form, streetscape and the interaction of a mix of uses on both sides of the street.

Addressing this limitation in the MDP is not likely to be a matter of challenging or changing the basic terms of the MDP, which in any case are largely schematic with respect to design issues, but rather of adding additional information to the plan which focuses on the reciprocal relationship shape and character of buildings and public space, as well as on relationships and connections to the wider context, both visual and physical. In general, then, this plan is not meant as a critique of the MDP, but rather as a supplement to it, with the goal of establishing a broader and more detailed framework that helps to ensure that the Fort Trumbull area becomes an attractive and viable urban neighborhood, not just a collection of individual parcels, uses, and projects. In the end, this is also sound economic development policy, since it is now generally accepted that well-designed urban streets and public spaces promote more productive and sustainable urban development over time.



Fort Trumbull Study Area. This boundary of the MDP is indicated by the heavy dashed line in the plan above.

Project Study Area

The primary study area for this project is the area contained within the boundary of the Municipal Development Plan as approved by the New London City Council in 2000. This boundary includes roughly all of the Fort Trumbull Peninsula from Shaw's Cove at the north to Bentley Creek to the south, and from the Thames River on the east to the railroad tracks on the west. It also includes areas on the west side of the railroad tracks from Shaw's Cove at the north to Shaw Street at the south along Howard Street, including sites west of Howard street between Hamilton Street and Shaw Street.

While the bulk of the plan deals with the zone within the boundary, wider relationships with adjacent neighborhoods and with downtown were considered as part of the planning for the site. Of particular importance is Howard Street, running north from the site, to Bank Street, where the intersection and vacant site called parcel 'J' by the MDP is located. Bank Street running east into downtown, the Waterfront Park, and Shaw's Cove were also examined as part of the planning.

The existing conditions plan at left indicates the boundary of the core study area.



The Public Forum of the Future of Fort Trumbull. Approximately 40 attendees gathered on July 29, 2010 at the New London Public Library to provide input.

Developing a Shared Community Vision

At the core of the process used to develop this plan for Fort Trumbull was the extensive use of public consultation to arrive at a consensus based, shared community vision for the future of the site. Public participation in the evolution of the plan occurred through a number of mechanisms, including regular meetings with a representative steering committee, through open public presentations and a participatory public design charrette held on the site, and through numerous meetings with private individuals, including New London residents, business owners, and other parties with an interest in the future of the site. The content of these meetings and workshops was assembled and assimilated by the design team to produce this plan - a document which embodies many of the communities shared ideas and aspirations for Fort Trumbull, but which also responds realistically to the market by remaining flexible about certain aspects of the development process.

On January 28, 2010, New London newspaper *The Day* convened a roundtable event on the future of Fort Trumbull at their offices on Bank Street. Participants included Alan Plattus from the YUDW, City Councillor Adam Spreccace, John Brooks from the New London Development Corporation, and Kathleen Mitchell, a community advocate. A lively discussion ensued, but there was a general consensus that although scars remain in the New London community from the Kelo v. New London battle, it was time make a new start: to begin fresh thinking about the site and trying to move forward with a new plan for Fort Trumbull. A special issue of *The Day* appeared on February 14 carrying position pieces written by the panelists. These are included in Appendix C for additional reference. Subsequently, New London City Council approved a proposal from the YUDW to move forward with a new, community based plan for the site.

The YUDW, with Councilor and then-Deputy Mayor Adam Spreccace convened a group of representative individuals to form a project steering committee. This committee constituted a core representation of the community, and was a source of information and institutional memory, as well as being a monitor and mirror of public opinion on what issues were most important and what the plan should focus on as its main goals. The steering committee, chaired by Councilor Spreccace, included representatives from city government, both elected and managerial, from the business community, the preservation community, the NLDC (who control the site) and other interested members of the New London community. A core group of the steering committee met regularly at the office of New London Landmarks in New London, and often invited others into the meetings to discuss or comment on specific aspects of the ongoing process.

Discussions within the steering committee were wide-ranging and comprehensive, touching on all aspects of the project past and future. The committee worked tirelessly with the design team to identify important issues and sources of information, engage individuals in the community who would have a stake in the process, and facilitate discussions with members of the City Government and NLDC. They also provided a sounding board for design ideas and were advocates for the process that created this plan. They were instrumental in the planning and execution of the public events held for the project.

On June 25, 2010, Councilor Spreccace hosted Professor Plattus on his public access television show, *Common Sense Revisited*, to start the discussion in the community about the new plan that was being developed. This was in some ways an introduction for the first public meeting for the project, the *Public Forum on the Future of Fort*



PUBLIC FORUM *on the future of* FORT TRUMBULL

The City of New London and the Yale Urban Design Workshop invite the public to participate in an open forum to discuss the future development of Fort Trumbull.

The Yale Urban Design Workshop was recently asked by the City to develop a plan for Fort Trumbull which incorporates involvement from all segments of the community. The Workshop will present a description of the planning process and a summary of discussions to date. Public participation is crucial to the success of the work and all interested parties are encouraged to attend to share their ideas.



NEW LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY
63 Huntington Street, New London, CT 06320
7 - 9 pm, Thursday, July 29

For further information, contact Deputy Mayor Adam Spreace at 860-460-4976 or Alan Plattus at the Yale Urban Design Workshop at 203-764-5696



PUBLIC CHARRETTE *on the future of* FORT TRUMBULL

The City of New London and the Yale Urban Design Workshop invite the public to participate in a DESIGN WORKSHOP to plan the future development of Fort Trumbull.

Since April 2010, the Yale Urban Design Workshop has been working with the City to develop a plan for Fort Trumbull which incorporates involvement from all segments of the community. On **Saturday, April 2**, the YUDW and City will host a participatory, open DESIGN WORKSHOP to gather ideas and visions for Fort Trumbull through group design work. All interested parties are encouraged to participate. Coffee and cookies will be provided, and a children's table will be available.



**FORT TRUMBULL STATE PARK
CONFERENCE CENTER**
1 - 4 PM, Saturday, April 2, 2011

For further information, contact Councilor Adam Spreace at 860-460-4967 or Alan Plattus at the Yale Urban Design Workshop at 203-764-5696

Registration is not required, but if you are planning to participate, please e-mail Councilor Spreace at aspreace@ci.new-london.ct.us so that we may estimate attendance.



Charrette on the Future of Fort Trumbull.

(left) Six groups worked to develop sketch schemes for the site at the Fort Trumbull State Park Conference Center on April 2, 2011. Above: posters advertising the Forum and the Charrette.

Trumbull, held on July 29, 2010 at the New London Public Library's meeting room. The event began with remarks from Councilor Spreccace followed by a 50 minute presentation by the YUDW of many of the topics that were being discussed at length in the steering committee meetings to date. This included the need for public participation and feedback to develop a vision for the district, the structure of the existing MDP which places certain controls and requirements on any development at Fort Trumbull, and an introduction into a number of planning topics, including how to connect the site to other community assets such as downtown, walkability, district anchors like Fort Trumbull State Park, a potential waterfront hotel, and the Coast Guard Museum, and fabric like residential units and commercial shops and offices. The YUDW presentation concluded with a presentation of the nature of the plan as a guiding document that reflects the community's desires.

In an hour-long response session, attendees of the presentation responded in an overwhelmingly positive way, presenting

many wonderful ideas about how the site might eventually develop. The session was followed by the distribution of a paper survey to capture

additional ideas not discussed in the open session. The results of the meeting along with the survey became the basis for many of the design elements presented in this plan. More detailed description of various discussions based on ideas from this and other meetings can be found later in this section.

The YUDW held more detailed separate meetings with a number of individuals who had a more direct stake in Fort Trumbull itself - these included local business and property owners, City officials, and others.

On March 23, 2011, Professor Plattus once again appeared with Councilor Spreccace on *Common Sense Revisited* to discuss the evolution of the project, leading to the next open public event - a design charrette. The *Public Charrette on the Future of Fort Trumbull* was held on April 2, 2011 at the Fort Trumbull State Park conference center. The event was well attended, and after a brief presentation

The Future of New London is Fort Trumbull.

Fort Trumbull should augment, not compete with downtown.

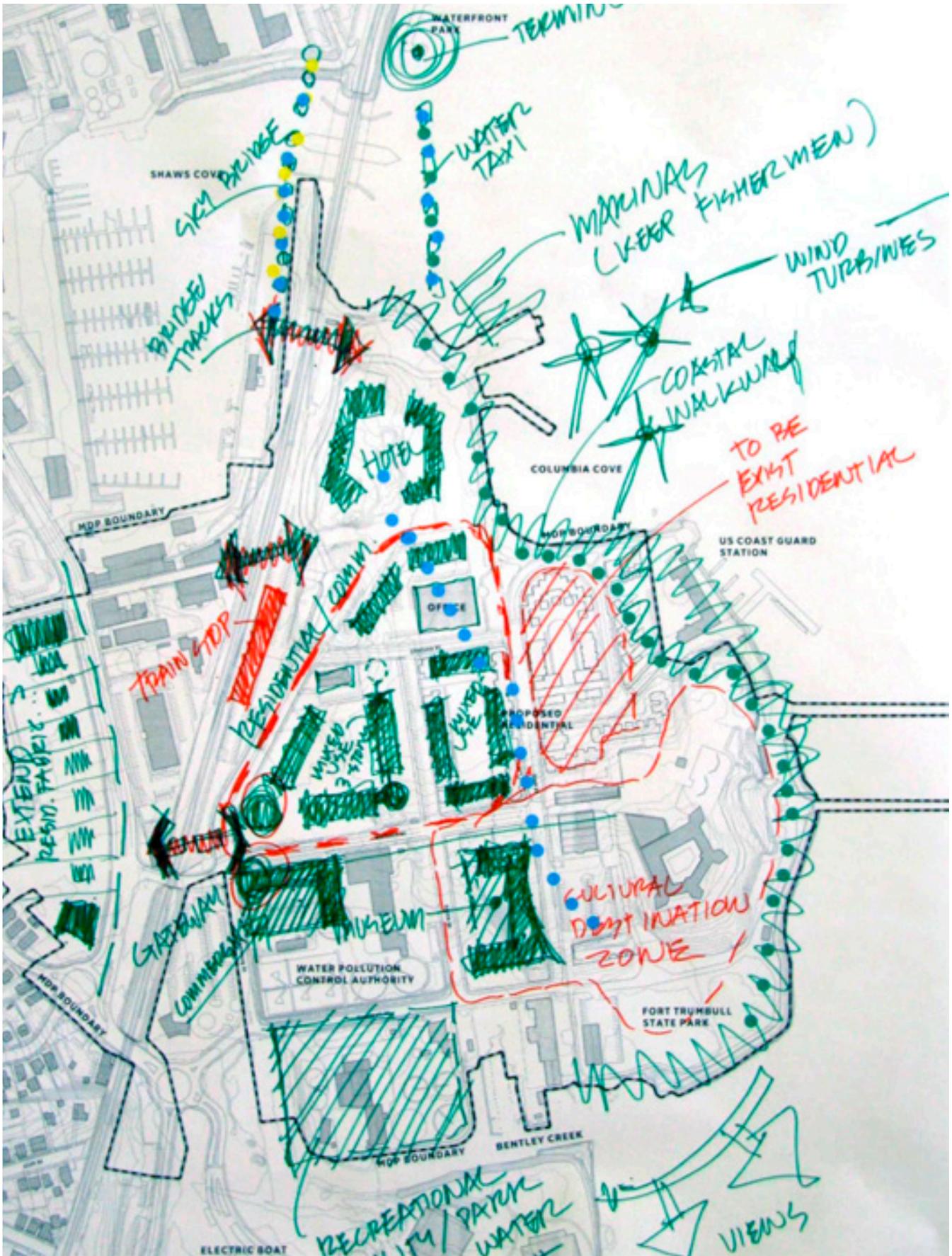
Fort Trumbull should be a cohesive, well connected neighborhood.

Development should emphasize the specific history of the site, including maritime history.

The natural character of the site, including the granite ledges, water and views should be emphasized.

Connect to downtown physically through pedestrian and transit, and thematically through the arts.¹

¹ Public comments from the *Forum on the Future of Fort Trumbull*



Charrette on the Future of Fort Trumbull. An example of a sketch plan prepared by one of the groups at the April 2 design charrette.

by the YUDW, six groups of attendees produced sketches of schemes for the site. These are recorded in Appendix B of this report.

In all our discussions and consultations, there were a number of ideas which surfaced repeatedly. One overwhelmingly important aspect of the project to those we consulted was the notion that Fort Trumbull should be a neighborhood. Different individuals meant different things by that - some were referring to the mix of uses, some to the desire for cohesiveness in the architecture and urban design, some to connectivity to other areas of the city, and others to a way of living that might entice young professionals to stay or relocate to New London.

Neighborhood character was important in this discussion. Many hoped that specific characteristics of the place could become the inspiration for the design of the area - the waterfront, New England character, Naval and Coast Guard history, working class history, or natural features such as the granite ledge. Others hoped aspects of the working waterfront could be retained, such as the fishing fleet. Still others suggested capitalizing on New London's art scene to contribute to the area's character.

Fort Trumbull's relationship to downtown economically and physically was another key

discussion. Many felt Fort Trumbull should augment and not compete with downtown, and that the relationship could be mutually economically supportive if a better physical link could be made between the two districts.

The question of how to integrate Fort Trumbull with the city and especially downtown came up perhaps more than any other topic. Discussions revolved around how to improve the Bank-Howard Street corridor for vehicles and pedestrians, and how to provide a better, more direct link to downtown from the Fort with public transportation, walkway, and footbridge.

Finally, sustainability arose as an important aspect of development to many community members. The effects of sea level rise and storm events were discussed, as were green building and green technology such as wind turbines on site, as economic development tools for the Fort.



Fort Trumbull Planning Diagram. This diagram shows the basic structure of Fort Trumbull, including connections to the city, existing and proposed, major anchors and gateway points.

3. CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

Connections to the City and Region

Given its location, topography and relationship to infrastructure, a top priority for the successful and sustainable development of the Fort Trumbull area is improving its connections to the rest of New London and the region, without compromising its status as a special place immediately adjacent to the heart of the city. There are considerable obstacles that have already been mentioned, including the railroad tracks, a road network that provides somewhat roundabout and limited routes to the Fort Trumbull area, critical gaps in the potentially continuous waterfront walkways, and a tantalizingly close, but technically difficult relationship to the downtown waterfront across the entrance to Shaw's Cove.

All of these obstacles could in fact be turned into assets, indeed into unique experiences, but each will require collaborating with non-local partners, like Amtrak and the Departments of Transportation and Environmental Protection. In terms of improvements to the all-important pedestrian and bicycle connections, there is some lower hanging fruit in this area, such as making the Bank Street and Howard Street corridor more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly. Except for the older section of Bank Street in the immediate downtown area, this corridor has adequate right-of-way to accommodate attractive sidewalks and a designated bicycle lane. The critical and currently very unfriendly intersection at Bank and Howard is already slated for some pedestrian improvements, and these could be supplemented by distinctive signage directing people to Fort Trumbull and eventually new, street-oriented development on the southwest corner of the intersection, the emptiness of which now contributes to the perception of diminished interest and activity, rather than continuity from downtown to Fort Trumbull.

In addition, there is an opportunity to develop an almost continuous alternative pedestrian and

bicycle route along Shaw's Cove from the southern end of Sparyard Street along the edge of the Cove, past the marina and Captain Scott's Lobster Dock, and finally connecting the Fort Trumbull Riverwalk underneath the railroad tracks at the northern end of the site. This new route could also stimulate additional waterfront development in the area, including additional restaurants and connections to the proposed redevelopment of the Hamilton Street corridor.

Most importantly, more detailed planning and discussions should begin immediately to explore options for a new pedestrian bridge from the southern end of the Waterfront Park to the northern end of the Fort Trumbull peninsula. There are two main options for this bridge: each with its advantages and difficulties. The first option would be to work with Amtrak to develop a new pedestrian walkway to be attached to the existing rotating railroad bridge and operated as a single unit with that bridge. If Amtrak would cooperate in the development and operation of that project, it would probably prove to be the most efficient and affordable option for getting pedestrians across the entrance to Shaw's Cove. It would not have the visibility or drama of an entirely new bridge, but could be designed in such a way as to develop some distinct identity of its own. This option will likely require engagement of Federal elected officials. The second option is, of course, to build an entirely new, dedicated pedestrian and bicycle bridge that could be operated as drawbridge either independently or in concert with the parallel railroad bridge. Such a bridge could be a signature element for Fort Trumbull, as well as for the entire city of New London. Many European cities have invested in innovative and exciting new pedestrian bridges in recent years, not only for their practical value, but as a way of announcing to themselves and to the world that they are pedestrian-oriented cities with a strong relationship to the water.



Water Taxi (Auckland, New Zealand). Water taxi service is flexible, inexpensive, and has low initial costs. A water taxi in New London could link downtown with Fort Trumbull and other sites like Ocean Beach and Groton.



Cable Car (Barcelona, Spain). Cable cars can provide a spectacular entertainment of connection and have the benefit of less expense than bridges, but are of limited utility for everyday commuting.



Streetcar (New Orleans, LA). Beyond providing a comfortable commuting experience, the permanence of fixed rail streetcars route indicates a community's long term commitment to public transit infrastructure and can help stimulate development.

Public Transportation Opportunities

While these pedestrian and bicycle connections are critical to the success of future development in the Fort Trumbull area, and to a robust and symbiotic relationship between Fort Trumbull and Downtown New London, with its highly developed regional inter-modal transit hub, there are also important opportunities for public transit that directly serves Fort Trumbull, with its significant concentration of jobs at Electric Boat and other current and future businesses, as well as projected new residential development and the attractions for local residents and visitors provided by the Fort and the open space amenities and public events of the area. All of these can benefit from improved public transit access, not least in reducing the demand for on-site parking as development proceeds.

A simple and attractive option for connecting Fort Trumbull to Downtown New London and other sites along the Thames River and Long Island Sound shoreline would be a seasonal water taxi, operated either by a public agency or a private contractor. This would supplement the proposed pedestrian and bicycle links to the downtown area, providing a more leisurely and scenic option, and a degree of choice and redundancy which are the hallmarks of the best urban infrastructure networks.

More ambitious options for public transit would include a new and dedicated Fort Trumbull commuter rail stop for Shoreline East Trains, if not Amtrak, on the model of the State Street Station serving downtown New Haven along the same route, just half a mile from the main station, as

would be a commuter platform located adjacent to the Howard Street gateway to the Fort Trumbull peninsula. That location would eliminate the need for a costly overpass, since platforms, parking and other destinations on opposite sides of the track could be accessed via the existing underpass. Of course a constructed overpass somewhere further north could provide an additional means of pedestrian access to the site, but would involve elevators and/or ramps in order to satisfy ADA requirements, unless vertical access could be provided in the context of a new building of sufficient height on one or both sides of the track, sponsoring a skywalk connection that could also serve as platform access. Such a bridge might also provide protected access to future structured parking serving both commuters and local uses.

There may be other, slightly more exotic, options for transit connections that may be worth exploring, depending on funding options, commercial opportunities, and the desire to turn the connection into something more like a “ride.” For example, an exciting and highly visible harbor crossing could be provided by an aerial cable car, on the model of the Roosevelt Island aerial tramway in New York City, or the cable car connecting the Barcelona waterfront with Montjuich. An alternative to a dedicated commuter rail stop might be a parallel light rail or even a street car connection, which would have the advantage of establishing a more flexible local route that could be extended to other destinations in the city as well.



Option A. In this scenario, a parking garage is buried in the center of parcel 3c, ringed by a wrapper of mixed use buildings, providing a visual screen. As a central garage structure, it could serve those adjacent buildings, as well as the hotel on parcel 1A/B, a commuter train station, and potentially other uses on the site.



Option B (Preferred). A second option for locating a central garage on the site would be on the current municipally-owned parcel at the corner of Walbach Street and Nameaug Streets. As one of the first sites visitors will see as they arrive at Fort Trumbull, this is a critical corner, and a garage at this location could visually screen the sewage treatment facility, and would also not be bothered by the smell. Ground floor retail could be provided to augment the street life, and a corner pavilion could announce entry into the Fort Trumbull district.



Option C. A third potential location for a parking garage at Fort Trumbull would be at the south edge of Parcel 4A where the topography drops off rapidly. Facing the sewage treatment facility, this part of the site is challenging for other uses, and a garage here could serve an adjacent shopping and restaurant zone, a cultural institution on the waterfront, as well as the Fort Trumbull State Park.



Parking

Given the projected work force of between 3,200 and 3,500 at Electric Boat's new facility on the former Pfizer property, as well as the proposed 80-104 units of housing on Parcels 2A and 3B and additional future development on the site, not to mention what is hoped to be a significant growth of visitors to the area going to the Fort, to events such as band concerts, or just coming to enjoy the waterfront open space and boating, there is sure to be a need for significant amounts of parking on the site, even with improved pedestrian, bicycle and public transit access. Some of that parking, especially short term, should be accommodated as normal on-street parking, since that will contribute to the sense of an ordinary grid of local, pedestrian-friendly streets, as opposed to suburban style development. Indeed, wherever possible, large areas of surface parking should be avoided altogether, or located in the rear of buildings, with adequate and attractive lighting and landscaping.

However, with future demand in mind, this plan suggests three possible locations for structured parking. These are (1) a mid-block garage associated with future commercial and mixed-

use development on Parcel 3C, which could serve that development, as well as providing commuter parking for a future rail stop, and/or providing long term parking for hotel guests; (2) a corner garage on the site of the current school bus parking lot, that could also serve to partially buffer the waste water treatment plant and would potentially be attractive for additional parking for Electric Boat employees (the preferred scenario); and (3) a garage on the southwest corner of Parcel 4A, which could take advantage of the topography of that block and be partially buried at its northern end. That garage could provide additional parking for Fort Trumbull itself, service and parking for water-related uses on Parcel 4B, as well as parking for future cultural facilities, such as a Coast Guard Museum, especially if they were to be located at the southern end of the site in relation to Fort Trumbull on either Parcel 4A or 4B.

In all cases, parts of a garage fronting the streets or visible from the public right-of-way should be provided with screening elements that mask the typical generic garage elevations, as well incorporating ground-floor retail wherever feasible.



Waterfront Streetscape. Examples from Providence, RI (top) and Battery Park City, Manhattan, NY (bottom)

4. STREETScape AND OPEN SPACE

Since the MDP has already established some standards for streetscape vocabulary and implemented those standards in the case of infrastructure already developed, future development should work with those existing standards and elements wherever possible, but extending their range to provide attractive signage, lighting, trash receptacles, benches, sidewalk and paving treatments, landscaping, public art and other elements reflective of a sophisticated waterfront urban neighborhood, such as Battery Park City in New York or Mission Bay in San Francisco. The overall effect should be distinctive and sufficiently unified so as to contribute to the sense of local identity and placemaking. Other recent examples might include the redevelopment of the riverfront areas in Providence, Rhode Island, or even Millennium Park in Chicago.

The over-arching goal would be to enhance and highlight not the streetscape itself, but the spectacular views and open spaces that are the real glory of the site, including the historic and heroic man-made landscape of the Fort, and the prominent natural topography of the site with its granite outcroppings. The plan in fact attempts to build around and showcase those natural features which can give even ordinary urban blocks a rather special feel related to the character of the entire peninsula. In particular, Parcel 4A, with its varied elevations and topography, its dramatic views over the Fort and the river, and its complicated history, is recommended for a relatively open treatment, with a few commercial buildings, restaurants and other elements, that could serve the area of the Fort and future uses, but which have a more park-like relationship to the site and to each other.

Other featured open spaces, in addition to the Riverwalk as a linking element providing continuous public access along the water, would include the “Green” in front of the hotel, providing a publically accessible front lawn to the hotel, with its waterfront terraces to the east, and spilling down to the water at its northern end, receiving the new pedestrian bridge and serving as a front yard to the entire site. This Green has its own large rock outcropping, which could serve as the centerpiece for a landscaped turnaround providing access to the porte-cochere of the hotel.

At the southern end of the site, the wonderful lawn that links the Fort to its immediate waterfront is already a valued public amenity and venue for events, now part of the State Park. The plan recommends relocation of the maintenance building serving the Park, and eventual development of a new building on Parcel 4B, the eastern façade of which would align with East Street and provide an attractive backdrop to the sweep of the open park landscape along the southern edge of the site.

This lawn, with Fort Trumbull looming above as a commanding presence, is the recommended site for a new permanent band shell, the form of which might evoke the memory of the striking structure that was part of the former Naval Underwater Sound Laboratory.



5. ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

Anchors and Fabric

An effective and coordinated district plan is based on elements that play a crucial role beyond their immediate function. It should also establish a clear hierarchy that produces a coherent and legible local order in relation to infrastructure, views and patterns of movement and use. Therefore, this plan identifies certain elements as anchors in relation to the important, but more background role played by buildings and streetscape that together constitute the fabric of the district. Anchors have to serve both a structural and a catalytic purpose in relation to the overall plan. Structurally, they function as beacons or landmarks that give the district visibility and identity, as well as shaping or terminating local vistas and creating memorable places. This site already has an obvious visual anchor of the strongest possible kind: Fort Trumbull itself which has already given its name to the area and should always be featured and deferred to in any future development. But anchors also must function as catalysts for economic development and local activity, in very much the same way that anchor stores in shopping centers support the smaller stores, which may not themselves, be destinations. The “fabric” of a shopping center is thus the collection of small shops, kiosks, and décor

that create and in turn benefit from the spaces of transition and connection between the anchors, and by the same token, the fabric of a well-designed urban district or neighborhood must shape and define the streets, sidewalks, and public spaces of the area. Of course any use – a unique shop, a popular restaurant – can become a destination, just as any ordinary building or streetscape might have a special feature – a bay window or turret, an unusual sign or prominent tree – that becomes a local landmark, so this is not a hard and fast distinction, but rather a useful way to structure a discussion of the uses proposed by this and previous plans with reference to their role and responsibility in a comprehensive urban design for Fort Trumbull.

A note about the format of this section: in the following pages multiple options for each type of anchor and fabric are illustrated in the plan images on the left-hand pages. In most cases, these first illustrate the scheme preferred by this Plan, but will also illustrate additional options below which were discussed by the steering committee and the community.



Preferred Option. A destination conference / resort hotel on parcel 1A/1B could take advantage of excellent views across the Thames and north to downtown, access to the waterfront for recreation and boating, proximity to the Riverwalk, and direct pedestrian link to downtown via a new pedestrian bridge or water taxi, effectively making the facility a downtown waterfront hotel. Parking could be provided by valet in one of Fort Trumbull's central garages. Below: aerial view of hotel and pier, and view up Nameaug Street towards hotel.



Anchor: Resort Hotel and Conference Center

Of all the proposed uses for Fort Trumbull, the new use that seems to have the greatest potential to add both vitality and identity, as well as direct revenue to the area and to the city as a whole, a small, but distinctive resort hotel, possibly with a spa and/or conference center is the one that seems most immediately realizable. Initially, a hotel for Fort Trumbull was seen as an accessory use that served and was mainly supported by business uses on the site, particularly Pfizer and other future research-based uses that might need space for visitors and visiting employees. That sort of hotel would in all likelihood be operated by a national chain, with both short-stay and long-stay rooms available and some modest meeting facilities. While not ruling out that version of a Fort Trumbull hotel, this plan, in light of current and possible future economic conditions and patterns of development, but especially taking into consideration the nature of the available site, also recommends the exploration of a more individual waterfront resort hotel. This hotel would quite possibly be a boutique hotel, insofar as it is owned and operated by an independent company or individual, and has an image that, rather than connecting it to a well-known brand, establishes its distinct and local identity in relation to Fort Trumbull, but also with reference to the well-established tradition of New England seaside hotels.

Such a hotel, with as many as 200-250 rooms as suggested in the MDP, but perhaps with fewer depending on market conditions as determined by prospective developers, and in any case, with a variety of rooms, suites and even free-standing cottages, would function mainly as a destination for visitors to the New London area, even as an attractive alternative to the casino hotels to the north, but certainly providing a base for visitors to

Fort Trumbull, New London, Groton and Mystic, and other local destinations. It would also cater to meetings and events, such as board meetings, weddings, family reunions and, in general, the sort of occasion that calls for not simply convenience, but also comfort and style. On the model of similar waterfront facilities, such as Water's Edge in Westbrook Connecticut, it could also include a spa, health club and even small shops. The former would also take advantage of the available waterfront walks, jogging and biking routes, and possibly the commercial recreational facilities proposed for Parcels 5C1 and 5C2 on the west side of Howard Street. In addition, new and existing marinas could provide opportunities for boating and other water-based activities. It should certainly include one or more restaurants and bars that take full advantage of the location and views, with gracious terraces, porches and balconies relating the interior spaces and uses to the water.

Of course all of this is suggestive of a strong architectural image for the hotel, that could be realized in a variety of styles and materials, but should include elements that consistently respond to the opportunities of the waterfront site. A hotel of this sort on Parcel 1A at the northern end of the site not only becomes a powerful anchor for the whole Fort Trumbull area, but also a beacon for the New London waterfront, visible from the downtown, from the water, from the train, and even from Groton and the highway bridge. Obviously, this hotel will be some distance from the highway itself, and while visitors arriving by train or ferry could be shuttled to the hotel by minibuses or even more dramatically by water taxi, most will drive and should have the option of leaving their cars, or having them valet parked, in structured parking in Fort Trumbull area



Preferred Option: Parcel 4B. A water related cultural facility such as the National Coast Guard Museum could be located on part of parcel 4B adjacent to the lower lawn of the State Park. In this location, the building could take on a pier like form, and its broad side would face the lawn, forming a large outdoor room with the Coast Guard bandshell and Fort Trumbull itself. Parking for the facility could be located directly across the street, and the adjacent marina could be redeveloped as a private marina or could also become a part of the project. Across the street on the site of the former Kelo house, an observation tower would provide a view of the facility, lawn, bandshell and out to the water, and a small bridge from this location could provide access directly into the cultural facility. In this location the State park and new facility become a significant anchor to the southern part of the peninsula.



Alternate 1: Parcel 1A with Hotel. One alternative would be co-location of the cultural facility with the hotel on Parcel 1A. In this location, synergies could be developed between the two building programs through sharing of elements like a conference center or meeting rooms.



Alternate 2: Parcel 4A. A third option is to locate the facility on parcel 4A, directly across from the entry to the State Park. The advantage of this site is that it would be difficult to otherwise develop in the private market because of its proximity to the sewage treatment plant, steep topography, and projecting granite ledge. The facility and the State park have synergies and could be mutually supporting when located adjacent to each other.

Anchor: Cultural Institution

In addition to Fort Trumbull itself and its outstanding Visitor Center and exhibits, it has been recognized for some time that there is a significant opportunity for an additional cultural institution that would specifically relate to the waterfront site and the wider history of Fort Trumbull. Such an institution would be an additional magnet and anchor for development and visitors to the area, and together with the Fort, the marinas and piers and the waterfront itself, could provide a critical mass of destination attractions that would in turn support restaurants, shops and other commercial activity, not to mention the proposed hotel.

There are a number of possible scenarios for such an institution, including, but not limited to, a lighthouse museum, but the most compelling match for the site and its history would be the proposed Coast Guard Museum, to be developed as a partnership of public and private initiative. Not only was Fort Trumbull the original home of the Coast Guard Academy, now on its own site further north in New London, but easily accessible from the area, the opportunities to exhibit historic vessels, interact with exhibitions and activities at the Fort, and occupy a site of high visibility and easy access from Downtown New London, makes this use in this area a logical and exciting option. Because of the Coast Guard's long-standing connection with New London, Congress has mandated that if a Coast Guard Museum is to be built, it will be in New London. An example of such a facility which has become a strong urban anchor and continues to expand is the World War II Museum in New Orleans.

There are three sites on the Fort Trumbull peninsula that have been studied as specific sites for a cultural institution of roughly 62,000 square feet. The first would be Parcel 1A in conjunction with, and possibly connected to, the proposed hotel. This site has the advantages mentioned above: high visibility from

downtown and the water, and good accessibility, especially if a new pedestrian bridge is constructed to link to the downtown waterfront. A museum on this site could also share facilities with the hotel, including meeting rooms and food service.

The second site studied was Parcel 4A, where a museum would have a direct and exceptional relationship to Fort Trumbull, as well as good visibility from the highest point on the peninsula and spectacular views. Parking could be shared with the Fort, and a new parking structure could be easily hidden at the low southwestern corner of the site. On the other hand, the very topography that makes the site so powerful might be compromised by a significant structure on this particular site, although a museum could be carefully designed in such a way as to preserve and take advantage of the topography. Finally, while the controversial associations of this site might be seen as an obstacle, a significant and handsome public institution might be seen as honoring and serving the entire history of the site.

Finally, the potential of Parcel 4B was also studied in relation to the siting of a new cultural institution. It has many of the same advantages of Parcel 4A, but with a direct waterfront location. A building along the eastern edge of this parcel would be highly visible from the water to the south, combining with the Fort to create a strong composition at the approach to New London Harbor, as well as framing the southwestern end of the great sloping lawn running down from the Fort to the water's edge. It could be compatible with the continued operation of a commercial marina on the site, or take advantage of the entire site for outdoor programs and exhibits. As with Parcel 4A, structured parking could be provided at the corner of Smith and Trumbull Streets.



Preferred Option: At intersection of Walbach Street and Nameaug Street Extension. In this option, the station could be built with minimal expense and maximum impact. The underpass along Walbach Street could be used to provide access to platforms on either side, and a small pavilion for tickets could be located on either side of the tracks. Parking could be provided in proposed central garages either on site 3C or the municipal lot diagonally across the street from the station.



Alternate 1: Near Hamilton Street. An alternative commuter platform location would be at the end of Hamilton Street. This location would have better proximity to the hotel site, and a bridge could find secondary use as a public way of crossing the tracks to Fort Trumbull. A station here might also stimulate development in the Hamilton Street area where the Minor and Alexander site stands.

Anchor: Train Station

As discussed above under the heading of Public Transportation Opportunities, a new commuter rail platform serving Fort Trumbull would provide another strong anchor for the area and make the entire development, including Electric Boat, immediately transit-oriented. Together with the current downtown Amtrak station in the historic building by renowned architect H.H. Richardson, this would make New London as a whole one of the best served small cities in New England with respect to public transit. While a new commuter

platform should no doubt be kept simple in terms of facilities, with north and south bound platforms, and perhaps a small ticket office with restrooms, it could also sponsor a beacon of some sort, such as distinctive signage identifying Fort Trumbull, or more ambitiously, a vertical element such as clock tower. It would also no doubt sponsor and support some local retail activity directed at commuters as well as at local residents and people working in the area.



Preferred Option: At Fort Trumbull State Park Southern Lawn.

In this option the bandshell is located facing northwest on the mostly flat lawn at the south edge of Fort Trumbull State Park. This location has the benefit of being scenic, with views of the Thames and Groton beyond the bandshell, and has a large space for gathering including the hill going up to the Fort itself. Performances here would be somewhat removed from residential areas, minimizing disturbances, and also somewhat remote from train noise. Having the bandshell in the State Park could also provide a greater audience for the Park facility itself and the shell could be co-programmed for other kinds of events. If the National Coast Guard Museum located on site 4B, additional synergies could develop within this zone.

Siting would be perfect for evening concerts with the sun at the audience's back. The design of the bandshell might recall the futuristic testing structure once part of the Underwater Sound Lab on this site (image below: sound lab in 1989, Historic American Building Survey)



Alternate 1: Parcel 1B.

A second location for the bandshell would be adjacent to a resort/conference hotel. At this location the views beyond the bandshell would be to downtown which could provide a dramatic backdrop, especially at sunset. The shell could take advantage of open space provided to the west of the hotel facility. Issues with this location include the noise of passing trains, and the potential disturbance caused to hotel guests.

Anchor: Band Shell

Distinctively designed and sited band shells, such as the Hatch Band Shell on the Boston Esplanade along the Charles River, where the Boston Pops Orchestra plays, can become significant local landmarks and generators of public activity. With the Coast Guard Band playing summer concert(s), New London and Fort Trumbull already have a resource of considerable local and regional interest and a permanent band shell on the Fort Trumbull site would give that activity a highly visible address. Two possible sites were studied for this anchor including Parcel 1B at the northern end of the site, where a band shell would be highly visible and

more readily accessible from the downtown area, and ornament the public lawn of the proposed hotel. The preferred site, as discussed above under Streetscape and Open Space, is the waterfront of Fort Trumbull State Park at the southern end of the peninsula, also a site of great visibility and exceptional views, already familiar to concert goers, and perhaps better suited by its topography than parcel 4B to accommodate large crowds of people seated on the ground. As also mentioned above, the design of a band shell on this site might recall the futuristic structure that was part of the former Naval Underwater Sound Laboratory.





Preferred Option: Parcel 2A, 2B, 2C, and 3B. At the time of the writing of this report, the development of 80 semi-detached residential units on these parcels was ongoing.



Option: Parcel 3C, Mixed Use. Additional residential in the form of live-work units could be provided above commercial space on parcel 3C. Parking could be provided in an adjacent garage.



Option: Parcel 4B, Mid Rise. Parcel 4B could be developed as a marina-related waterfront residential mid-rise tower. Because of the low elevation, the ground floor would be in the flood plain, so residential units could not start until the second or third floor. Parking could be provided on site or in an adjacent garage.

Fabric: Residential

The approved Municipal Development Plan limits residential redevelopment in the Fort Trumbull area to 80 units. In addition to the limits imposed by the MDP, which can be adjusted with the approval of the NLDC and State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, there is the additional consideration of evacuation of the peninsula in the event of a major storm event. Since residential development is the stuff of which most successful and lively mixed-use districts are now being made in urban areas, it is the recommendation of this plan that, as development of the area proceeds, additional residential units be considered insofar as they can be safely accommodated by new and existing infrastructure and in support of the overall economic development goals for the area. These can take the form of either conventional units, live-work type units, which are both business and residential space, swing space in the upper floors of commercial buildings (see below) which could be designed as loft space amenable to office or live-work use, and possibly long-stay units in the proposed hotel. This kind of mixed-use development would ultimately support the conventional business uses projected for the area and help to make the sort of lively 24/7 neighborhood that is safe, attractive and, in particular, works well for contemporary urban retail, restaurant and cultural development.

As this plan is being finalized, Riverbank Construction are developing plans for building at

least all 80 units allowed by the MDP on parcels 2A, 2C and 3B (and possibly more depending on the ruling of DEEP regarding expansion). These are being designed to moderate urban density and in a way intended to evoke some of the historic urban neighborhoods of Downtown New London, including on-street parking and garages in back of the street-oriented units. A small amount of ground floor retail space along Walbach Street is also included in the plans.

However, in the absence of additional adjacent development, the limited extent of this development and the lack of any immediate context other than the Fort and an unrelated existing office building on Parcel 3A, this encouraging new project would initially, at least, float in space both visually and programmatically. Therefore, this plan attempts to situate the proposed project in a supportive and compatible urban context, determined in part by the project itself, in part by the additional development anticipated in earlier plans, and in large part by the positive vision of a coherent, pedestrian-friendly, and well-connected urban neighborhood that will make this and any future residential development sustainable over time. However attractive the units, and however desirable the scenery and amenities of the site, residential development at Fort Trumbull should function not as isolated suburban-style development or orphaned housing in the midst of unrelated commercial uses, but as fully integrated, street-oriented urban fabric.



Preferred Option: Parcel 3C, Mixed Use. In this option, a street-oriented perimeter of mixed use buildings surrounds a parking garage at the center of the block, taking advantage of the blocks great depth. The perimeter buildings could contain ground floor restaurants, shopping, and professional offices, contributing to the street life of the area, while the upper floors could contain offices, live-work, or apartments depending on the market conditions. Open plaza space between the garage and perimeter buildings could host outdoor seasonal farmers markets or outdoor restaurant seating. The granite ledge at the southeast corner of the parcel could be preserved with a rockery and stairs constructed on top as part of the opens space network of the peninsula.



Preferred Option: Parcel 5C1 and 5C2, Indoor Recreation and Office. Indoor athletic uses such as a hockey rink, indoor tennis courts, and health club could take immediate advantage of this large site and are an under-served market in the area. This facility could serve guests of the resort/conference hotel at Fort Trumbull as well as a local and regional audience, and could and provide a badly-needed street facade along Howard Street at the gateway to Fort Trumbull. If ultimately the office market returns, the site could be redeveloped for office use.



Preferred Option: Parcel 4A, Restaurants & Retail. Development of this site is made difficult by the amount of granite ledge projecting above the ground and street level at the north and center of the site, and proximity to the Water & Water Pollution Control Authority (WWPCA) treatment facility. Development of themed retail and shopping buildings at the perimeter of the block around a core of open public space, focused on the natural granite topography, could find synergies with Fort Trumbull State Park across the street and the cultural facility, if located just south on Parcel 4A. The interior of the block could be used for outdoor dining and arts or performance space.

Fabric: Commercial

As in the case of residential development, this plan recommends that future commercial development on the Fort Trumbull site be treated as pedestrian-friendly, street-oriented urban fabric. That means buildings which spatially define streets and blocks, with principle entrances oriented toward the street, with lively ground-floors including retail wherever feasible, and with parking occupying mid-block or marginal positions. Buildings should be interesting and appropriately scaled, with quality materials and detailing on the facades facing, or visible from, public streets and spaces. Interiors may be generic and loft-like, to accommodate a variety of uses and users, as well as inevitable change over time.

The principal site for this sort of street-oriented, mixed use development is Parcel 3C, which the plan projects as a large perimeter block accommodating buildings of varying size and shape ideally around all four sides, and with parking organized in the middle of the block, connected and buffered by attractively landscaped public space. Parcel 4A, due to its topography and special circumstances is projected as a combination of park-like public open space and free-standing commercial buildings that could be restaurants, shops and other uses related to the Fort and the proposed new cultural institution.





Preferred Option: Parcel 1B & 8A. Part of Parcel 1B, the proposed site for the resort/conference hotel includes an existing commercial fishing pier. This area could be refurbished and organized to integrate the commercial fishing activity with the life of the hotel and peninsula at large. The pier could become an attraction with the introduction of a new seafood restaurant and fish market. Commercial fishing has been successfully integrated with urban environments in other New England Cities such as Nantucket, Newport, and Cape Cod.

A new marina off the shore of Parcel 8A could contribute to the waterfront character of Fort Trumbull, and transient slips could find synergy with the hotel and residential uses in Fort Trumbull. This marina would only provide slip space and no upland support would be provided - support is available at nearby Shaw's Cove and other locations along the shore of the Thames River.



Preferred Option: Parcel 4B. The existing marina at parcel 4B off Bentley Creek, currently privately owned, could be refurbished and/or redeveloped in keeping with the maritime character of Fort Trumbull. Upland support and offices could be provided in the lowest level of a parking structure located on the adjacent parcel 4A, just north of the marina. The eastern half of parcel 4A could be redeveloped as a cultural facility or as a marina-related residential development (see other sections of this report for detail.)

Parcels 5C1 and 5C2 on the west side of Howard Street could easily be developed as additional street-oriented, mixed-use commercial space, with parking in the rear of the buildings, if sufficient demand for that space exists or emerges. The plan also considers and illustrates the use of those parcels for a commercial indoor recreational center, including tennis courts, a hockey rink or other sports facilities. In either case, it is important for these large parcels to contribute to the definition of, and activity along, Howard Street, which, as a principal approach and gateway to Fort Trumbull needs the sort of urban continuity that is currently lacking, or fragmentary, at best.

Parcels 5B and 6, along the north and south sides of Hamilton Street could also make a more significant contribution to activity and economic development in the area, as well as connecting to the Shaw's Cove area and beyond to the north end of the Fort Trumbull peninsula, as discussed above. This Plan endorses the concept of an arts district, with selective preservation and conversion of existing buildings, along with new infill development to accommodate studios, galleries, live-work space and related commercial uses.

In addition to the conventional commercial fabric, Fort Trumbull area already includes, and should continue to include and enhance, water-dependent commercial uses. New and existing marinas on Parcel 4B, and as proposed for Parcel 8A, with their support structures and uses in Shaw's Cove and elsewhere, should all be coordinated parts of a comprehensive plan, accommodating public access to the waterfront, compatible commercial activities, and an attractive, lively New England seaside image, rather than remaining isolated uses. The commercial fishing pier that is part of Parcel 1B should, in particular, continue to support that economically and symbolically important industry, but the facilities should be improved to make them more attractive and accessible to neighbors and to other uses, especially the proposed hotel and public open space on Parcel 1B. The marina on Parcel 4B, if it is to continue, should also be integrated into the plan for the area and improved either as part of waterfront mixed-use development, or as an adjacent use to the proposed cultural institution on the eastern half of that site.



6. NEXT STEPS

Plan Concept

The basic concept and goal of this plan is simple: to shape the future development of Fort Trumbull as an attractive and lively mixed-use neighborhood in the City of New London; that fulfills the economic development goals of the original project by being both productive and sustainable, while fulfilling the larger goals of the community by being accessible, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, and founded on a shared vision of the future of Fort Trumbull and the of the City. While it is intended to be compatible with the current Municipal Development Plan, it attempts to go beyond that plan in projecting an

urban design framework that is more than the sum of individual uses and parcels, and is, rather, organized around a conventional grid of streets and blocks, where buildings are not simply containers for functions, but contributing aspects of an urban neighborhood. This allows for a diversity of architecture, building types and uses as long as they all support the larger vision of human scale, walkable streets, an accessible waterfront, and a sense of place informed both by the rich and complex history of the site and the hope for a productive and inclusive future.

Acronyms used in the Matrix:

ConnDOT	Connecticut Department of Transportation
ConnDECD	Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
ConnDEEP	Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
EDC	New London Economic Development Commission
FT	Fort Trumbull
NLDC	New London Development Corporation
OPD	New London Office of Planning and Development
PW	New London Public Works
SCCOG	Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments
STIP	Connecticut State Transportation Improvement Program
US EDA	United States Economic Development Agency
FTAC	Fort Trumbull Action Committee and Design Review Board

Timing:

In Progress	Already Initiated
Immediate	Within 6-12 months
Short Term	Within 2-3 years
Mid Term	Within 3-5 years
Long Term	Within 5-10 years

Next Steps and Phasing

It is essential to maintain the continuity and momentum of the collaborative process that has led to the creation of this plan. Any plan is only as good as the ongoing commitment of citizens, institutions, businesses and public officials to treat it as a living document and honor its spirit by not only actively promoting and pursuing its goals and objectives, but also interpreting and re-evaluating those goals in the light of current conditions and opportunities.

In the following pages, we have included a phasing matrix below to assist in this ongoing effort of implementing the recommendations of this report. While the matrix indicates a set of concrete goals, projected steps necessary to accomplish them, as well as initiators and partners, it is provisional and based on the collective understanding and priorities that have emerged in the course of the planning

process. Market conditions, funding opportunities, as well as the focus of citizen concern are constantly changing and need to be closely monitored. Indeed, the City and other participants in this planning process should commit to formally revisit and review this plan at least every year, and provide updates as needed. The proposed Fort Trumbull Action Committee and Design Review Board should also meet on a regular basis, to monitor progress, develop and pursue strategies for outreach and publicity, and track specific project development.

For the purposes of this plan, the terminology used in the matrix and elsewhere will refer to “immediate” action items as having a 6-12 month time frame, “short-term” is roughly 1-3 years, “mid-term” 3-5 years, and “long-term” is 5-10 years.

GOAL	ACTION	TIMING
Connecting to New London		
Pedestrian Bridge	Initiate discussions with Amtrak and ConnDOT about the possibility of a operable or connected bridge to downtown across Shaw's Cove	Immediate
	Investigate and obtain funding for bridge from Federal, State and Local sources. Develop design for marketing, PR and fundraising	Short Term
	Build Bridge	Mid Term
Improve Howard Street Corridor	Investigate opportunities for modifying Howard Street to a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment, using a "complete streets" concept	Immediate
	Reconstruct Howard / Bank Street Intersection	In Progress
	Develop and implement short term improvements to Howard Street Corridor (e.g., bicycle lanes)	Immediate
	Reconstruct Howard Street to "complete street"	Long Term
Better connect Fort Trumbull to Downtown with bicycle connections	Develop continuous and safe bicycle route along Howard St and Bank St. Coordinate with "Choices for New London: Neighborhood Planning Strategy" by the Cecil Group, Oct 2010	Immediate
Establish a commuter rail station at Fort Trumbull	Explore the option for a commuter rail platform or station in Fort Trumbull with ConnDOT and Amtrak	Short Term
	If approved, proceed with design and construction	Long Term
Develop a seasonal water taxi network	Explore and develop a feasibility study of a publicly or privately operated water taxi network	Immediate
	Issue RFP for private operators or develop system with SEAT or other municipal agency	Short Term

PRINCIPAL INITIATOR	PRINCIPAL PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCES	NOTES
City of New London City Council with CT and U.S. Reps/Senators and support of City of New London ODP, FTAC	NLDC, ConnDECD, ConnDOT, Amtrak	n/a	Discussions with Amtrak could be initiated from the Federal legislative level; See page 25 for additional discussion of the bridge
City of New London City Council with CT and U.S. Reps/Senators and support of City of New London ODP, FTAC	NLDC, ConnDECD, US EDA	SCCOG planning funding, Federal, State, Local funds	A freestanding bridge could be a signature waterfront element and should be designed to take advantage of views
City of New London ODP, FTAC	NLDC, ConnDECD, US EDA	Federal, State, Local funds, STIP	Investigate funding from multimodal transit funds
City of New London City Council and OPD, Public Works, FTAC	ConnDOT, SCCOG	SCCOG planning funding, Local, State Funds	Should include a review of street widths, traffic speeds, safe bike lanes, and pedestrian streetscape. See also page 29
City of New London ODP / Public Works, FTAC	ConnDOT, SCCOG	Local, State Funds	See also page 29
City of New London ODP / Public Works, FTAC			
		Local, State Funds, STIP	
City of New London ODP, Public Works, FTAC	Bike New London	Local Funds	Should be developed as part of a comprehensive, city-wide bicycle lane program, See page 29
City of New London City Council with CT and U.S. Reps/Senators and support of City of New London ODP, FTAC	NLDC, ConnDECD, ConnDOT, Amtrak, FT Stakeholders	n/a	See also page 31
ConnDOT, FTAC	NLDC, City of New London OPD	Federal, State, Local funds, STIP	
City of New London ODP, Port Authority, FTAC	ConnDOT, Southeast Area Transit District, NLDC		A water taxi could provide immediate improved access with little cost, see also page 31
City of New London ODP, Port Authority, FTAC	ConnDOT, Southeast Area Transit District, NLDC	Public-Private Partnership	

GOAL	ACTION	TIMING
Develop a Shaw's Cove multimodal trail connecting downtown with Fort Trumbull	Explore possibilities of a trail with private land owners abutting Shaw's Cove and explore sources of funding for trail design and construction	Immediate
	Design and construct multimodal trail	Short Term

Development

Develop 80 units of housing	Design and Construct Housing	In Progress
Develop Transient Boaters Marina off Parcel 8A	Select Developer and proceed with development	In Progress
Develop Hotel at Fort Trumbull	Issue expanded RFP for Hotel Developers	Immediate
	Proceed with development and construction of Hotel	Short Term
Redevelop the commercial fishing pier, retaining the fishing fleet but creating a publicly accessible area with fish market and restaurant	Explore redevelopment of the Fishing Pier with current fishing fleet leaseholder; Issue RFP for redevelopment of the pier as partnership with current leaseholder.	Immediate
	Redevelop Pier	Short Term
Develop indoor athletic uses on parcel 5C	Issue RFP for development of 5C	Immediate
	Develop 5C	Short Term
Locate and Develop structured parking within Fort Trumbull	Explore possibility of public or private development of garage facility independent of other uses. Identify site for parking garage	Immediate
	Investigate funding sources for garage facility, perhaps in conjunction with cultural facility, commuter platform, Electric Boat, Hotel Developer, or other private development. Issue RFP for garage developer or initiate public development process	Short Term
	Design and Construct Garage	Mid Term
Develop Hamilton Street as a mixed use arts corridor	Review current zoning and explore changes to allow arts-related live work uses. If necessary, create zoning overlay. Explore public infrastructure improvements and environmental contamination issues.	Immediate
	Work with property owners or acquire property to pursue Arts District development	Short Term

PRINCIPAL INITIATOR	PRINCIPAL PARTNER	FUNDING SOURCES	NOTES
City of New London ODP, FTAC	Private Property Owners, NLDC	n/a	See also page 29
City of New London ODP/PW, FTAC	Private Property Owners, NLDC	Local, State Funds, ConnDOT RT funds	

Riverbank Construction, NLDC, FTAC		Private	See also pages 46-47
NLDC/Private Developer, FTAC		Private	See also pages 48-51
NLDC, New London EDC, FTAC			See also pages 38-39
NLDC/Private Developer, FTAC	New London EDC	Private	
NLDC, City of New London EDC, OPD, FTAC			See also pages 48-51
NLDC/Private Developer, FTAC	New London EDC	Private	
NLDC, New London EDC, FTAC	New London EDC		See also pages 48-51
NLDC/Private Developer, FTAC	New London EDC	Private	
NLDC, City of New London ODP, Parking Commission, FTAC	ConnDOT		See also pages 32-33
NLDC, City of New London ODP, Parking Commission, FTAC	ConnDOT, Developers		
Selected development agent, FTAC	NLDC, City of New London ODP, Parking Commission	Public-Private partnership	
City of New London ODP, New London Landmarks, FTAC	NLDC, Property Owners, Private Developers, New London EDC	US EPA Brownfields	See also pages 48-51
City of New London ODP, New London Landmarks, FTAC	NLDC, Property Owners, Private Developers, New London EDC	Private	See also pages 48-51

<i>GOAL</i>	<i>ACTION</i>	<i>TIMING</i>
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Other Goals

Market the entire Fort Trumbull area to attract businesses, residents, tourists	Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for Fort Trumbull	Immediate
Construct a Coast Guard Bandshell at Fort Trumbull	Explore bandshell concept with US Coast Guard, ConnDEEP. Explore funding and management structure	Short Term
	Develop design and construct bandshell	Mid Term
Develop more intensive programming and Marketing for Fort Trumbull State Park		Immediate
Develop a heritage trail linking historic sites in the region		Short Term
Establish a Fort Trumbull Action Committee and Design Review Board	Establish committee, appoint and charge members with stewardship of the master plan	Immediate

<i>PRINCIPAL INITIATOR</i>	<i>PRINCIPAL PARTNER</i>	<i>FUNDING SOURCES</i>	<i>NOTES</i>
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NLDC, City of New London EDC, FTAC	City of New London, NLDC, ConnDEEP, Chamber of Commerce , Stillman Organization and other site developers, current property owner	Private, Local, and State funds	The New London EDC could take a central role in coordinating the marketing of all aspects of Fort Trumbull
City of New London City Council, FTAC	US Coast Guard, ConnDEEP, private Coast Guard organizations, ConnDECD	Private, Local, State, and Federal funds	See also page 44-45
City of New London, ConnDEEP, FTAC			
City of New London, FTAC	ConnDECD, ConnDEEP		
City of New London P&Z / City Council	New London Landmarks, NLDC		The Fort Trumbull Action Committee should become the stewards of this plan, coordinating its recommendations and advocating for its goals



7. CONCLUSION

Many options were studied as part of this Plan. After careful consideration of these options, the drawing shown at left illustrates the preferred version of the overall Plan. This drawing describes what a fully built-out Fort Trumbull might look like in 20 years. This includes:

- A new, signature, freestanding pedestrian bridge connecting downtown with Fort Trumbull
- A multiuse trail around Shaw's Cove, connecting under the railroad bridge to Parcel 1B
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along Howard Street and Bank Street linking to downtown
- A signature, New England style conference/resort hotel on parcel 1A/B
- A revitalized commercial fishing pier with fish restaurant and market off Parcel 1B
- A transient marina off parcel 8A
- Residential development on Parcels 2A/B/C and 3B
- Mixed use development on parcel 3C with parking in the center of the block, either structured or surface depending on whether other centralized parking is provided
- A new Fort Trumbull central parking garage on the WWPCA corner of Walbach and Nameaug with ground floor commercial
- Restaurant and Retail related to the State Park and Cultural Facility, parking for the cultural facility and marina, an observation tower on the former Kelo site, and a bridge to the cultural facility on parcel 4A
- An international caliber water-related cultural facility on the east half of Parcel 4B, with a major facade looking out onto the south lawn at Fort Trumbull State Park
- A Coast Guard Bandshell on the South Lawn of Fort Trumbull State Park facing back towards the Fort and the Cultural Facility
- A revitalized marina on the west half of Parcel 4B
- Relocation of the State Park maintenance building to open up the south lawn of the state park between the cultural facility and band shell
- An indoor athletic facility on parcels 5C1 and 5C2 with a small office building at the south end
- A new commuter rail platform at the corner of Walbach and Nameaug Streets
- Street facing, mixed use development on Parcel J





APPENDIX A: REFERENCES

The Cecil Group, Milone and MacBroom, et al.

Action Plan: Choices for New London: Neighborhood Planning Strategy. October 2010. Available online at <http://newlondonlandmarks.org/docs/Final%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

Milone and McBroom, RKG Associates, Diversivied Technology, et. al. *Fort Trumbull Municipal Development Plan*. Draft dated August 1999 with addenda, originally adopted by New London City Council, January 18, 2000.

Minutes for all meetings held as part of this planning proces are on file with the City of New London

APPENDIX B: CHARRETTE SCHEMES

These following schemes were developed by groups of public participants as part of the Charrette held on April 2, 2011 at the Fort Trumbull State Park Conference Center.





