

PLACEMAKING

ON THE MIDDLETOWN RIVERFRONT

FINAL REPORT
JANUARY 2014



A PLACEMAKING PLAN FOR THE MIDDLETOWN RIVERFRONT

FINAL REPORT

PREPARED FOR
THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT
&
THE RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

PREPARED BY



JANUARY 2014

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The Middletown Riverfront

INTRODUCTION

The Middletown riverfront is at an important turning point. Long industrialized, hidden by Route 9 and hard to reach, this beautiful shoreline on the Connecticut River is poised to become a well-loved community gathering space and a lively regional destination. The City of Middletown appointed a Riverfront Redevelopment Committee to seize this propitious moment to plan for the future of the riverfront and invited Project for Public Spaces, Inc. (PPS) to assist in the process. PPS was asked to engage the community in a discussion about placemaking on the riverfront and, based on community input, to develop recommendations for transforming its public spaces. The study area was defined as stretching from Harbor Park in the north to Silver Street in the south, taking into account the need to look at connections back to the city, its downtown, nearby residential neighborhoods and the Wesleyan campus. This report describes the concepts PPS cultivated through a participatory placemaking process of visioning, gathering ideas and information, examining details and feasibility in close collaboration with the Committee, the community and key stakeholders.

An unusual confluence of events has brought the riverfront to this moment in time:

- The Peterson Oil storage facility closed and was purchased and cleared by the City of Middletown;
- The Middletown Waste Treatment Plant will be decommissioned in the next two-three years as the new regional Water Pollution Control Facility in Cromwell is completed and begins to serve Middletown;

- The federal Environmental Protection Agency is conducting soil remediation of the OMO site, which is expected to be completed in the next few years;
- A developer is interested in transforming the Jackson Corrugated Container Corporation site into a residential community;
- The Connecticut Department of Transportation is looking at rebuilding the Route 17 ramp onto Route 9, with the added benefit of transforming the entrance to Middletown's riverfront;

The City of Middletown is wise to use this timely opportunity to consider the future of its valuable riverfront and its role in the community, and to begin to take immediate steps to build excitement and engage partners in transforming the riverfront into a great destination with a series of exciting places strategically situated along it.

Over the past few decades, shipping and industry have left waterfronts, making cities around the world rethink what to do in these prime locations—the birthplaces, in most cases, as in Middletown, of the cities themselves. As humans, we are naturally drawn to explore the water's edge, which makes it deeply disappointing when all we find there is a highway, fenced-off industrial facilities or, just as bad, a gated residential development or underused park. Making the transition from a working waterfront to a vibrant, attractive destination and public gathering place is full of challenges, be it providing public access or identifying the activities best suited to a particular community. Because it is so central to the life of the community, representing so many competing claims about

its history and its future, the process of figuring out what is important and how the riverfront should be developed is an opportunity for a breakthrough in how people in that place think of themselves. Such a project opens up the debate about the soul of a city for all to see. Will the city stay on the familiar course of standard-issue condos, and parking lot and road construction, or will it assert its values as a community and uphold the essential public-ness of the waterfront by creating a gathering place that attracts and inspires all?

Middletown boldly chose the latter direction and embarked on a waterfront project that puts the public character first, considering the nature of the public spaces ahead of private development or car-centric construction. In undertaking a Placemaking Plan, the City and its residents have chosen an approach that is rooted in community participation, listening and talking to the people in the community who want to revive the riverfront as a central focus of the City and who want to work, live, recreate or play there. In addition, making the riverfront come alive depends on building strong local partnerships and allowing, indeed, urging, a wide variety of organizations to participate in activating the place. The placemaking process ensures that potential partners not only voice their ideas, but also are invited to stay involved to help implement them.

As places, waterfronts play a primal role in our hearts and, because they are perceived as belonging to everyone, they almost magically bring people of different backgrounds, races and cultures together, emphasizing their connectedness rather than their differences. Waterfronts are among the most

important public spaces in building social capital, defined by Robert Putnam in his 2001 book, *Bowling Alone*, as the “connections among individuals, and the social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” Middletown has an unusually diverse community and through this placemaking process it was often stressed that the riverfront must be for all. The nature of placemaking as an ongoing pursuit which requires the continuous involvement of the community, not only in visioning and planning, but in growing the places, will help to ensure that everyone feels welcome and plays a role in making Middletown a great public destination.

Since our goal in this placemaking process is to create a great public destination on the river, it is essential to start with a clear understanding of the activities that should occur there and to ensure that both programming and the proposed design changes are done in a way that supports these activities. The great waterfronts of the world are lively, exciting and distinctive places because they function well and offer many reasons for a variety of people to use them in different ways. Working in an open process with city leadership and staff, the Riverfront Redevelopment Committee, and a wide variety of stakeholders, partners, and state agencies, PPS and the Riverfront Redevelopment Committee have developed an exciting and enticing plan for the Middletown riverfront. This report looks both at the overall goals and on the uses and activities needed to create distinct places along the river, addressing both the short and long-term future of these places.



The Connecticut River in Middletown

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE

The principles of what makes a great place were used to guide the discussions, public workshops and stakeholder meetings:

ACTIVITIES AND USES

Good community places are full of home-grown activities that act as the glue of their communities, drawing people to them for companionship and relaxation. Examples might be a Saturday market, bake sales, a playground, a community garden, or a café. A healthy variety of such uses will attract a variety of people to the riverfront at all times of day, week or year who want to be plugged into their community – both through organized programs and through spontaneous interaction with a lively network of users.

ACCESS AND LINKAGES

A good place is visible and easy to get to. People need to see that there is something to do and that others have been enticed to be there. Physical barriers can also be a tremendous obstacle: a street or highway that is too wide or dangerous will discourage people from reaching the place. A lack of public transportation or pedestrian-friendly sidewalks will also prohibit many people who want to get there without cars from visiting.

COMFORT AND IMAGE

Good places attract people through well-designed amenities, such as seating, shade trees, bike racks, and information kiosks, and also through good management that keeps sidewalks clean, landscape cared for and the area safe. Details such as these can tantalize—they signal that someone took the time and energy to design facilities

that are welcoming and respond to the unique needs of the community.

SOCIABILITY

A sociable place is one where people want to go to watch the scene, meet friends and interact with a wide range of people who are different from themselves. Sociability is achieved by working together with the unique, local assets that can be found in all communities, and then combining the above ingredients to make a great place.



THE PLACEMAKING PROCESS

PPS' Placemaking Process is grounded in community participation. The goal of Placemaking is to create great public spaces AND enrich the lives of the community, so our methodology for making places aims to build and nurture community engagement both through the process and its outcome. Thus, the Middletown community was asked to participate in the process in a variety of ways.

PPS kicked off its collaboration with Middletown at an introductory discussion with the Riverfront Redevelopment Committee in July 2013 where the goals and process for the project were discussed and refined. That meeting was followed by eight focus groups held in late July and early August with over seventy stakeholders representing: city government, staff and neighboring municipalities; recreation and education; water-related uses; the environment; cultural arts; transportation; and, tourism and economic development. The focus groups were intended to gather specific information and ideas, and to help PPS understand how the riverfront currently functions, what the needs of stakeholders are, and the breadth of possibilities for programming, activities and events. Other stakeholders, such as property owners, interested developers, and state and federal agency representatives, were also interviewed individually, in person and by phone, over the course of the project. (See the Appendix for the list of stakeholders who attended the focus groups or were interviewed individually.)

Using the information collected in these initial meetings, PPS prepared and conducted two community Placemaking workshops, hosted by the City of Middletown, on October

3rd and 5th, a Thursday evening and a Saturday morning. The workshops were each attended by over 70 people, including community residents, representatives of non-profits, Wesleyan students and faculty, rowing coaches and enthusiasts, and other members of the community. The City's Transit Agency, MAT, provided transportation with buses allowing groups of workshop participants to evaluate various sites along the riverfront. PPS used its tested "Place Performance Evaluation Game" to focus the discussion and help participants evaluate existing sites all along the riverfront and propose improvements and programs, as well as brainstorm ideas for entirely new public spaces.

Using the recommendations and ideas from the focus groups, interviews and workshops, PPS developed an initial program of uses and diagrams illustrating the major "places" and activities on the riverfront. The initial program was presented to the Riverfront Redevelopment Committee and the public on November 20th for feedback. A more detailed concept plan and program were then developed and presented at a public meeting on January 13, 2014. This report presents the vision for the riverfront in a written format, and reflects many of the ideas and comments that we received at earlier presentations.



Mayor Drew at the Placemaking Workshop, October 2014



Placemaking Workshop, October 2014

GOALS

The goals for the future of the riverfront were clearly expressed throughout the stakeholder discussions and community workshops:

1. The Power of Ten: Create Multi-Use Destinations
2. Making Connections: Improve Access to and on the Riverfront
3. Take Me to the River: More Ways to Get Onto the Water
4. Celebrate Middletown's Historic Legacy
5. Greening the Riverfront: Engage and Educate the Public in Environmental Preservation
6. Increase Opportunities for Tourism and Economic Development
7. Add Cultural Venues for Performing and Visual Arts
8. Start Now: Lighter Quicker Cheaper Interventions

THE POWER OF TEN: CREATE MULTI-USE DESTINATIONS

THE POWER OF 10+ AT MIDDLETOWN, CT

To be successful, all cities need great destinations and places that give them an identity, that make them interesting and dynamic, and that help attract new residents, visitors, businesses and investment. In short, they need interesting places for people to go. A place might be a main street, a town green, a downtown square, a park, a natural area, or an entire riverfront. Towns and cities of any size should have at least ten great destinations where people want to be. And each of those destinations should have at least ten things to do. This “Power of Ten” concept helps us enrich places and create synergy through the layering of multiple uses, activities and features so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Applying the principles of the Power of Ten, Middletown’s Riverfront should have at least ten great destinations on it. Next, those destinations should be connected to form a compelling experience, where even a full day is not enough time to explore and experience all that the riverfront has to offer. Within each destination at least ten things to do should be clustered, along with the amenities that support these activities, to create a synergistic, vital place to be.

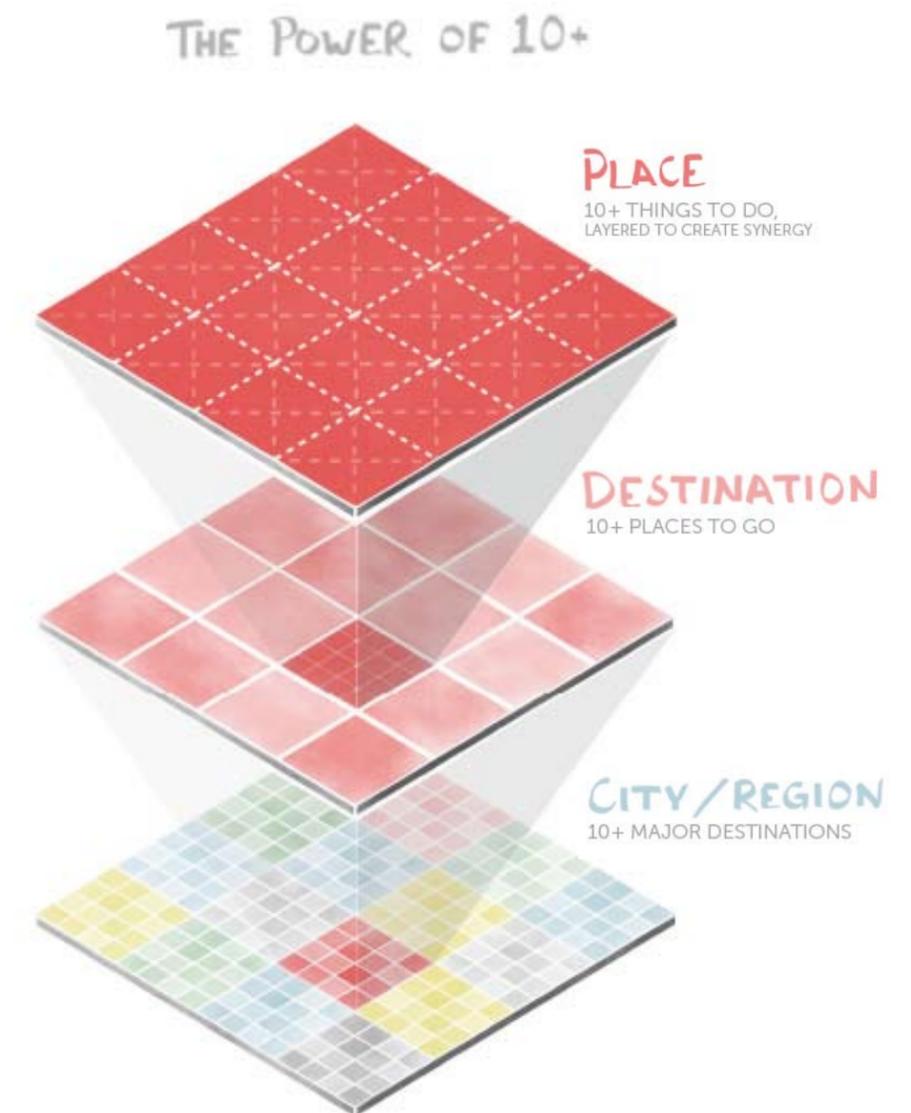
We have identified a number of such places along the riverfront that will become key multi-use destinations – Harbor Park, the Community Boathouse and Boathouse Plaza, Sumner Brook Great Lawn (at the former Peterson Site), the Waterworks (at the Waste Treatment Plant, which will be decommissioned), the OMO site, the Jackson site (at Jackson

Corrugated), River Road, and Silver Street Pier – where clusters of activities can take place all year round. For example, Harbor Park can offer a much greater variety of day-to-day activities and amenities that can appeal to a wide variety of people, and programs and events that attract thousands and that change from season to season. Seeding the park with food, providing a place for children to play, increasing the ways to get onto the water and offering comfortable places to sit and picnic with friends and family will transform it into a multi-use destination that brings people together and extends their stay in a meaningful way. Cumulatively, many such destinations will make a great riverfront.

ENHANCE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The community suggested a number of recreational activities and water uses, especially for children and youth, that could transform the Middletown riverfront into a destination even more enticing than Portland’s terrific Brownstone Park. Walking, jogging and biking should be encouraged with 5K runs and bike rental programs. Programming could expand beyond the summer months with ice skating and tubing in the winter, and birding and nature walks year-round.

Partners were identified who could assist the City in expanding its recreational resources. The YMCA, for example, would like to take advantage of its close proximity to the river to enhance its rich program offerings. A private partner could be sought to operate the recreational attractions at Waterworks (the decommissioned Waste Treatment Plant).





MAKING CONNECTIONS:

IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND ON THE RIVERFRONT

REDUCE ROUTE 9 AS A BARRIER TO THE RIVERFRONT

Access to the riverfront has been severely constrained since Route 9 was built along the river in the 1960's. A major theme of the workshops was the difficult access to the river and the desire to tackle Route 9: bury it, bridge over it or change its character. According to Connecticut Dept. of Transportation, Route 9 is unlikely to go away or be buried, because ConnDOT does not have the resources to do a Big Dig in Middletown. However, state highway departments around the country are looking at transforming many limited access highways that rip through the hearts of cities into boulevards that are connected into the urban grid and have grade crossings for pedestrians. The Westside Highway (now West Street) in Manhattan and the Embarcadero Freeway in San Francisco are well-known, successful examples. PPS has worked on several projects in New Hampshire where the NHDOT planned to "right-size" state highways to fit into small town, community-scaled contexts.

Middletown already has two traffic signals in the downtown area which cause bottle-necking along Route 9. Studies of similar situations have shown that several more traffic signals would not necessarily create more of a bottleneck than already exists with the two signals. These studies show that slowing traffic in fact reduces bottlenecks and improves flow, travel time and level of service. We understand that this concept is new, but as the riverfront becomes more important

in the life of the city, there may be more reasons to knit it into the downtown and look at Route 9 in a different way.

Bridges and Tunnels

Many workshop participants suggested building a pedestrian bridge over Route 9, possibly in combination with a new parking garage adjacent to Metro Square. While such an option is feasible, and has successful precedents (e.g. Walkway over the Hudson in Poughkeepsie, the Providence River Pedestrian Bridge), it would be very expensive to build as it might have to bridge DeKoven Street as well and would likely require elevators to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. In addition, a structure on the river side would take up much of Harbor Park.

The newly renovated tunnel under Route 9 occupies a prime location, near City Hall and Washington Street, and has a new ADA-compliant ramp. It seems more cost-effective to make the existing tunnel more attractive with artwork, particularly light art, provide video surveillance in order to keep it open later and use attractive signage, plantings and artwork to draw attention to it and help people find it.

Union Street

In addition to enhancing the attractiveness of the tunnel, Union Street—now the main vehicular route to the riverfront—should be transformed into a lovely boulevard where it would be pleasant to walk or ride a bike. It links another major downtown green space, Union Park, to the river and could be programmed during festivals to become an even stronger connection. The Recommendations section of this report

has a more complete discussion of proposed plans for Union Street.

Wayfinding Signage

Visitors and residents alike should be made aware of the riverfront's importance and how to get there from all the major Middletown corridors—especially Main Street, Route 66, South Main and the Wesleyan Campus. Attractive wayfinding signage that directs motorists and pedestrians to the river should also be tied to other media, such as websites, apps, maps of the downtown and other tourist information. This could involve, for example, creating a brand, image or logo for the riverfront, and using it on all print and digital media. Colorful banners or graphic art could also be a part of this wayfinding campaign.

BIKE TRAILS

If the Middletown riverfront became the entrance to a network of trails throughout the region, it would become a major destination for bike riders. Many towns have become tourist destinations simply because they offer excellent access to rail trails or other bike paths. Millerton, New York on the Harlem Valley Rail Trail and towns along Le Petit Train du Nord Rail Trail in Quebec, Canada near Mont Tremblant are good examples where biking has become a local economic engine. River Road may become a popular 1.5 mile bike path, but if it were extended south to East Haddam along the river, it could then connect to other popular roads used for biking. This would require an easement (or a way around) the Pratt

and Whitney Plant. To the north, if the old RR bridge over the river became a bike and pedestrian path, it could link eventually to the Airline State Park Trail, a 23 mile trail that runs between East Hampton and Lebanon, Connecticut. In 2013, the Cities of Portland and East Hampton applied for grants to help them fill the gap between East Hampton and Portland which could possibly extend the trail to the Connecticut River.

Other bike trail segments in Middletown include the 2.5 mile Mattabesett River Trolley Trail and the 2.2 mile Westlake Area Bikeway. The City of Middletown is seeking funds to create another bike trail between Wesleyan Hills and downtown Middletown. All of these trail segments could be linked and extended to the downtown and to the riverfront to create an attractive network of trails and bike lanes that would enhance Middletown and its riverfront as a destination for bike riders.

RIVERWALK/NATURE TRAIL

A path for walking and biking is proposed to run continuously along the river, a "Riverwalk" linking activities and uses like a string of pearls, but changing its character and materials depending on the context. In Harbor Park a traditional boardwalk which will remain the primary pathway for strolling, fishing, and linking the boats docked along the quay. The Riverwalk will continue on a pedestrian bridge across Sumner Brook, around the Great Lawn and through the Waterworks, providing views over the river. As it approaches Eastern Drive and the Jackson Site, it will narrow into a dirt or gravel path adjacent to the railroad track. Where the shoreline is narrow, between the river and the River Road to the east of Eastern

Drive, it may become simply a shoulder along River Road and then separate once more to become a nature trail through a restored wildlife habitat as it approaches Silver Street.

RIVER ROAD

River Road will be an important circulation spine for the riverfront, not just for cars, but for pedestrians and bike riders as well. The road should be kept narrow to calm traffic and make it a safe "shared" road for all users. North of Union Street, the road will no longer provide access to Route 9, but will offer on-street parking and dead end at Harbor Park in a roundabout. Between Eastern Drive and Silver Street, River Road should be closed to cars in the long-term and only bike riders and pedestrians be allowed, unless a trolley is introduced for special events. In the short-term, the City should consider opening it in a one-way direction to cars, and closing it on weekends, until a critical mass of bike riders and pedestrians is achieved.

PARKING AND TROLLEY

Workshop participants agreed that parking is critical for waterfront users, yet it must not visually dominate the beautiful site. Wherever possible, parking lots should be visually buffered by landscaping and attractive planting should break up the lots themselves.

The concept plan illustrates a number of opportunities for new parking lots. The Harbor Park parking lot currently has about 16 parking spaces, but if River Road ceases to be an

access ramp to Rte 9 and it is reconfigured to allow street parking, 20 more parking spots could be accommodated along the street. The new Community Boathouse is shown with an adjacent lot with 33 spaces and another across the road with as many as 70, depending on how the embankment is configured. The Waterworks complex, as shown in the concept plan, has 60 plus parking spaces as well. The OMO site offers an area that is under remediation by Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Preservation (DEEP) where a large parking lot, with up to 175 spots, can be hidden from the River Road and used flexibly for other purposes, such as markets or festivals. The Jackson Site and Wetland could offer over 120 parking spots, although they will probably be reserved for residents and patrons.

For large events, agreements could be made with property owners of the Jackson Site and OMO to allow for public



parking, and the public should be encouraged to park in parking lots or structures in the downtown where a trolley could meet them to shuttle them to the festivities on the river. The trolley could become a permanent link between the downtown and the riverfront as the river grows as a destination.



THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY RAILROAD

A freight train line that runs parallel to the Connecticut River along the Middletown riverfront serves the historic Essex Steam Train down river, which runs from Essex to Chester. Freight trains stopped running on this line a few years ago and are unlikely to resume. Many Middletowners are very enthusiastic about extending the tourist-oriented Essex Steam Train to Middletown where it could stop both on the riverfront, near Waterworks and the OMO site, and near the downtown, at the end of Court Street. The train runs from June 21 - September 1 daily from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm. Tying Middletown to the historic Connecticut rivertowns to the south, which are popular tourist destinations, is a logical step in building up Middletown as a regional destination.



“TAKE ME TO THE RIVER:”

MORE WAYS TO GET ONTO THE WATER

The City of Middletown has turned its back to the river for years, but recently Middletown residents have expressed an urgent desire to get onto the river again in a multitude of ways. Providing access to the river for a greater variety of water uses has long been a planning goal for the city, as spelled out in the 2003 Harbor Management Plan. Fishing and rowing are now important attractions, but there should be many more ways to enjoy the water. Supporting “a diversity of water-dependent facilities and uses” to enhance local and regional economies and the quality of life of residents was a principal goal of the 2003 plan and a key objective was “expanding boating and water access facilities.” This objective was clearly stated in the Placemaking Workshops as well. Water uses are an important component of any vibrant public waterfront because they transform the river into a destination for a wide variety of activities and create an active edge along a riverfront promenade.

All water uses must be approved by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Preservation (DEEP) and the Army Corps of Engineers. Constraints to building boat ramps, floating docks, mooring fields and even small kayak launches or docks include the presence of endangered species and the potential loss of critical habitat, the proximity to the navigational channel, water depth and the need to dredge, and rocky shoals. The DEEP recommends a preliminary on-site consultation with the various agencies involved before any further planning or engineering is initiated. See the Appendix for DEEP and Army Corps of Engineers contact information.

Compliance with Americans for Disabilities regulations is also a requirement for all boat and water access points and, therefore, all recommended water access points in this report must be scrutinized carefully. A motorized boat launch, kayak and canoe launches and docks, and even fishing piers must all allow for handicapped access and convenient parking. Easy vehicular access and parking for car-top boaters will be a requirement even if the spot is viewed primarily as a take-out for transient boaters.

The following water uses are an integral part of this plan, but should be further investigated through the CT DEEP and Army Corps of Engineers:

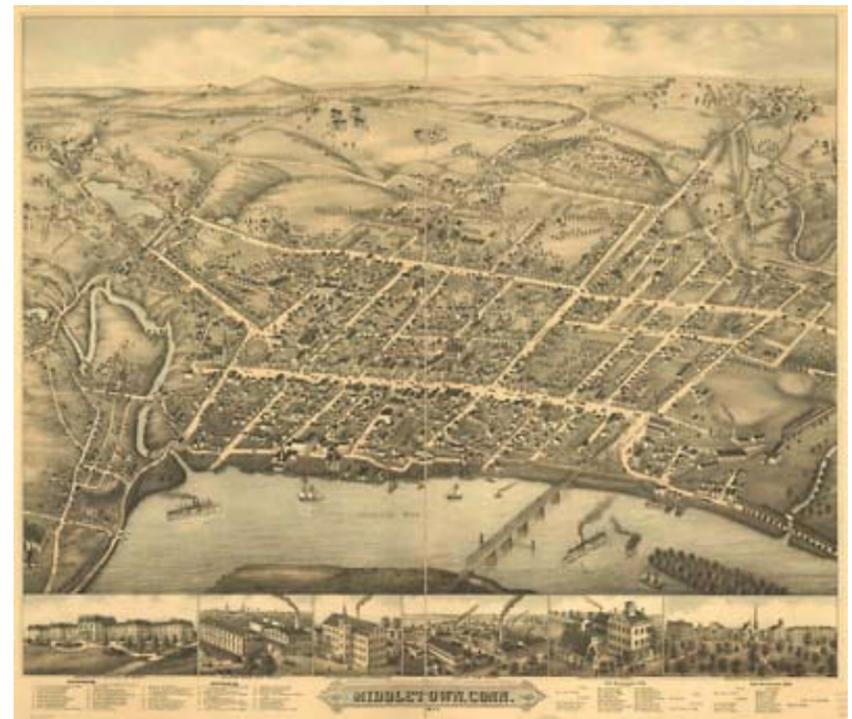
- Rowing programs and a boathouse for four or more clubs or teams;
- Up to four launch sites for kayaks, along with kayak rental and storage facilities;
- A public boat launch ramp for motorized, trailered boats;
- A mooring field for motorized boats;
- Fishing areas and piers, and places to clean fish;
- Transient boat docks and information, water and rest-rooms for transient boaters;
- Docking for commercial boats, including restaurant boats or barges, and tour boats;
- Docking for historic ships that could serve as museums;
- Docking for scientific or environmental research, and education boats or barges;
- Docking for emergency fire launch and police rescue boats.



CELEBRATE MIDDLETOWN'S HISTORIC LEGACY

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, Middletown, although over 30 miles from the mouth of the Connecticut River, was the busiest seaport in Connecticut, its ships carrying agricultural and industrial products all over the world, and returning with exotic goods, rum and even slaves from distant ports. The riverfront was the focus of the city's commercial activity with over a third of its population employed in the maritime trade. Main Street, which runs parallel to the river, was tightly connected to the port by cross streets which led directly to Water Street and the industries and piers on the water. This connection ended with the construction of Route 9 in the 1960's, but industry continued to flourish along much of the riverfront until now.

Middletown residents want to celebrate the city's illustrious history as a port and thriving industrial center, and seek ways to convey this legacy to riverfront visitors. Suggestions include a playground with a ship theme, temporary or permanent docking of historic ships at Harbor Park, interpretive information all along the Riverwalk with historic photos accompanying the history of the site, and even possibly a maritime museum. In addition, Middletown's industrial heritage should be preserved as much as possible. The attractive historic brick buildings on the OMO site, as well as the buildings and some of the tanks on the Waste Treatment Plant site, should be restored and reused in creative ways. Even the old oyster shack on the Peterson Oil property could be restored to serve a new function.



GREENING THE RIVERFRONT:

ENGAGE AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC IN ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

The lower section of the Connecticut River was named one of the “Last Great Places” in the United States by the Nature Conservancy because of the quality of its wildlife and wetlands. Many organizations and agencies are working to study, protect and restore the river and its wildlife, from the Federal Department of Fish and Wildlife down to many local environmental organizations and educators who are also eager to create opportunities to teach about the river as a natural resource and habitat. Some even suggested creating an environmental center on the riverfront to study and educate people about the river as a natural resource.

Restoration projects that engage the community can bring youth and adults together on the river in a meaningful way, and educate the public about the wildlife as well as the need to preserve critical environmental areas. Three areas of the riverfront were highlighted both as areas ripe for restoration as well as opportunities for education.

- Sumner Brook:

When the EPA’s remediation project is near completion, the community can work together with the EPA, and Federal and Connecticut Departments of Fish and Wildlife to restore a portion of the brook north of Route 9.

- The Wetland area west of the Jackson Site:

The City has expressed interest in purchasing this low-lying area to preserve it as a wetland habitat and open it up to a walking trail or boardwalk.

- The shoreline along River Road, between Eastern Drive and Silver Street:

This strip of land which has been prone to erosion could be planted with native vegetation to support the shoreline and serve as an outdoor environmental education center.

A number of state, local and non-profit resources (see Appendix) have indicated interest in assisting with this effort and local educators at Wesleyan University, local schools and the Jonah Center for Earth and Art have expressed interest in providing more environmental education on site.

Members of the community have voiced concern about climate change and its impact on flooding and sea level rise on the Middletown riverfront. There is no doubt that the riverfront will be affected by the increase in extreme storm events and flooding, and areas within the 100 year flood plain, whether park land or structures, will have to be built or retrofitted with the potential for flooding in mind. This should not curtail the use of the riverfront, however. Waterfronts around the world are adapting to these harsh realities while continuing to operate as vital community places.



INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM AND ECONOMIC

Middletown is already a regional destination known for the number of popular cafes and restaurants on its Main Street. Moreover, Portland's Brownstone Park, across the river, has demonstrated how an exciting and unique recreational attraction can succeed in attracting visitors even without much in the way of amenities or tourist-friendly infrastructure around it. If Middletown builds on its assets, such as water activities, a riverwalk, innovative recreation at the Waste Treatment Plan and exciting programming, AND provides easy access and good signage, comfortable amenities and food, just imagine how successful it could be in attracting families from around the region!

Much will depend on the quality and number of programs, the promotion of the riverfront as a destination and a strong management entity. Middletown businesses could see significant revenue from visitors who are coming to the river to have fun, but stay to enjoy the local dining opportunities and even shopping on Main Street. Riverfront attraction should and can complement, not compete with Main Street businesses.

Many opportunities should be pursued and explored to create new businesses and attract innovative entrepreneurs to the riverfront: food, craft and flea markets; food trucks and new restaurants; recreational and boating attractions that charge fees; incubators for new high-tech businesses—all of these will help to create new jobs AND offset the significant public investment required for the public spaces on the riverfront. Commercial activity can truly enhance the attraction of the public space.



CULTURAL VENUES FOR PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS

Middletown boasts a number of visual and performing arts organizations that have enriched the community for years. Children’s and adult theater groups, local bands and orchestras, and numerous visual artists, have long clamored for more space to showcase their work. While there is not the critical mass of organizations with sufficient financial resources to build a cultural arts center at this time, all the public spaces on the riverfront should be considered as possible venues for arts programming. In particular, areas more remote from the noise of Route 9, such as Sumner Point Great Lawn and the Waterworks (at the former Waste Treatment Plant), should be equipped with appropriate infrastructure to allow for outdoor theater, concerts and movies.

Indoor event venues can also double as performance spaces. An event space over the Community Boathouse or in the existing buildings on the Waste Treatment Plant site could be designed and equipped to serve as multi-purpose or “black box” performance spaces. In addition, private owners should be encouraged to partner with non-profit or public groups, such as the Middletown Arts Commission, to offer more studio, gallery and event space for the arts.



START NOW:

LIGHTER QUICKER CHEAPER INTERVENTIONS

“Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” (LQC) describes a moderate cost, high-impact framework for short-term, experimental interventions. LQC experiments allow for lower risk and lower cost improvements to become the launching pad for a larger, long-term plan. These experiments capitalize on the creative energy of the community to generate new uses, test ideas, and build a new image for places in transition.

Demonstration projects are essential to the LQC approach and draw upon local assets to transform under-utilized spaces into exciting laboratories that reward citizens with authentic places and provide a boost to areas in need. These projects provide a powerful means of quickly translating a vision into physical reality. Short-term interventions can take many forms requiring varying degrees of time, money and effort, but the spectrum of interventions aims to build lasting change.

This is an incremental strategy that can start with small steps. For example, under-utilized Harbor Park could attract people with seasonal programming and special events. At the same time comfortable, well designed, light amenities such as movable chairs, tables, hammocks, fire pits, flags and banners could be used to spruce up the place and give it a new image. Harbor Park can become a “stage” that could then host events and incubate new activities.

By championing use over capital-intensive construction, short-term interventions help determine the public’s interest in specific activities and can boost long-term transformative campaigns. A great program of events can put a place on the map. When people have positive experiences during the

experimental phase, they are likely to return for more, and return regularly, after larger capital improvements have taken place.

To revitalize Middletown’s riverfront, we propose to build on existing facilities and programs, while developing new destinations strategically. This would require establishing a priority of places and staging the growth of the riverfront through its destinations, both public and private.

SHORT-TERM EXPERIMENT PHASE

In order to keep momentum, assess interest and test ideas, a combination of programming and design experiments should be the focus of a concerted, well-managed effort in the next year that will spark dramatic change in how the riverfront is used and transform its image, starting with:

- **Improvements to Harbor Park adding both programs and amenities.** Harbor Park is the logical place to start with simple improvements. The proposed floating dock is a good beginning along with the renovations the city has already made to the pedestrian tunnel. A summer “happening,” taking advantage of the proximity to the water, like a temporary beach, could be considered here.
- **Create focal points in Harbor Park** by installing a specially designed (but temporary) children’s play area, a place for games such as chess, or bocce and attracting a food cart or truck to offer snacks and ice cream.
- **Complement the above with amenities** such as benches along the boardwalk, movable seating such as Adirondack chairs or deck chairs, picnic tables and um-

brellas.

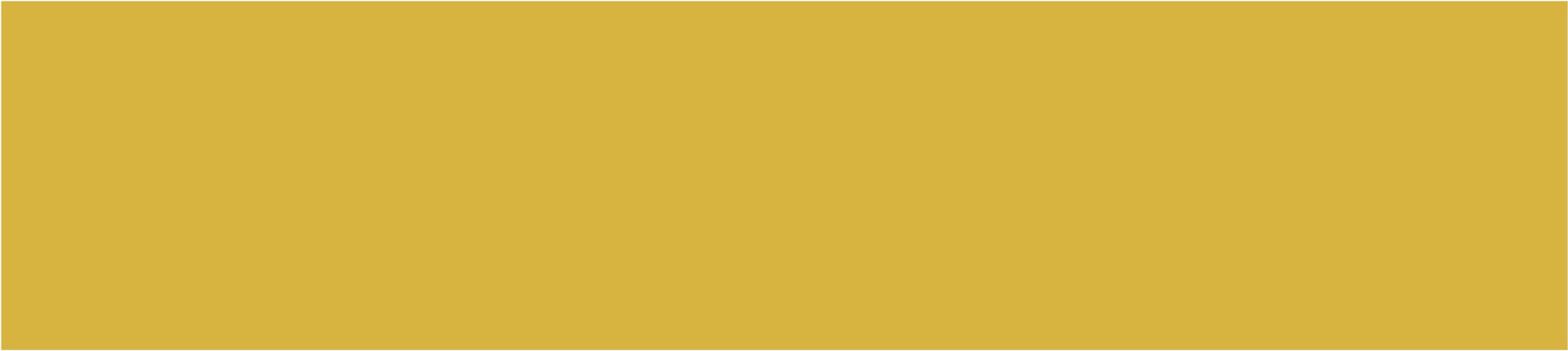
- **Add signage and information** to encourage people to take the tunnel and arrive at the park on foot. Art installations in the tunnel would be a good short-term next step.
- **Create a performance area/use existing gazebo** for small concerts, dances, yoga, outdoor classes or YMCA programs, and other programs near the boathouses.
- **Experiment with a significant special event at the Peterson site.** Alternatively, this could be a “sneak peak” style event that includes other places on the riverfront like the OMO site, the Waste Treatment Plant, River Road and the well-head area. An outdoor concert, movie or community gathering could attract a large cross-section of the community to the Peterson site to inaugurate a future “great lawn” or outdoor performance space.
- **Develop a seasonal program of active recreation events** that include more of the Riverfront such as 5k runs, bike races, boat parades, etc. building off the success of the 4th of July and the regatta.
- **Develop a parking strategy for the riverfront** with agreements to use private lots for parking for events, display signage, and create a safe and pleasant pedestrian route along Union Street.
- **Develop a pop-up market or gallery program** for the vacant buildings at the OMO site. Art and crafts markets as well as artist studios could be experimented with here, along with other special markets, like a night market, holiday market, carnival market with food truck rally, etc.

- **Develop a strategy and funding plan for new events** of varying scale, such as:
 - Various markets—arts and crafts fairs, flea markets, etc.;
 - Art Exhibits and Rotating Art sponsored by various art groups;
 - Community events and performances on the riverfront;
 - More frequent, small events;
 - Boating and water-oriented events like the regatta, boat parade, bass fishing contest, etc
- **Identify a partner to actively manage riverfront experiments** in the short term, coordinate events, improve maintenance, and help determine additional studies needed. See Next Steps for a discussion of a management strategy.





CONCEPT PLAN FOR THE RIVERFRONT



PLACE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



1. HARBOR PARK

Harbor Park is a long, narrow space offering scenic views of the Connecticut River. Like the rest of the riverfront, Harbor Park has been separated from downtown Middletown by Rte. 9, and although it is one of just a few places with access to the river, the park has been under-utilized for years. This is due in part to the fact that Harbor Park has very little to offer to potential users, but it is also because its existing limited amenities lack luster, and are sometimes in need of repair and renovation. The park features a boardwalk with a few scattered benches, a gazebo, restrooms, some grassy areas, and a few picnic tables. Participants in the Placemaking process reported coming here for walks, to fish and for special events, but overall they felt the park could be substantially improved to attract individuals and families to the river. The park's most important feature is a safe pedestrian connection to downtown Middletown under Rte. 9 via a tunnel, which was recently renovated by the city.

Just downriver are the boathouses for the Wesleyan University and Middletown High School crew teams, whose slender sculls can be seen slicing the water in season. Harbor Park is also the site of the annual 4th of July festivities and a handful of larger events occurring more or less regularly like the regatta.

LQC/SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS

In this Placemaking Vision for Middletown's Riverfront, Harbor Park has a key role to play. First, it will continue to be, for years to come, one of the few places where people can get close to, or even on the river. In that context it is crucial that change to the riverfront begins with visible, attractive, engaging improvements to Harbor Park.

The pedestrian tunnel will remain for the foreseeable future a major gateway and access point to the riverfront, particularly for pedestrians and bike riders coming from downtown. But Harbor Park will also become a gateway into downtown for people arriving by boat to the floating docks proposed by the city for the area near the tunnel. Enhancing the gateway and arrival experience at the tunnel, gazebo and new floating docks will be an important first step towards transforming Harbor Park. Proposed gateway enhancements discussed in the public process include visible directional and informational signage, lights, including light art for the pedestrian tunnel, colorful banners or flags along the boardwalk railing, and attractive colorful focal points at key locations such as landscaping, public art, etc.

The gazebo and landing plaza around it should also be improved in the short-term by adding comfortable, attractive seating – picnic tables, benches, or Adirondack chairs – with views of the river. The gazebo could become a temporary site for a visitor information booth welcoming people arriving on foot from downtown and transient boaters, once the floating docks are completed at this location. These improvements should be seasonal to begin with, and should be timed around larger or organized events when visitors are expected to arrive at Harbor Park.

The new floating docks will attract small boats and boating activities, but could encourage larger boats to dock along the bulkhead, adding to the Lady Katherine and the coast guard boats. Participants in the placemaking process mentioned bringing back historic tall ships like the Amistad, which had stopped at this location in the past, and seeking new boat-related attractions similar to the Science Barge on the Hudson



River, for example. Barges used as floating terraces or event/party venues were also considered as possible uses along the boardwalk.

Currently, Harbor Park does little in the way of giving people access to the river or to the water. One idea for the short to medium-term is to clean-up the cove next to the gazebo, add some sand (the cove appears to be heavily silted already) and use it as a place to put-in canoes, kayaks, and small row boats, and as a temporary beach, similar to the urban beaches now popular in cities around the world. If the current or ADA requirements do not permit small boats to launch here, some sand, a few umbrellas and beach chairs could go a long way in creating a beach atmosphere even if the water is not fully accessible at this location.

The beach theme should be continued along the boardwalk and in the adjacent grassy areas by adding benches, loungers or cabana chairs coupled with simple activities for people's enjoyment. PPS has successfully used this type of short-term, low-cost interventions to attract people to the riverfront (or lakefront) in cities like Detroit and Buffalo. We believe that a modest number of well placed amenities, like movable chairs, loungers, benches, or swings, accompanied by a carefully organized program of small but regular events can have a tremendous impact on bringing people to the riverfront. The Placemaking process has already generated a lot of buzz and excitement in Middletown, and people will be looking for activities and events to participate in this Summer and Fall.

Harbor Park will become a successful riverfront destination if it has something to offer to families and children. Since the park already has a restroom, and that is a necessary element



Imagination Playground



Temporary beach and sand play

when seeking to attract families with kids, we propose to develop a unique play environment replacing the asphalt area next to the restrooms.

In the short-term, the city could purchase an "Imagination Playground" or a similar type of portable equipment to be made available around specific events and activities when children and families are expected to be in the park. Imagination Playground is a collection of custom-designed, oversized blue foam parts that are portable and could be deployed in different locations as needed. The makers of Imagination Playground recommend that the playground be set-up and supervised by a play associate, so partnering with a group that has qualified staff would be helpful.

The Middlesex YMCA is located just a few blocks from the riverfront on Union Street, and conversations about collaboration on the riverfront began during the Placemaking Visioning process. The City should pursue a partnership with the Y particularly with regard to programming and activities for children in Harbor Park. The Y could bring children participating in their preschool, vacation days and summer enrichment camp programs for activities in the park, and could also offer activities to children around special events in the park. Y staff would also be well qualified to manage and supervise an Imagination Playground-type of environment. They may also be able to bring their own portable play equipment.

The play area, portable or permanent, should be triangulated not only with the restrooms but with a place for supervising adults to sit, and possibly engage in an activity themselves, for example a coffee cart or ice-cream truck offering snacks

or coffee nearby. The Placemaking concept plan shows the playground triangulated with picnic tables, or movable tables, chairs and umbrellas, tents with programs or vending, and a simple bocce court area which could be created by using wood planks or small logs to delineate the court. The bocce court will only be successful if people know it is available and bring their own sets to play with. Exploring a partnership with an existing club or a student activities group would be a good way to experiment with bocce or similar simple game activity (i.e. horseshoe, bag toss, croquet) in the short term. Bocce (or other) tournaments could be organized as part of other events in Harbor Park to engage people and get them excited about these games.

Harbor Park's parking lot can also be activated in the short term with food trucks, ice cream, or specialty crafts or makers markets. Food truck rallies have become popular events in communities around the country, and could be experimented with as part of a Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper strategic plan for activating Harbor Park. While the trucks can park in the parking lot, offering pleasant seating with views of the river is something no other venue in Middletown can currently boast.

LONG-TERM PLANS

In the long-term the successful elements from the short-term experiments could be made permanent – movable chairs and picnic tables could be replaced with sturdier, more durable amenities and appropriate benches. The existing restrooms should be upgraded and a proper visitor center could be co-located with the renovated restrooms to serve the needs of park users and boaters alike. The visitor center may offer services to support other activities in the park such as game



set rentals, tackle and bait sales to fisherman, tours of the riverfront by boat, bicycle or in foot, etc.

The concrete pad near the restrooms could be replaced by a unique, attractive permanent play area, such as a nautical themed play area, like Prince Diana Playground in London, or Sandbox Village in Brooklyn Bridge Park. Whatever its size, this play area should have a special character offering an exceptional experience to children and their parents.

The floating docks may expand, and more amenities for transient boaters may become needed.

Game areas may become formalized as groups or clubs rally around particular games and begin using the park for their activities consistently.

The LQC experimental phase will lay the groundwork for permanent, more costly improvements if such are needed. Short-term improvements have been known to have staying power, and sometimes become a permanent use even if they were meant to be temporary.



Princess Diana Playground





2. THE COMMUNITY BOATHOUSE

Middletown's riverfront has long been a popular site for rowing programs. Currently three programs operate out of two boathouses:

- Wesleyan University has its own boathouse and popular rowing program;
- Middletown High School has 90-100 rowers and shares its boathouse with the Middletown Park and Recreation Dept. rowing program, called Central Connecticut Rowing, which has about 50 participants made up of residents and non-residents of all ages.



Other schools interested in rowing out of Middletown include Mercy High School in Middletown and Choate/Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, CT. Significant interest was expressed in building a new rowing facility where the existing boat houses stand that would serve current and future rowing programs and provide room for expansion. There are also potential donors who could help the city and the schools build a new boat house.

Workshop participants and interviewees stressed the need for more event spaces in Middletown for private functions, such as weddings and parties, and for performances and suggested that such a space could be accommodated in an expanded boat house, possibly over the boat storage facility. A space that could hold 300-400 people for a performance was suggested several times. We estimate that a space of about 6,000 sf on the second floor above the boat storage could serve that function. That way it would be above the floodplain and offer great views over the river. A terrace and stair could connect the space to a plaza below. It requires further study, but the expanded boathouse does not have to be one big building; it could be two buildings - a larger one with an event space upstairs and a smaller one exclusively for boat storage and rowing program activities upstairs, as we illustrate. This could help reduce the scale of the buildings and be more in keeping with the smaller buildings elsewhere on the riverfront. Similar facilities can be seen in Boston/Watertown, Massachusetts (on the Charles River), in Poughkeepsie, New York, and at Oxford University.



Boathouse, University College, Oxford



Award Winning Community Rowing Inc. Boathouse Boston, MA



Award Winning Community Rowing Inc. Boathouse Boston, MA

BOATHOUSE PLAZA
A VISION



BOATHOUSE PLAZA

The plaza next to the Community Boathouse would be the heart of the riverfront, providing information, food, possibly bike and small boat rentals, and serving as an event space for private and public functions, markets and small performances. It would also provide a great viewing area for boat races, fireworks and other activities on the river. It would be linked by a pedestrian bridge to the Sumner Point Great Lawn which would provide a space for larger events.

The Plaza is a key destination on the Riverfront, and the vision for it is to be a draw for diverse users, not just those interested in rowing activities. The vision for the plaza utilizes the natural slope of the area next to the existing boat houses (Columbus Park) to create a space with several levels: a level that encompasses the Riverwalk and connects to a proposed pedestrian bridge over Sumner Brook; a grassy mid-level that could be used for viewing activities on the river, but also for informal games, sunbathing, relaxing near the water, etc.; and an upper level connected to the community space by a stair that could feature an attractive, family-friendly focal point such as an interactive fountain or a child-friendly piece of public art.

The edge of the plaza near Sumner Brook could host a light pavilion/food kiosk or even seasonal restaurant which could offer food at different price points and for different occasions, most importantly with outdoor seating and views of the river and the plaza.

In this context, we propose to re-site the monument to Christopher Columbus, who is currently enjoying the best views of the river, to a contemplative garden environment next to the plaza, creating a beautiful, quiet setting for the sculpture.





3. SUMNER POINT GREAT LAWN

With its proximity to the entrance to the riverfront and to Boathouse Plaza, this large open space, the former site of Peterson Oil storage facilities, will make a great flexible space for a variety of outdoor performances and programs. It offers over two acres of programmable space that will easily hold several thousand people. The two spaces – the Plaza and the Lawn – could be programmed simultaneously for festivals and performances (e.g. Jazz Festival or a River Music



Festival). When not programmed, the lawn is a versatile space for informal activities (e.g. Frisbee, kite flying, pick-up soccer games, badminton, picnics) and for more organized activities through the YMCA or Parks and Recreation Dept.

We recommend two entrances: one highly visible on axis with Union Street with attractive plantings where the existing oyster shack could be re-used as a welcome center/gatehouse for ticketed events; and a second offering restrooms and storage adjacent to the parking lot at the Waterworks.

The Sumner Point Great Lawn will provide a natural amphitheater with spectacular views up the river for a variety of performances. We recommend that no formal amphitheater or permanent stage be built since that could constrain the types of performances that could be held there. Rather, a temporary stage structure that could be configured in a variety of ways and moveable seating or lawn chairs that could be stored close-by would give the space much more flexibility. West Point Academy has a similar performance area overlooking the Hudson River and even with an acoustical barrier behind the stage, the view is not blocked. Utility infrastructure for power, lighting and sound systems should be provided at several select locations on the Great Lawn. Landscaping should be minimal but shade trees and low-growing shrubs could provide protection from the sun and help to define the space without blocking views into the park or of the river.



EXAMPLES OF AMENITIES/ACTIVITIES

FOR SUMNER POINT





4. THE WATERWORKS

The Waterworks will be a dynamic, multi-use recreational, entertainment and cultural destination proposed to replace the Middletown Waste Treatment Plant. The existing Waste Treatment Plant will be decommissioned in the next two-three years and its activity will move to the new regional Water Pollution Control Facility in Cromwell. The Waterworks would become a spectacular example of adaptive reuse of industrial facilities for public, recreational and cultural purposes borrowing from the best precedents in Europe and beyond.

The Waste Treatment Plant features a number of structures located in the floodplain that, if fully demolished, could never be replaced. Instead of demolishing all buildings and water treatment tanks, we propose to preserve, adapt and remodel existing buildings and some of the tanks. While the primary treatment tanks may be too polluted for retrofitting, as many as possible of the remaining tanks should be preserved and adapted for new recreational uses, such as swimming and wave pools, scuba diving, skateboarding ramps and bowls, climbing walls, high ropes courses, etc.

The Waterworks was envisioned as a destination with many activities for a multi-generational audience. Instead of erasing the site's industrial past, over a period of time, a culture, nature, recreation and leisure destination can be created around the

old tanks and service buildings with a truly dynamic mix of uses. Walking, biking, playing, swimming, diving, climbing, skating, enjoying the view from the rooftop terrace of the service building, relaxing in the beer garden or restaurant, attending a party, play or concert, participating in a beach volleyball tournament or learning archery are just a few of the many possibilities the site could provide. At night an outdoor light installation, film screening, or VJ party would light-up the walls of the industrial buildings providing a venue that is

interesting and not likely to disturb nearby neighbors.

The Placemaking Concept envisions creating several places within the Waterworks, each centered on or around a re-used building or tank. The two-story main service building, where the pumps are housed today, could easily be remodeled into a space for either a full size restaurant, or a smaller kitchen serving primarily an outdoor beer garden. An important element of the plan, the outdoor beer garden, would have great views of the river and could, for special events and



festivals (like Oktoberfest) spill on both sides of the building. Another possibility is for the building to accommodate a micro-brewery which would then serve local brew in the beer garden. The beer garden environment is meant to be simple, light, informal, and easy going.

The flat roof of the building has beautiful views of the river and plant workers use it informally to watch the July 4th Fireworks. The views could be capitalized upon by adding a terrace or rooftop deck, which could be connected to a bar, or nicer restaurant separate from the beer garden. The main floor of the building was also considered for a black box venue for small performances, parties, and cultural events.

If feasible, the long water tanks should be remediated and repurposed into an aquatic center that could feature various pools, including a children's pool, a lap pool, and possibly a wave pool. The office/lab building to the left of these pools, closer to the entry gate and proposed parking lot, could be adapted as a small rec center/pool house with restrooms, showers, lockers, possibly some indoor exercise space, and storage/office facilities. This building will serve as the welcome center to the entire Waterworks complex, and should feel closely connected to the pools even if it is not directly adjacent to them. The space between the pools and the building should become a patio with outdoor seating, deck chairs, a cart offering coffee, snacks, soft drinks and ice-cream, and spilling into an attractive, fun water playground.

The lawn area behind the building along the river and along the pool could be converted into a lawn beach/game area with umbrellas, beach chairs and beach games. One option would be to convert a portion of the lawn along the pool into

a true sandy beach with several beach volleyball courts (at least two so teams could compete), beach chairs, sand box play area, and other such amenities.

The one story building attached to the long tank and the tank adjacent to it, because of their somewhat isolated, remote location could be converted to a teen/youth center housing a great many activities such as indoor skate ramps, youth club space, youth art/graffiti wall space, etc. The tank could be repurposed as a skating bowl, climbing walls, high ropes course, and similar activities which would require supervision by trained instructors.

The Waterworks should probably be developed and operated, either in its entirety or in its discrete components, by concessionaires who could maintain the quality, dependability and safety of the different recreational elements. Yet, we believe that the grounds around the facilities – beach, lawns, patios - should be freely accessible to the public.

Certain elements of the existing water treatment plant, such as the Archimedes screws could be displayed and incorporated into an interpretive exhibit about water treatment, water quality, hydraulics, etc.

This site, as shown in the concept plan, could also feature a good size parking lot along with on street parking for up to 60 cars and an access road crossing the disused railroad spur leading to the proposed location for a small motorized boat launch.









5. THE OMO SITE

This industrial site is the target of an EPA-sponsored remediation that is intended to remove hot-spots containing a variety of toxic substances, including PCB's and metals, and cap the site. The brownfield area extends to Sumner Brook



but does not include the existing industrial buildings which are currently used by around 15 light-industrial tenants. The owner of the property, J.R. Marino, operates a construction and demolition business from the site.

The brownfield area, which is within the 100-year flood plain, is being cleaned up to a standard that precludes residential use, but a developer or future owner could opt to perform a more thorough additional remediation and, if the flooding issues were addressed, could build on the site. However, the land's central location on the riverfront and its environmental challenges make it a good location for a parking lot that could serve much of the riverfront, providing space for up to 175 cars, in addition to boat trailers. In the future, if greater density were required, a parking structure could be built that could be wrapped with office or commercial uses. Stormwater run-off should be contained on the site and not allowed to drain into the adjacent Sumner Brook by the use of pervious paving materials, retention ponds or rain gardens.

A number of cultural and commercial uses for the historic industrial buildings were suggested at the workshops with which Mr. Marino, the owner, is in agreement. The large spaces could house an indoor public market, or other types of food, craft or flea markets, performance spaces or art galleries. Smaller areas could accommodate a variety of artists and artisans' studios or other work spaces. Mr. Marino would also like to create a roof-top restaurant that would have views of the river.

The back of the site, close to Route 9, could be redeveloped with commercial offices. We suggest that Wesleyan University consider this site as an incubator space for start-up, high-

tech businesses. Many universities around the country are emulating Stanford University in creating "business hubs," with meeting and conference space, incubation offices or co-working space, to encourage students, recent graduates and others to start new innovative businesses on or near their campuses. Wesleyan houses the Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship which promotes the creation of businesses and organizations that support the public good and which could be another tenant for this site.

SUMNER BROOK AND A KAYAK LAUNCH

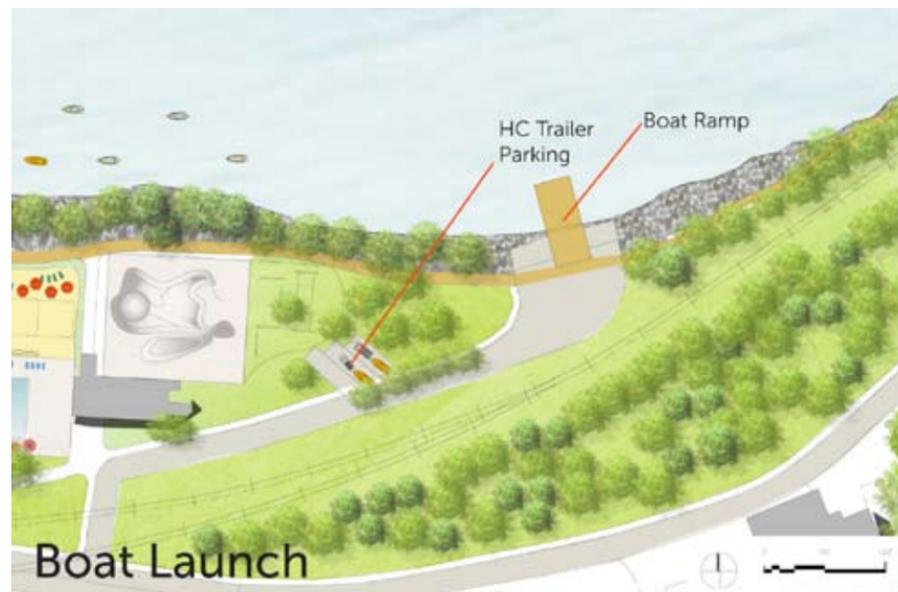
For decades, Sumner Brook has been compromised as a natural water course and habitat: it was channeled through a culvert (e.g. under Route 9), polluted with industrial waste and non-point source pollution, and was allowed to silt up through erosion and direct storm water run-off. In the Harbor Management Plan and in recent workshops citizens of Middletown expressed the desire to restore the brook through dredging, the removal of invasive vegetation, erosion control and new plantings. This community project could result in better water quality and wild-life habitat, as well as new ways for the community to enjoy the brook with nature trails and a kayak launching site. The calm water of the brook and the proximity to a parking lot could make Sumner Brook an ideal venue for kayak storage and rentals, lessons for children and beginners before they embark on the river itself.





6. BOAT LAUNCH

Middletowners have long wanted to launch trailered boats close to the City without driving to East Haddam, the closest public boat ramp. The Harbor Management Plan stresses the need for a ramp and suggests the Waste Treatment Plant as a possible site. Other sites within the study area have been considered in the past (in a Cardinal Engineering report from the 1980's), but each of these sites has a number of constraints, including steep inclines, which would make it difficult or expensive to build, limited parking areas and the proximity to rowing activity.



While most of the Waste Treatment Plant site is filled to above 20 feet, there is a low area at the east end that gradually slopes to the water. It is possible that a small boat launch ramp could be built here, with most of the trailer parking located remotely, but this site must be investigated more thoroughly. The Connecticut State DEEP regulates boat launches and requires 1 handicapped parking spot within close proximity of the ramp for every 20 trailer parking spaces. Twenty to thirty trailer parking spaces (at least 45' deep is recommended) could be located in the parking lot on the OMO site, which would then necessitate 1-2 handicapped parking spaces near the ramp. The minimum width of a ramp for a single boat is 20' and the length depends on the slope of the site, the ramp itself can be no more than 12-1/2%. A turnaround area at least 60' in diameter is required adjacent to the ramp and a water depth of 3' at low tide is optimal.

Mike Payton, with the DEEP Marine Headquarters, is the state staff person responsible for regulating and approving boat launch facilities (see contact information in the Appendix). He recommends that Middletown send a Request for Involvement with pictures and information about the proposed launch site and to formally begin the process of investigating the site.

A boat launch in the study area is not a requirement and should not displace other important uses (such as the Great Lawn on the former Peterson Oil Site), but if located in an area where there is little conflict with other uses, it could be an important recreational attraction that would bring more visitors who will also enjoy walking, recreation and dining on the riverfront.



MOORING FIELD

Middletown could also investigate boat storage in the cove adjacent to the Waste Treatment Plant, which lies at a wide point where the river bends eastward and could be served by the boat launch. A mooring field may be easier to accommodate here than floating docks with boat slips. There is no officially designated navigational channel in this part of the river to avoid, however a Special Anchorage would have to be approved by the State (there are two across the river in Portland) and other state regulations would have to be complied with (see "Take Me to the River" section of this report). Another constraint is the possible presence of a fast current in this area, which may be mitigated by keeping the boats close to the shore. Navigational charts show deep water in this vicinity, but depth is another factor to investigate through bathymetric measurements.



7. THE JACKSON SITE

The site that is now home to Jackson Corrugated Container Corporation, a carton manufacturer, is a prime redevelopment site on the riverfront suitable for residential and possibly other uses due to its location above the 100-year flood plain, its easy access from Eastern Drive and its lovely views of the river. Waterhouse Development Company has an option to buy the property and has proposed three, five-story buildings containing 176 units of housing on the site with a green/community space, a clubhouse and a pool. Current zoning regulations restrict the uses to residential and office, and limit the maximum height to 3 stories and no more than 60 units of housing.

We propose that a commercial use, such as a café, restaurant or event facility, be permitted and encourage at the front of the site so that it does not become a private enclave closed to the public. Continuous public access along a waterfront is critical, even at developments that are primarily residential. Exclusive private developments on waterfronts tend to privatize the adjacent public space, discouraging other users; thus a public use of some type and public access onto the site will be paramount to alleviating this problem.

The developer has offered to give the city its strip of shoreline across River Road which could help with the construction of the Riverwalk, if there is enough space, or at least keep the shoreline public, if there is not.



THE WETLAND

To the west of the Jackson Site is a low-lying, wetland area that has little development potential. Residents suggested that the City purchase the property to be preserved as wetland and used for environmental education purposes. A path or boardwalk around or through the wetland area would provide access for birders and school classes, and expand the reach of the Riverwalk.



Jackson Site and Wetland



8. RIVER ROAD

River Road between Eastern Drive and Silver Street has been closed to vehicular traffic for over ten years, but open to walkers and bike riders. Much of its charm comes from its close proximity to and extraordinary views of the river and its narrow width. While we recommend that it be closed to vehicular traffic between Silver Street and Eastern Drive to allow for safe walking and bike riding, the community was of two minds on this topic. It was suggested that it be open to one-way vehicular traffic during the week and closed to traffic on weekends to promote more biking and walking. This may be a short-term solution to encourage more use and as biking increases in Middletown and the River Road becomes a link in a larger network of bike trails and lanes, the road could be closed to traffic permanently.

A number of bike trails and rail trails around the country and in Canada could serve as good models for River Road. For example, Le Petit Train du Nord rail trail in the Laurentian Mountains of Quebec, runs for 124 miles and is a popular destination for bike riders and cross-country skiers. However, River Road must be part of a longer bike trail if it is to become an attraction for serious bike riders.



9. A NATURE TRAIL

The stretch of shoreline between Eastern Drive and Silver Street has been impacted by erosion (and erosion mitigation) and the construction of the well-heads and the Middletown water filtration facility, yet it offers beautiful views of the river and a quiet, secluded area from which to enjoy the views. Because of its natural beauty and remote location, it is an ideal place for a nature trail that skirts the edge of the slope leading down to the river and offers a different experience from River Road. If the vegetation along the river is both opened up (by the removal of invasive trees, shrubs and vines) and restored with native species, views could be enhanced while more birds and other wildlife could be attracted.



10. SILVER STREET PIER

At one time a pier that provided a place for the launching of small boats stood near the intersection of Silver Street and River Road and it was served by a small parking lot. The pier and parking lot could be recreated at this site, if the shallow water and steep slope meet state requirements at this location. A new pier must be handicapped accessible (with an ADA compliant ramp) and the parking lot must provide ADA compliant parking spaces. Picnic tables with views of the water would enhance the pier as a destination.

The Rushford Center, which occupies a building that was once a historic inn and tavern, is a privately-owned rehabilitation facility. If River Road becomes a popular bike trail, the center could be an ideal destination for bike riders to

stop for refreshments and even rent bikes at this location. The City could consider building a temporary snack bar and bike rental (for example using a shipping container) on its property in the interim to start to activate this site.



11. UNION STREET: A GATEWAY

Workshop participants recommended that Union Street be a better gateway to the riverfront and a stronger link to the downtown and to the surrounding community, especially to Wesleyan University. Union Street should be given a “boulevard” treatment with better, safer access for pedestrians and bike riders, more effective wayfinding signage, and an attractive gateway to the riverfront. We propose 6’ wide sidewalks with attractive lighting and street trees on both sides of Union Street from Main Street to River Road separated from the roadway by a 5’ planted verge. Consideration should also be given to reducing the width of Union Street from four lanes to two between Main and DeKoven Streets. Until bike lanes are introduced throughout the City, there is little reason to introduce bike lanes on Union alone. We propose instead a planted median, to create a “gateway boulevard,” between Main Street and the Rte 9 underpass with left turn lanes where needed. This will also help establish a stronger pedestrian link to Union Green, where a number of community events now occur.

ACCESS FROM THE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD

Pedestrians heading to the riverfront from the Wesleyan University neighborhood typically head down William Street to Main Street and then over to Union Street. Church Street is also an alternative when coming from the south part of campus. Along the routes from the Wesleyan neighborhood to the riverfront, several pedestrian crossings could be reduced in size with curb extensions or road reductions

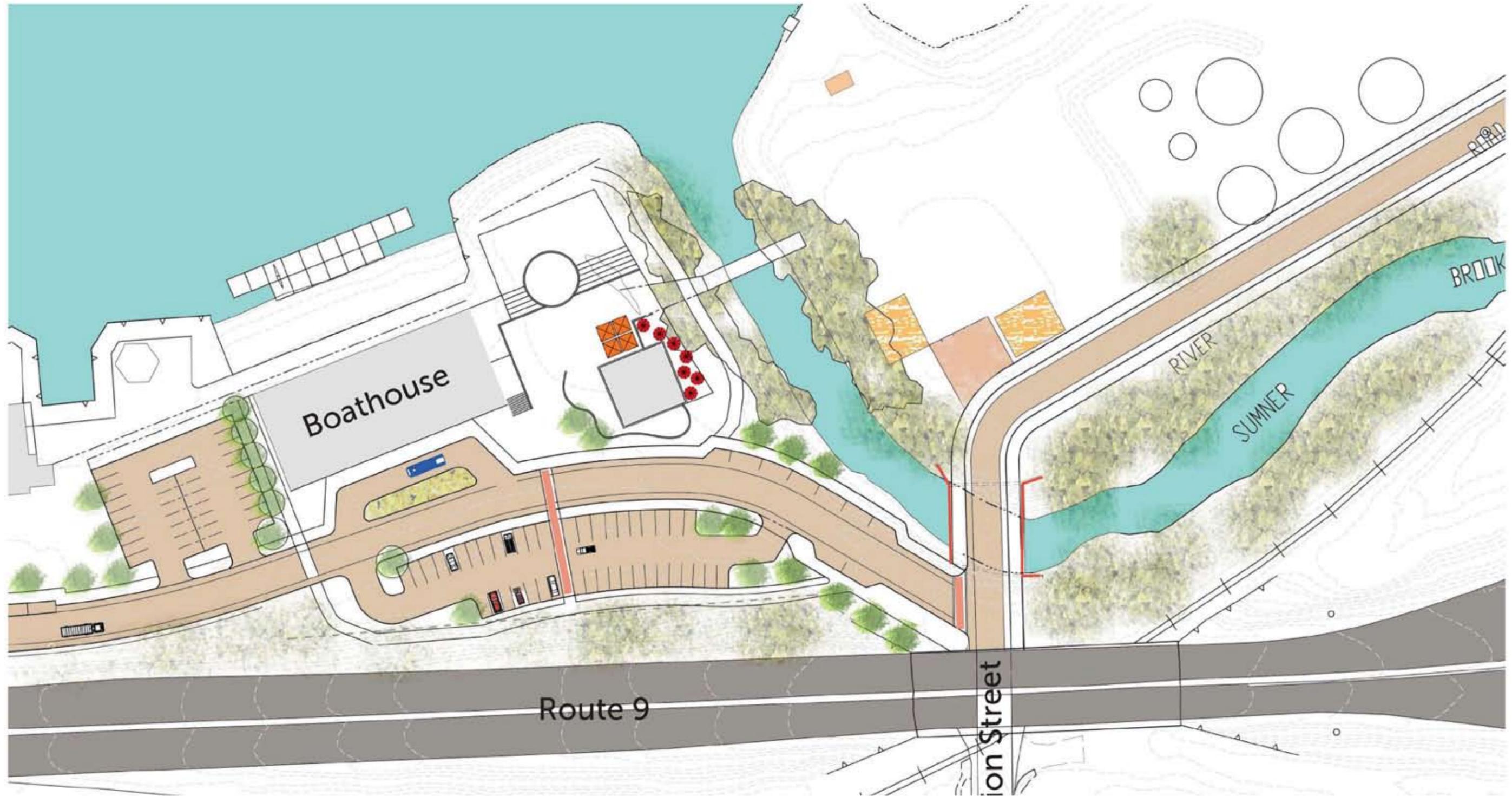
to improve pedestrian safety and walkability. Foremost among these is Main Street, where curb extensions could greatly improve the crossing distance of 85’ at both Union, Old Church and William Streets. Additional planted curb extensions on Union Street to the underpass will enhance the boulevard look and improve pedestrian access. As people walk from Wesleyan down Church or William Streets and through Union Green to reach the riverfront, they encounter difficult crossings at the intersections of Church and Broad Streets and Church and South Main. These would be greatly improved if the last block of Church, adjacent to the park, were reduced from four lanes to two. Crosswalks on William and Church Streets should also be repainted at several intersections.

UNION GREEN

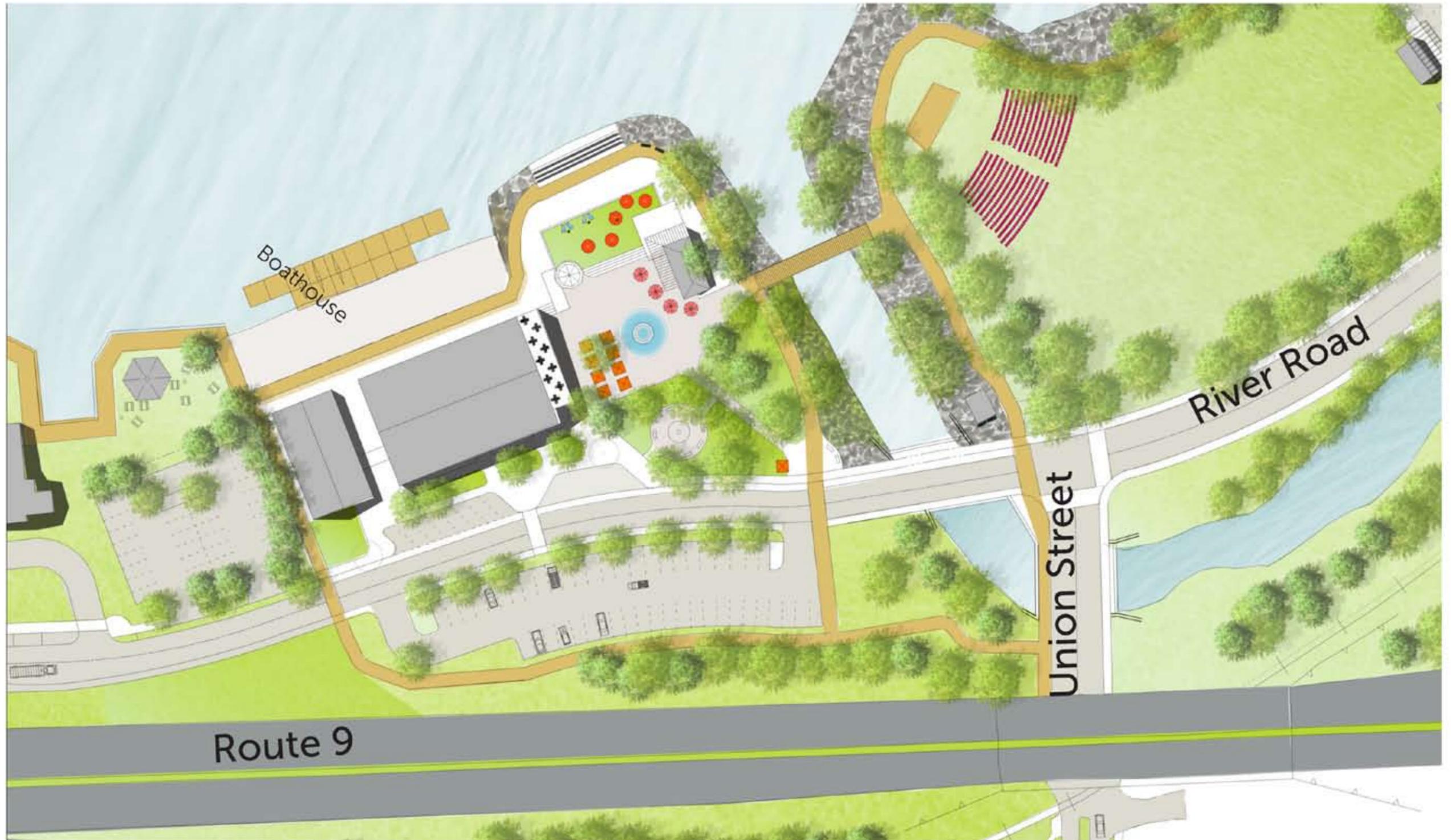
Union Green, while beyond the scope of this study, is an important public space in the downtown and an important link to the neighborhoods to the west. Pedestrians should feel welcome to walk around or through it when walking to the riverfront, and with more activities and amenities it too could become an attractive destination. Old Church Street was closed to create a safer condition on the north side of the park and has become essentially a parking lot. Pedestrian amenities, more seating, lighting, public art in the park and along Old Church Street would make it an attractive route to the riverfront.



Waterfront roadway access at Union Street-Layout Alt.2



Waterfront roadway access at Union Street-Layout Alt. 1



NEXT STEPS

1. MEET WITH THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED ROUTE 17 RAMP AND THE NEW UNION STREET ENTRANCE TO THE RIVERFRONT.

Erik Jarboe, from ConnDOT, has prepared two schemes illustrating how the Route 17 ramp and the bridge at the end of Union Street over Sumner Brook could be replaced with one or two bridges. The entrance roads should be resolved so that the City will know how the placement of a new Community Boathouse and parking lot will be affected. In addition, the City and ConnDOT will have to resolve how the new bridge(s) and roadways will be financed. The City may have to seek federal or state transportation grant monies to help pay for the work. The pedestrian bridge proposed over Sumner Brook would be a part of this grant package.

2. PLAN THE LIGHTER, QUICKER CHEAPER (LQC) PROGRAMS AND AMENITIES FOR SUMMER 2014 AND SEEK FUNDING.

A separate committee or an off-shoot of an existing committee (e.g. the Riverfront Redevelopment Committee or the Middletown Arts Commission) should get started right away seeking funding, securing partners and planning the LQC interventions for the coming year, beginning in Summer 2014. Engaging the community in programs, planting and clean-up campaigns, will help to keep the momentum and excitement going and begin to build a pool of volunteers..

3. PURSUE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY BOATHOUSE AND PLAZA.

The City can work with its partners at the local schools and university to start to design and finance the new boathouse and plaza. A needs assessment and feasibility study should be carried out to determine the size of the boathouse(s), the size and use of the event space(s) and the number of parking spaces needed. Parking will be critical and the roadway configuration and placement of the new boathouse will determine how many parking spaces can be created across the street from the boathouse.

4. HOLD A PRE-APPLICATION MEETING WITH STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES.

The feasibility and location of the recommended water-related uses should be determined early on through a pre-application meeting with representatives from DEEP, Fish and Wildlife and the Army Corps of Engineers. The City could save both time and effort by inviting the agency representatives to tour the sites and meet with the City together.

5. ESTABLISH AN ENTITY TO PURSUE LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES.

The Riverfront Redevelopment Committee and the City should investigate their options in setting up an entity to guide riverfront redevelopment. An attorney with knowledge in this area will help to explain the differences between a Redevelopment Authority and a non-profit

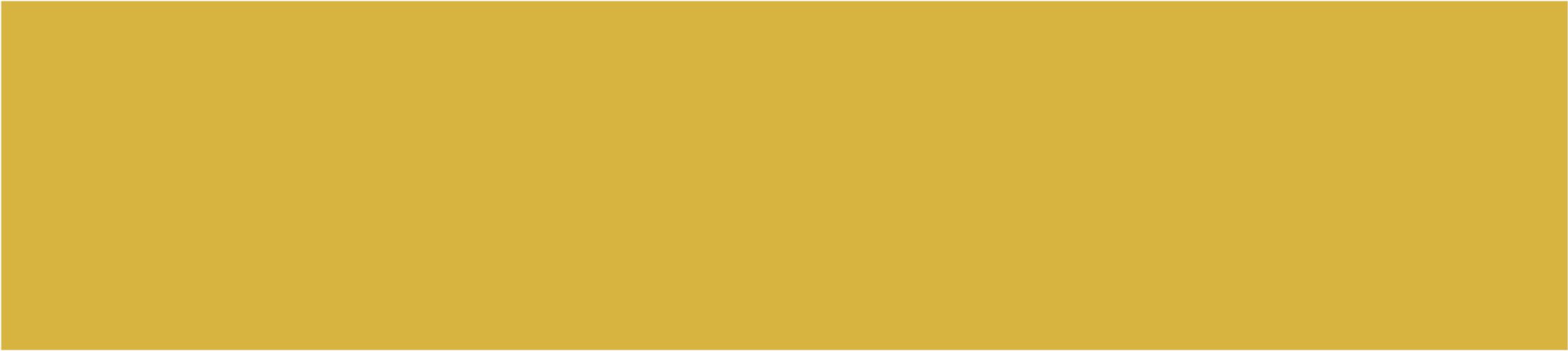
Redevelopment Corporation, their roles vis-à-vis city government and how to set them up. The City should look at the possibility of this entity evolving into a management entity for the riverfront public spaces. For example, the non-profit Bryant Park Restoration Corporation, which oversaw the renovation of Bryant Park, became the management and programming entity for the park once the renovation was complete.

6. STEP UP MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF HARBOR PARK.

Until an entity is created to manage the riverfront, the City Department of Parks and Recreation has responsibility for its management and maintenance. While it can begin to partner with outside organizations on programming, the department should improve sanitation, lawn and garden maintenance, repairs and the general level of operations in Harbor Park. The City should consider engaging tenants, such as the Canoe Club, in these efforts.

Management of an active, multi-use waterfront park is more demanding than a typical recreational area. Management entities are usually responsible for the following tasks:

- Maintenance and repairs;
- Events and Programming;
- Tenant and concession management;
- Fundraising;
- Marketing and Promotion;



LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS:

1. MUNICIPAL STAKEHOLDERS (GENERAL PLANNING)

The Municipal Stakeholder group included people from the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Common Council, Design Review and Preservation Board, the Long Hill Authority and other City Departments.

PARTICIPANTS:

- Todd Berch
- Gerald Daley
- Grady Faulkner
- Robert Santangelo-
- Linda Salafia
- Richard Pelletier
- Ken McClellan
- Brian Kronenberger
- Bruce Plumley
- Deborah Moore
- Linda Szykowitz
- Cynthia Clegg

2. RECREATION AND EDUCATION

Participants from Parks and Recreation Commission, Mercy High School, Middletown High School, YMCA, various Day Care Centers, the Children's Museum, Board of Education, Middlesex Community College Anna Wascha, Wesleyan University made up the Recreation and Education focus Group.

PARTICIPANTS:

- Melissa Bullock
- Ed McKeon
- Kevin Wilhelm

- Vincent Juliano
- David Sykes
- John Wesleyon

3. CULTURAL ARTS

The Cultural Arts focus group was joined by members of Odd fellows, Art Farm, Buttonwood Tree, the Arts Commission, Center for the Arts, Middletown Choral, Wesleyan University Arts, Theater and Music and the Green Street Arts Center.

PARTICIPANTS:

- Matt Pugliese
- Art Farm
- Franca Biales
- Lee Godburn
- Richard Kamis
- Joyce Kirkpatrick
- Pam Tatge
- John Gudvangen
- Peter Frenzel
- Charlotte McCord
- Laurey Bank, RRC
- Kristen Palmer
- Joyce Kirkpatrick

4. CONNECTIONS AND TRANSPORTATION

The Connections and Transportation focus group was joined by the Complete Streets Committee, people from Providence and Worcester Railroad, City Roads and Transportation, Wesleyan University, Essex Stream Train/ Valley Railroad, and

interested Bicyclists and proponents.

PARTICIPANTS:

- John Hall
- Izzi Greenberg
- Amy Vaillancourt
- Rob Haramut
- Dan Bourret
- Erik Jarboe
- Michael Whaley
- Torrance Downes
- Rob Rosenthal

5. TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Participation from the Connecticut Main Street Center, Inn at Middletown Nora Cupcake Factory, other north end businesses out of the DBD district, the Canoe Club, Essex Stream Train/ Valley Railroad, Connecticut Wedding Group Tom McDowell, the Downtown Business District, Middlesex Chamber of Commerce Central Business Bureau, Lady Katharine Cruises, Long Hill Authority and others.

PARTICIPANTS:

- Danny Cronin
- Jeff Pugliese
- Christine Schilke
- Steve Lovelace
- Susan Bransfield
- Bill Roberts

6. WATER-BASED RECREATION

The focus group was joined by representatives from Wesleyan University Crew Team, Xavier High School Crew Team, Mercy High School, Choate rosemary Hall Crew Team, Middletown High School Crew Team, Lady Katherine Cruises, YMCA, ECKRA New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association, Harbor Improvement Agency and Other boating organizations.

PARTICIPANTS:

- Peter Belmonte
- Michelle Rulnick
- Trevor Davis
- Joanne Jukins
- Daryl Smith
- Joseph Samolis
- Wendy Sheil
- Jacqueline Talbot

7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development focus group comprised of members of Westfield Residents Association, Village District Association, NEAR, NEAT, Community Foundation of Middlesex County, Lions Club, and other Civic Organizations.

PARTICIPANTS:

- Green Thazhampallath
- Stephen Devoto
- John Bell
- Guy Russo
- Rosa Carrero

- G. Davis
- Ed Dypa
- Janice Ehlemeyer

8. ENVIRONMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS

The participating agencies include the Connecticut River Watershed, Middlesex Land Trust, Middletown Conservation Commission, Rockfall Foundation, Middletown Garden Club, EPA, DECD, Army Corp, and other State and Federal Agencies.

PARTICIPANTS:

- David Brown
- Jane Brawerman
- Joan Liska
- Michael Singer
- Katherine Green
- Jane Harris
- Margot Burns
- Peter Patton

FOCUS-GROUP FINDINGS:

Summary of Focus Group Discussions

July-August 2013

Middletown, Connecticut Riverfront

In July and early August, 2013, PPS facilitated eight focus group meetings with a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss the following riverfront themes:

Municipal officials and staff: General Issues and Opportunities

- Recreation and Education
- Environment
- Transportation
- Water Recreation
- Tourism and Economic Development
- Community Development
- Cultural Arts

Below is a summary of the discussions:

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

GENERAL

- The riverfront has been forgotten due to poor access, lack of visibility and not enough reasons to go there. Even Wesleyan students rarely go there, unless they are rowing. There is a big stigma and fear factor associated with the river that residents need to get over. It is used by many residents, however, who enjoy fishing there, or just sitting and enjoying the views of the river.
- Now there is a confluence of positive factors that make this a very good time to rethink Middletown's relationship to

the river: decommissioning of the waste treatment plant, the CDOT changes to Route 9 and access roads, and the tunnel access has been improved.

- The riverfront should be a place for the entire community to go: "a warm place in the heart of Middletown."
- People need to become accustomed to going to the riverfront and looking at the river.
- Identity is very important; people identify themselves with where they live, with place. We have to come up with a unique identity for the riverfront.
- People like to go to the river because it is quiet and peaceful; we want to make sure to have quiet and peaceful areas
- We want to encourage a healthy lifestyle for youth
- If we are trying to attract families to the riverfront, it needs to feel safe
- Make is safe for the most vulnerable, like the elderly it will show everyone is safe
- The riverfront has to be closely linked to Main Street; it has to complete the downtown

LOCATION

- The riverfront is centrally located, adjacent to a vibrant downtown with destination restaurants, a popular Farmers Market and downtown programs.
- To the south lies state land (Connecticut Valley Hospital). Most of the buildings close to the river are not in use. State has not determined future of site.
- Wilcox Island lies to the north (located in three towns): a footbridge once connected the Island to Middletown and, although it is in the flood plain, it could have more uses on it.
- The Sewage Treatment Plant is to be shut down and replaced by a new one in Cromwell. The plant has a great

location on the river and would be a great viewing place to see the lit-up bridge. The plant's buildings can be re-purposed.

- The former Peterson Industrial Site, a former oil storage facility, is available, owned by the city, and is next to the Sewage Treatment Plant.
- The Connecticut River is wider in this area and creates a cove area next to the Peterson site.
- The OMO and Jackson Corrugated sites (industrial sites) will be redeveloped and they are adjacent to the River Road.
- Middletown lies on a bend in the river (Mattabesett means bend in the river) which was an important site to Native Americans. It has always been a good point to access the river.
- Sumner Brook creates a peninsula and a quieter area of water which could be cleaned up and dredged, and accessed from the OMO site.
- The area to be redeveloped offers many points with nice river views and good locations for views of the bridge.
- The City's well-heads and filtration plant are located along River Road. The City gets 70% of its water from this aquifer. River Road was closed to traffic after 2001 to protect the well-heads.
- Maromas Area zoned industrial

CONNECTIONS

- Route 9.
 - ~ The Riverfront is visible from Route 9, with easy access from the highway. However Route 9 blocks access from the downtown to the riverfront. It is both a physical and emotional boundary and has resulted in citizens of Middletown forgetting that they have a waterfront.
 - ~ While there are two traffic signals on the stretch of Route 9 that goes through Middletown, this is the only

section with signals. Route 9 is primarily a limited-access highway with fast-moving traffic and it often gets backed up in Middletown. CDOT has often discussed with Middletown how to remove the signals and speed up the traffic.

~ Lowering Route 9, or burying it, has been discussed, but is not feasible because of flooding and the expense.

~ Could Route 9 become a boulevard with on-grade access (for vehicles and pedestrians) to the riverfront? It has never been viewed as a destination and traffic flow has been viewed as more important than river access up until now.

- CDOT is working on a plan to improve the on-ramp of Route 17 onto Route 9. Currently, motorists must stop before entering traffic and many accidents occur because of the difficulty of entering the lane of moving traffic. New plans include improvements to Union Street, the underpass and the road access to the riverfront, as well as the removal of the on ramp in front of the Canoe Club.
- Tunnel. Access to the tunnel has been improved with the new ramp and provides direct access from the parking lot next to City Hall. Yet the tunnel is perceived as dark, unpleasant and smelly, and it is often locked when people want to use it.
- Access to the riverfront, whether by car, foot or bike, is not clear, especially from the downtown. The riverfront should be more pedestrian friendly.
- Rail Line:
 - ~ The infrequently-used freight railroad line operated by the Valley Railroad that runs along the river is a great opportunity.
 - ~ The Essex Steam Train, a tourist destination, could be extended to Middletown with a station in the downtown.
 - ~ The right-of-way for the rail line is not wide enough to have both trains and a trail.
 - ~ At-grade crossings are a safety issue.
- Access to Harbor Park is difficult because of the ramp onto Route 9.

- The north end of Middletown is cut off from the riverfront to an even greater extent than the downtown or the south side. This project should help to tie the various parts of the city together which are quite disjointed now.
- River Road is currently closed to traffic. There has been significant erosion of the edge of the road where it is close to the river. It could be reopened to vehicles.
- City water wellheads near the intersection of Silver Street & River Road require that the area be off-limits.
- Glastonbury CT. features an historic ferry, which is the oldest continuously running ferry in the country. Has to be subsidized by the state, however.
- Parking:
 - ~ Tourism is car-centered, so there has to be easy parking on the riverfront.
 - ~ For large events, like the 4th of July and the Regattas, people could park in town and come by trolley. Everyone does not have to be accommodated on the riverfront.
 - ~ A new parking structure is planned next near the courthouse and Riverview Plaza and could provide parking for the riverfront and especially for large events.
- The City is planning to build a new parking garage and it has the potential to be more than that: it could also anchor a bridge over Route 9
- Daily commuting on bikes is not popular (only about 1% of the population). It's not easy to get to downtown by bike.
- We need to think of the river as means of transportation again
- "Bring the river to the city, not the other way around." Sumner Brook could be restored and, with a walking trail, extend further into the city.
- Union Street can become a green artery, featuring way-finding signage, good sidewalks and bike lanes. It should be a welcoming gateway to the riverfront.

COMMUNITY

- Middletown is 30% minority, with strong multi-cultural character and rich cultural history. The diversity of Middletown should be represented both in our community engagement efforts and in the activities planned for the waterfront.
- Lively arts and cultural scene.
- Current users of the riverfront include people who like to fish, kayak, or just sit quietly and enjoy the views of the river.
- Transients used to camp by the river.
- There is an active senior population and a new senior housing development is opening not far from the riverfront. A Senior Center is only about 2 miles away.
- There are few events or programs on the riverfront now and no one feels a sense of ownership. The riverfront can be an opportunity for collaborations and partnerships.
- Community gathering spaces on the riverfront should be for all the people of Middletown
- Celebrate Middletown as a welcoming and open city, with a distinctive historical culture
- Provide low income urban kids an access to water, summer programs, swimming lessons
- Middletown tends to be politically divided and not always on the same page. Can we create a plan that appeals to everyone?

EXISTING OR FORMER EVENTS

Currently:

- 4th of July Celebration with fireworks launched from a barge in the river
- The Head of the Connecticut rowing regatta (did not take place this year) with up to 7000 people is second only in attendance to the Head of the Charles. Rowing Association needs more volunteers to carry it off successfully.
- Bass fishing tournament Sept 13, Around 200 participate

- Home-made raft race
- The Farmers Market at north end of downtown
- Oddfellows' Children's Circus brings out several hundred people, but held in parking lot
- Midnight on Main: a First Night event for New Year's Eve
- Summer concert series on the South Green
- Senior picnic and boat ride

Formerly:

- Four Winds and Amistad (historic ships) docked in Middletown
- Music on a barge
- Formerly was a carnival on the riverfront
- Walk Middletown Project
- Market that attracted several thousand people.
- African American arts festival

HISTORIC

- The Middletown riverfront is an important heritage site that was once the largest maritime port in Connecticut and once had fourteen piers.
- Clipper ships were once built here, and that industry, along with the opium, agricultural and rum market made Middletown very wealthy. It also had a slave market.
- Industry once included ivory mills for piano keys, typewriters, bicycles.
- Middletown has always had large ethnic populations: Chinese, Hindu, Italian, Greek, etc. Many groups have been here since the 1600's.
- Middletown was always a place to go drinking, now it is a destination for food, the arts and education.
- The Riverfront Commission could co-sponsor historic walks with the Historical Society before the workshops.

- Trails along the river could have interpretive information about the history of the maritime sites.
- There are already old pylons in the river for a pier at the bottom of Ferry Street where the ferry came in.
- We need to preserve the footprints of the sewage treatment plant buildings.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

- The Canoe Club is the only restaurant on the riverfront and it has an outdoor terrace overlooking the river and often features music. When the river floods the downstairs also floods. The city owns the property and the restaurant still has 18 years on its lease.
- The Jackson Corrugated site is out of the floodplain and has beautiful views. It would be a great site for a restaurant, a terrace, a plaza. A developer has an option to buy it to build residential.

ENVIRONMENT

- The OMO site is an EPA superfund site that has PCB's, but will get cleaned up in the next few years. The buildings can remain as they are because they are not in the contaminated area. The site is owned by a contractor who would like to create a mix of uses there.
- The smell from the sewage treatment plant has discouraged activity in the area.
- Flooding is an issue because most of the site is in the 100 year flood plain. Flood water has come as far inland as Route 9 in the past.
- There is great potential for ecological and sustainability programs on the riverfront.
- There should be a great celebration for the sewage plant decommissioning with environmental programming etc.
- Keep the public improvements close to nature, all outdoors
- Reclaim the brook and clean it up to create a friendly water

area.

- The river's shoreline should be restored to reduce erosion and storm water run-off, provide habitat and improve water quality.
- The large, privately-owned wetland south of River Road has to be protected.
- There has been severe erosion of the shoreline in several places on River Road, including near Eastern Drive (where part of River Road was lost and where the Army Corps did stabilization in 1984) and at the well-heads, where DEEP and the River Steward are assisting the City.
- Middletown has acquired lots of property all over the city for open space.
- Federal Dept. Fish and Wildlife are interested in the project and could create an interpretive center.
- There is concern about the flood plain and especially with sea levels rising and increase in storm events.
- The lower section of the Connecticut River was named one of the 40 "last great places" by the Nature Conservancy because of the quality of its wildlife and wetlands.

RECREATION

- Walking and Biking.
 - ~ There are many trails for walking and biking in the area, but they don't connect and there are many dangerous intersections.
 - ~ The riverfront could help to link the trails and bring attention to the hiking trail network.
 - ~ The trail guide is being updated
- There is now no real park for events in Middletown or that would be good for kids.
- Hartford's Riverfront Park with the boathouse is desolate: it's a long stretch, nothing happens there except for fireworks and it's scary.
- The riverfront should focus on health and recreation with green trails.

- Sumner Brook can play an important role, with a recreational trail that leads all the way to Middlesex Hospital.
- Wilcox Island used to be a vibrant park, there was a footbridge leading there
- The existing rail is a 3% grade: one could easily bike all the way to Old Saybrook if there were a rail trail on it.
- River Road could be a fabulous trail and a loop if you can get the road open through the Pratt and Whitney Plant.
- There should be a progression of destinations along the riverfront with different character
- Let people bring their dogs.
- There could be easy access to the Portland Brownstone Adventure Park by boat.

WATER RECREATION

- Rowing. Rowing has long been an important activity on the Middletown riverfront. The Wesleyan Boathouse is shared with the Dept. of Parks and Recreation rowing program, with about 50 participants, and the High School, with about 100 rowers, also has a boathouse. Other schools are interested in building boathouses for rowing programs in Middletown.
- The “Head of the Connecticut,” an annual regatta that was held for years at Harbor Park until recently, needs to be reorganized and safety needs to be foremost in its planning. It could leverage a number of other activities at the waterfront to accompany it, such as food and picnics, children’s and family activities.
- Small boat access:
 - ~ A canoe and paddle boat rental fell through because the vendor couldn’t afford the insurance. The river here is too fast and strong.
 - ~ Poor quality of the water prohibits swimming and sometimes boating.
 - ~ People do swim in the river, but it’s not great for swimming due to the unpredictable character and the strong currents.

- ~ The navigational channel is narrow and is close to the Middletown side.
- ~ Sumner Brook could be accessed from the OMO Site for small boat launching.
- ~ The river is tidal which also makes boating more difficult.
- ~ Safety on the water is a huge issue when considering any boating programs.
- A marina in the river or in the brook would have to be dredged on a regular basis because of the silting.
- If boating activity increases, how do we pay for policing the river?
- Motorized boating, and especially the loud boats, can diminish the natural beauty plus very few of the prospective users have boats.
- In addition to expanding boating opportunities, there is a need for boat storage and an equipment maintenance area.
- Many Middletown residents would like to have a boat launch for motorized boats. Closest boat launches are in Haddam, Rocky Hill and East Hartford.

RIVER USE AND MARINE TOURISM

- There was interest in bringing a steamboat replica, called the Becky Thatcher, to Middletown but it fell through.
- Transient boaters will have the opportunity to dock in Harbor Park as the City is building a floating dock that will run parallel to the bulkhead.
- There was once a pier for a ferry at the base of Ferry Street, but now you don’t have the depth for a pier there because of silting: the silt is very deep you sink up to your knees
- The bulkhead in Harbor Park is overdue for maintenance—there are some structural issues and it is difficult to tie up to it.
- The City is building a floating dock for transient boating parallel to the bulkhead.

- The Lady Katherine, a commercial river cruise boat for large groups, docks at Harbor Park.
- Private boat give rides from the Canoe Club’s dock every weekend

CULTURE

- An arts showcase program was held at the river years ago.
- Arts commission has placed sculpture on the riverfront as part of a public art program.
- Great place for arts activities
- The Buttonwood Tree – a cultural arts and entertainment organization – has no home. The director, John Bell, would like to grow it and wants to do more fundraising.
- Performances and outdoor movies are not possible in Harbor Park because of noise from Route 9. Sound issues may not be an issue at the sewage treatment plant
- While many arts groups would love to have a Cultural Arts Center, they don’t have the critical mass of arts organizations or the money yet for an arts center. “We don’t want to build something we can’t support.”
- Need an outdoor performance venue - flexible, access to power and sound are important.
- Art-science collaboration – maybe one of the buildings is an incubator space for artists and makers and bio businesses
- Get a few artists at the table for these conversations.

MANAGEMENT

- Safety issues: Because of strong current, bend in the river, the river is unpredictable. There have been drowning when people have attempted to swim. The marine patrol, operated by the Fire Department’s Search and Rescue Patrol, that is docked now at Peterson Field is used mostly for large events and rowing competitions.
- No unity in management and authority. Who should manage it and how should this team should be formed?

- Provide infrastructure and utilities in place for large events and then other organizations can put on the events. "You provide the stage, others put on the play."
- This shouldn't be an inside job, experts and finances should be coming from the outside, e.g. state monies.
- Look for short-term ideas at the workshops that could start to happen right away.
- Bonding for capital projects is not a problem because Middletown is in good shape financially.

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Middletown does not have the critical mass of people to make the waterfront work. It must be a regional destination.
- Middletown must work and coordinate with neighboring municipalities in planning its riverfront.
- Use the river and trails to connecting to other towns, historical areas and other destinations.
- Middletown has to take the lead, however, in planning its waterfront, creating its own brand and leading its own grass-roots effort.
- Connecticut Council of Governments (CCOG):
- The River COG is an official state agency that connects 17 towns along the Connecticut River.

RELATIONSHIP TO WESLEYAN

- Wesleyan uses a lot of the river for education purposes, especially the environmental and geology (earth science) departments, can do more with better access
- Student activities, fairs, a park
- Parents come to see their kids in school. Need more places to go.

IDEAS

CONNECTIONS

Route 9 Barrier

- History of Middletown is connected to the river. Route 9 highway cut it off, but people want better access and take advantage of the riverfront and reconnect to heritage
- Pedestrian bridge over Route 9 from the new parking garage near Riverview Plaza.
- Bury it or cover it over (flooding issue)
- Use bridge as an asset like the High Line

Public Transportation

- Affordable community transit buses, south to north connection.
- Reroute existing public bus line to the riverfront. Introduce electric buses.
- Passenger train on the old railroad tracks, either an extension of the Essex Steam Train or a future commuter line along the CT river. The location for a train stop exists by the Portland Bridge, but could be much closer to downtown.

Trails

- A multi-use trail all the way along the riverfront or a circular route around the riverfront for walking, jogging and biking. Exercise stations along trail.
- Bike path that riders could bike down and return by train or ferry. (Essex Steam Train)
- 20 mile bike loop around the city that includes the riverfront and could connect to the Mattabesset Trail, Randolph Road and the Middlesex Community College.

- Connect bike trails to Wesleyan Hills trail, South Farm area trails and West Lake Trail which are all frequently used.
- Recreational biking route towards Maromas.
- Union Street could be a walking, biking and jogging street with a uniform lighting bringing people to the waterfront
- A nature trail along Sumner Brook could connect to Middlesex Hospital.

Connection to Downtown

- A trolley to bring people from the parking lots in the downtown to limit the parking on the waterfront. Could be hop-on/ hop-off. The trolley barn still exists and could become a trolley barn again. We could dig up the trolley track on Main Street or could be rubber wheeled. Try the trolley as an experiment around the events for the 4th of July.
- Dig out Ferry Street and make a canal up to Main Street
- Can have a progression with the river coming up to Main Street
- Light rail from Main Street to the riverfront
- Improve Union Street as bike and pedestrian corridor, and reduce it to 2 lanes.

Connection to Wesleyan

- Wesleyan would like to address Williams street as a problem but also create a connection
- A cable car from the river up to Wesleyan

ENVIRONMENT

- Nature Center: a high/low-tech facility for environmental education
- The science barge (like the one on the Hudson River) on the CT River

- Winter: people can watch the herds of deer cross the frozen river – wild nature observation decks?
- Demonstration gardens with youth involvement.
- Create a more natural shoreline on the CT River: rather than bulkhead and riprap, could armor it and replant.
- Restore the habitat and vegetation along Sumner Brook. Maintain the vegetative buffers but get rid of invasive plants. The Connecticut Botanical Society could help with this effort. It could “botanize” the area.
- A thorough Natural Resource Inventory is needed along the riverfront and Sumner Brook.
- Restore the wetland and use for educational opportunities. (Should city acquire it?)
- There is interest in gardening, and community gardens student garden produce is sold at the farmers market in summer, and goes into the dining hall during the school year.
- Decrease impervious surfaces and control run-off.
- Take students out onto the river to explore the wildlife.

RECREATION

Children:

- Spray fountain
- Playground with a river theme - water play
- Access for disabled kids
- Summer camp for kids
- Youth programming could be oriented to arts and culture
- Kite flying
- Day camp (e.g. Camp Ingersoll in Portland)

Sports:

- Climbing walls

- Volleyball
- Skateboarding, maybe junior
- Baseball, basketball, football, soccer
- Kite flying
- Tai chi on a pier
- Bocce & miniature golf on the river
- Biking trail can be continuous all along the river with a change to boats or steam train
- Golf course at CVH

Tourist infrastructure:

- Tourist information point
- Funky little tourist map
- Tourist triathlon, multiple experience for people

Amenities:

- Picnic areas
- Promenade along the river
- Improve lighting (soften the lighting on the boardwalk at night)
- Ferris wheel
- Recreational pier
- A nice bathroom facility; replace the old one
- Nicer trash cans
- Improve restrooms
- More seating
- Wifi
- Fountain

- Flower garden
- Light the Ariggoni Bridge
- Dog Park
- Water sculpture (Singapore)
- Ferris Wheel

Winter ideas

- Indoor activities
- Ice-skating rink
- Cross-country skiing trails
- Snow shoeing along the water

RIVER USE

Boating:

- A barge/ floating building/ pontoon boat
- Barge cafes
- Marine tourism
- Tour boat
- Paddle boats
- Kayaks and canoes
- Jet skis
- Historic ships for excursions
- Cruise all night on the riverfront
- Boat rental
- Docking space/ Floating docks
- Boat launches – for motorized boats and non-motorized boats
- A new, good sized community boathouse – large, with banquet facilities. There are at least four crews already there

and could have more.

- Marina located on river or in a cove created in Sumner Brook
- Seaport-type idea – tall ships, have the Amistad come back
- There could be boat access to the Brownstone Adventure Park from the Middletown waterfront
- Need boat storage

Water Recreation:

- Beach
- Swimming area near the south end, or where Sumner Brook comes out
- Outdoor pool or floating pool
- Pier with a cover with swings (e.g. Charleston Pier)
- Harbor district with its own personality, separate but connected to the main street
- Fishing area or pier.
- Sponsor more activities to tie into the Bass Tournament and hold more fishing events
- Get the regatta back up and running and offer more activities that tie into the downtown
- Beach for a variety of uses

CULTURAL USES

- Public library in the park
- Cultural Center that is open to the river with lots of different programs– theater, HS plays, library programs for older kids in the summer (e.g. backyard scientist program at the river as opposed to the library courtyard.)
- Piazza for community gatherings

Events:

- Smaller events there – art and food festivals, water fire, etc.
- Outdoor movies
- Outdoor music
- Outdoor circus
- Folk festival
- Outdoor theater program
- Shakespeare at the Riverfront instead of in the park
- More events for seniors (and improve access for seniors)

Amenities:

- A music shell
- Seating for the fireworks
- Stadium seating, bleachers for people to watch the races
- Amphitheater

Art:

- An art center on the river with indoor gallery space, a plaza and performance space for 300 seats
- An arts and crafts fair on the water at Harbor Park
- Water-themed art
- Projection art
- Sidewalk art festival
- Performing arts center – a signature, eco-friendly building

HISTORIC

- History info about Middletown, the frigates, the first settlers, the Native Americans

- The riverfront's heritage should be celebrated with a museum or make it a docking point for historic ships, as in Mystic and Essex. Could look at whole region.
- The museum could be incorporated into a civic or cultural center with the library. Historical society could also use more exhibit space, some of the art in city hall is very valuable

COMMERCIAL

- Food retail
- Food trucks
- Food truck rallies
- Old style taffy, ice cream on the boardwalk
- Farmers market
- A beer garden with mostly outdoor seating
- Vendors selling flags, balloons
- Vendors renting canoes or paddle boats
- Maybe put a bigger pavilion for the vendors, although that can be risky.
- Plaza with vendors and activities, near the Canoe Club, start at Harbor Park and lead the way south
- Food vendors – get them in for the big events and then have them stay on a regular basis
- Agricultural area

DEVELOPMENT

- Housing on the OMO site, and on the Jackson corrugated Industrial
- Incubator space for artists, makers, artisans

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Use trails as economic development catalyst. Many

examples of towns that attract tourists to ride or walk trails and also stop to shop and dine.

- Promote tourism; provide tourist information
- Go after more grants
- Downtown: for every \$1 spent by people from Middletown, \$3 are spent by people from outside

EXAMPLES

- Guilford Art Center and art fair
- Providence riverfront
- Paris Plage
- Portland OR interactive fountains
- Portsmouth, NH
- Brownstone Park in Portland: adventure and water park
- Zip lines: Monkey Trunks in New Hampshire and Hillsdale NY, Tree Tops
- Charleston, SC riverfront – has a great splash fountain for kids
- New Haven beach area
- Brooklyn Flea
- Tai Chi lessons from Friends of the Hammanshaset Park
- Bangor, Maine festival
- Pontoon boat in Essex is their eco-museum
- The Frying Pan, bar and café on a boat in the Hudson River
- Parks along the Rhine River in Germany
- Pontoon boat at Essex gives eco-tours
- Stanley Park in Vancouver
- Boathouse on Hartford riverfront
- Pedestrian bridge across river in Omaha
- Worcester, MA Quinsigmett

- High Line

INFORMATION

- Wilcox Island used to have an amusement park back in the day
- Wilcox Island used to be a center of activity – always flooded, but there were boats to take people there and a suspended bridge
- Carousel could only be movable, because of flooding

POSSIBLE PARTNERS

- Wesleyan Univeristy
- Wesleyan Student committee
- Middlesex Community college
- Mercy High School : explore science programming on the river if there is a place to bring the HS kids to, would love to partner with the colleges to help run the programs
- YMCA
- Portland
- Canoe Club
- The Chamber of Commerce

WORKSHOP FINDINGS:

SUMMARY OF PLACEMAKING WORKSHOP RESULTS

SEPTEMBER 26 & 28, 2013

Middletown, Connecticut Riverfront

On September 26 and 28, 2013, PPS facilitated two public placemaking workshops intended to gather ideas for how to best program and revitalize Middletown's Riverfront so that it can become an extraordinary necklace of waterfront destinations and a great asset for the city and the region. After years of planning, Middletown is poised to transform its riverfront from a place used by few on a regular basis, hosting but a few large events per year, into a great waterfront used and enjoyed by all throughout the day and the year. Recent redevelopment opportunities, including the decommissioning of the waste treatment plant, and the clearance of the Peterson site, along with residential and mixed-use development proposed for privately owned land near the river have made this visioning effort timely and exciting.

Over 150 residents of Middletown attended the two workshops and shared their vision for the riverfront. The workshops began with a presentation by PPS of great waterfronts from around the world, including the elements that make them successful. Benchmarks were research and selected based on the information and preliminary ideas PPS had collected in a series of stakeholder focus groups and interviews conducted prior to the public workshops. The workshops included group visits to selected sites along the riverfront, and participants were charged with brainstorming ideas for the specific site they had visited as a group.

Middletown's transit agency provided transportation to the sites further removed from City Hall where the workshops took place. Participants were asked for their opinions on how to best attract a variety of users to the riverfront, how to make it more welcoming and better connects, and how it could provide appropriate programs and activities and allow and encourage social interactions. Special attention was given to water uses and ideas for increasing the access and enjoyment of the river for the people of Middletown and the entire region. Presented below is a summary of workshop findings organized by site.

RIVER ROAD/RUSHFORD CENTER AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL/EDUCATION:

- Use water treatment plant as education Museum and education plantings
- Aquarium similar to Burlington VT
- Nature center
- Improve well houses area (viewpoints/decks/murals)
- Educational/nature trails(>2015)
- Nature walk
- Bird watching
- Solar panels

RECREATION:

- Short-term: dog park, 5K, fishing, walking, biking (events)
- Picnic tables/benches
- Jogging

- Biking
- Tai chi
- Skinny cycling
- Playground
- Snow shoeing
- Winter tents
- Camping
- Bonfires
- Fishing / hunting hut as multi-use facility
- Ball field
- Showmobile

WATER RELATED:

- Water craft take out area
- Small boat launch (non-motorized)
- Fishing
- Improvements : Clear underbrush for better view; more entrances to the river (access); Signage and lighting; repave.

CULTURAL

- Concerts
- Passive music

COMMERCIAL:

- A little restaurant, maybe at Rushford center
- Parking area

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- Short-term: 5K, food trucks
- Green eco-community development/housing
- Road bike race – starting point

ACCESS:

- Water taxi
- Tram
- Boardwalk
- Tram-trolley

TOP 3:

- Boat launch
- Tram terminal
- Hiking, biking and fishing

LQC

- Ride the rails (unicycles?)

PARTNERS:

- Garden Club
- United way - learning trail
- Parks and Recreation
- MG club/pedal power
- Forest and Park Association
- Safe streets
- Jonah center
- Carter group
- Connecticut Valley Railway
- State of Connecticut
- Rushford
- Federal government
- Sponsorship of places/paths/parts
- Middlesex historical Society
- Portland Marina

RIVER ROAD /JACKSON CORRUGATED

RIVER ROAD:

- Active recreation
- Marketplace
- Arts
- Connection to main street
- Education

JACKSON CORRUGATED:

- Hotel/conference hall /event space
- Arts and culture destination:
- Studios
- Exhibits

RECREATION:

- Water park (Fountain, Wading Pond)
- Sports field
- Boating
- Market stalls
- Biking
- Walking
- Running road races
- Bocce
- Volleyball
- Tennis courts (Where?)
- Historic vessel
- Regatta
- Ferris wheel
- Ice skating (Seasonal)

- Walk
- Fishing pier
- Bird watching
- Observational stands/Telescopes
- Zip line
- Playground
- Pedal cabs
- Skinny cycling
- Boating
- Boat Launch
- Small boat put in
- Boardwalk
- Waterski
- Kayaks
- Canoes

COMMERCIAL:

- Residential
- Hotel
- Event venue
- Convention center
- Market area 4 Season
- Adaptive Reuse
- Working art studios
- Dance / Music studios
- Ballroom
- Restaurant
- Cooking facility
- Event space

- Rotating restaurants – Pop-up restaurants
- Indoor market (and outdoors)
- Upper residential above retail

CULTURE:

- Music
- Concert venue
- Shipbuilding
- Pier
- Food festival
- Art installation
- Farmers market
- Beer garden
- Sliders
- Small performance space

SEASONAL:

- Boat parade
- Seasonal fairs
- St. Paddy's Day
- Oktoberfest
- Ice rink with hot chocolate, market, fire pits, marshmallows, hot cider, etc.

ENVIRONMENTAL:

- Learning barge (a la Science barge)
- Arboretum
- Weekly cleanup
- Wesleyan university community
- Buckets with waste (?) / fishing line
- Touch tanks, net scoop for marine life/maritime education
- Found object art

HISTORIC:

- Sylven/Feldsrat
- Ghost tours

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- Movies
 - Concerts
 - River rafting (?)
 - Flea / free-market
- LQC*
- Sculpture center
 - Kayak rental
 - Wading post
 - Multi age park (Playscape)
 - Temporary building blocks
 - Temporary skate park (seasonal)

ACCESS:

- Signage
- Connect to other existing trails
- Train tracks
- Pedy cabs

PARTNERS:

- Wesleyan
- Kid City
- Recreation Department
- Local Restaurants (Food Trucks)
- Central Connecticut Middlesex Cc
- Boys and Girls Club
- Pratt and Whitney

- Clean Energy

WASTE TREATMENT PLANT

RECREATION:

- Games and sports (rock climbing, skating)
- Area for lawn games – badminton, soccer, volleyball, etc.
- Walking path
- Playground
- Water play
- Creative splash art
- Skating rink
- Picnic area
- Terraces
- Plaza
- Road race

TANK REUSE:

- Wave pool in long tanks
- Fishing
- Fish run
- River education splash pad
- Dive pool
- Regular pool in smaller tank
- Hydroponic grow tank
- ice-skating / swimming
- Permaculture demos
- Botanical gardens (water lilies)
- Aquaponics / aqua culture

STRUCTURE REUSE:

- Go higher: lookout terrace
- Gathering space / Community room
- Concert space/connect two tops (with the zip line)
- Black box theater
- Indoor recreational space
- Climbing gym – indoor and out
- Zipline between structures – climbing and trapeze classes
- Indoor skateboarding / BMX space/ roller rink
- Indoor archery range
- Bowling alley
- Graffiti wall project with local teens
- Space for teens “clubhouse”
- Big screen movies/projection in and out
- Big benches/swing benches/sculpture
- Archimedes screws as installation art

ENVIRONMENTAL:

- Open up views to the river
- Wetlands study
- Arboretum to be linked to Wesleyan programs
- Permaculture gardens linked to aquaponic tanks

COMMERCIAL:

- Restaurant on top floor with views of the river
- Boutiques
- Banquet facility
- Recreation facility in tanks and structure

WATER RELATED:

- Adaptive reuse of existing building ground floor for boat house

- Marina / boat launch
- Schooner permanently docked, maybe with restaurant in it

CULTURE:

- Music venue / night club
- Black box theater
- Arts and crafts show space

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES - LQC:

- Oddfellows circus
- Regatta
- farmers market
- Beer garden
- Food trucks
- Yoga classes
- Floating stage

ACCESS:

- Use the railroad
- Trolley
- Water taxi for special events

PARTNERS:

- Kid City
- Wesleyan

OMO SITE

BUILDING REUSE:

- Theater /concert Hall/performance space/Gallery space
- Market: small shops restaurants eateries restaurants bars cafés
- Residential (if not cleaned up)

- Covered amphitheater for music & performance
- Lots of shops near multi age residential
- Performance space with associated classrooms for drama/ dance /film
- Residential - on stilts
- Restore the building
- Boutiques
- Coffee shops
- Artist studios and art shows
- Gallery space
- Quincy market on small-scale
- Historic Museum
- Limited number of offices
- Eating opportunities

COURTYARD REUSE:

Park that has many uses especially artistic

- Park with multiple recreational opportunities including sports playground and indoor Cultural performance space.
- Small shops/food trucks/kiosks as well as lavatory facilities.
- Public parking
- Multiage fountains
- Pond
- Skating rink

LQC

- Music/performance/eating
- Clean up near buildings, get volunteers,
- Recycle junk metal

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- Festivals+ performances. This site would anchor the

waterfront proper with facilities and space that is less constrained by edge of river.

CULTURAL:

- Performance space 200-300 people to be alive day and night, weekend and weekday

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:

- B of building (+adult education Mt Community College)
- Tie to Sumner Brook

RECREATION:

- Access to brook
- Fishing and kayaks on Sumner Brook
- Summer small boat launch
- Kite flying contest on the river (windy along the river)

ACCESS:

- Improve Walnut Street access
- Signage
- Riverwalk and eventually rail
- Public transportation such as a tram, also bikeway walkway and some car traffic would be needed.
- Parking (landscaped)

PARTNERS:

- Oddfellow's
- Green Street Theater
- Shakespeare Co
- City Parks and Recreation
- Energy efficient transportation engineers
- Biking and walking groups
- City Creates
- Public Works Dept

PETERSON SITE

RECREATION AND WATER RELATED:

- Small-scale sports (volleyball, basketball)
- Pond for toy boats in summer / ice-skating in winter
- Biking (using River Road)
- Bike rental & repair
- Kayaks and paddle boats rentals (Pick up and bring people back)
- Marina slips (maybe need to dredge)
- Restroom facility
- Splash pad
- Playground
- Boat repair

CULTURAL:

- Concert barge
- Interactive public art (sculptures anchored on the water)

COMMERCIAL:

- Beer garden
- Food trucks
- Bait shop
- Boat storage

ENVIRONMENTAL:

- Use Sumner creek, create a trail
- Trail along the river
- Take advantage of views
- Protect/enhance natural habitats

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- Fireworks

- Boat races, regatta
- International bass fishing contest
- Public kayaking/canoe
- Concerts
- Craft fairs
- Outdoor theater

SHORT-TERM:

- Environmental study of site
- Cosmetic landscaping - cut grass, clear sightline along Brook
- Sidewalk on existing bridge over brook
- Soft launch for canoes kayaks
- Benches and picnic tables
- Cleanup site make grassy area now
- Picnic tables (hadoop meadows)
- Benches
- Volleyball (host tournaments)
- Setup temporary stage and have a few pilot concerts
- Lights
- Signage

LONG-TERM:

- Public boat launch (deeper and faster water in this part of the river)
- Cove with small boat marina, canoes, kayaks (shallower water)
- Dredging / cleaning the brook
- Multi-use river walk connecting Peterson site, Columbus Park and downtown over the brook
- Parking and public access to site
- Need room for 50+ trailers/vehicles, so qualifies as a

potential boat launch

ACCESS:

- Entrance from Union Street
- Bridge over Sumner Creek to Harbor Park
- Water taxis

PARTNERS:

- Wesleyan
- YMCA
- Middletown arts commission
- Show Mobile
- Chorale/Symphony band/AA farm

BOATHOUSES / UNION ST.

- Lights and arch/gateway leading to the river at the end of Union Street
- Skating rink in winter next to the boat houses

UNION ST

- Open to riverfront
- Improve look-highway, brick sidewalks on both sides of road
- "Welcome to the riverfront"
- Signage – additional, more prominence
- Access – trolley, ADA, better crosswalks
- Sumner Brook – bridge, reconfigure road
- Foot bridge – closer to river point and connect paths
- More activity on Union St
- Connect YMCA to riverfront – sailing program, afterschool / vacation activities
- More seating – chairs, benches around the boathouses
- Grassy access – kayak launch and canoe

LQC:

- Clean up,
- Signage (replicate current city signage),
- Seating
- Chairs,
- Play scape/Play area,
- Water feature,
- Programs and activities LQC

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

- Music: move some concerts from green to riverfront
- Art type activities
- Yoga/other physical activities
- Fishing- place to fish and spot to gut
- Boat houses: convert to 1 large complex to serve multiple crew teams
- 2nd floor: revenue making area large enough to accommodate large groups for events, Deli
- Possible restructuring – move new boathouse closer to water
- Area south of boathouse: bike rental, picnic area, food trucks
- Focus on walking vs accommodating cars
- North or South: Water area – fountains and pool
- Move Columbus Statue
- Dev. Adaptive rowing program w/ Middlesex hospital a ramp will be needed
- Kayak and canoe access
- Sidewalks on south side need brick everywhere
- Parking an issue for regattas, need shuttles, trolley, focus on walking
- Bike paths and bike rentals

- Food trucks in summer
- Problem by restaurant – no clear walking path, reconnect

COMMERCIAL/ACCESS:

- Union St access – attractive / signage.
- Increase activities, connect w/ YMCA
- Face lift for businesses along Union Street
- Small building used to be an Oyster Warehouse (should be preserved)

RECREATION

- Trail,
- Picnic Area,
- Foot bridge,
- Fishing
- Boating (various options)
- Play

CULTURAL

- Art Classes,
- Yoga classes,
- Outdoor performance space

HARBOR PARK

RECREATION

- Playground for younger kids with squirt fountain
- Connect walking path
- Giant chess
- Table games – chess, dominoes, majong, cards
- Informal game area for basketball, horseshoes, volleyball, skateboarding

WATER USES

- Boat rental
- Dock for transient boats (by pavilion)
- Teach kids how to build boats
- Rowing for kids

EDUCATION

- Educational boat - Tall ship or educational play boat with hands-on experience maybe tied with Kid City pirate ship
- Historic pictures of ocean trade on waterfront / rum trade: historic boats + rum + pirates + fun event sponsored by Bacardi?
- Historic re-enactment 17th-century village with help from the historical society

COMMERCIAL

- Food concession at pavilion
- Food truck with nice seating areas – tables, umbrellas, lights
- Bike and game rentals at pavilion
- Paddle boat rentals (?)
- Vecchitto's in the park

ACCESS

- Improve walk - make it continuous multi-use trail that is not broken up to the bridge, Get people onto the bridge and over to Portland, walk to Portland was like a "right of passage"
- Tunnel art: light projections, interactive motion activated rotating art, sound art, school art and mural projects
- Provide access to Cromwell, to Wilcox Island, to Portland
- Water taxis for access to Rushford Center area
- Bike taxis/pedicabs
- Sound and noise barrier between RT 9 and park for safety and noise pollution – plan trees as a buffer from the highway

- Make it the great gateway to "one of 10 'last great places'" in Middletown

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Crafts and arts fair (one step up from flea market)
- Portable ice skating rink
- Christmas light show (like Hubbard park in Hartford)
- Boat parade
- Laser show
- Outdoor movies
- Barge with music (floating stage)
- Grade the slope from the highway in terraces for seating to view large events like 4th of July, the regatta, new events

SEASONAL

- Ice skating in Winter
- Marshmallows with fire pits to roast them (portable)
- Harvest festival in Fall
- Connect to events on Main Street
- Extend events to water but improve Union Street for pedestrians
- Christmas market
- Hot chocolate, hot cider
- A beach with sand volleyball court and deck chairs/ Adirondack chairs

LQC

- Winter Festival - link to holiday on Main with marching band to ice rink

CONTACT INFORMATION

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5 EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRIAL REUSE IN EUROPE



Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex
Essen, Germany



Westergasfabriek
Asmterdam, the Netherlands



Carlsberg Breweries
Copenhagen, Denmark



Renault car industry plots
Boulogne-Billancourt, France



Duisburg Meiderich ironworks
Duisburg, Germany

ZOLLVEREIN WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Site characteristics

- _ 250 acres
- _ 3 miles to Essen city center
- _ representative of traditional heavy industries in Europe with an modern industrial architecture in the Bahaus style

Industrial history

- 1847: first coal mine
- 1851 - 1986: continuous mining activities
- 1986: Zollverein is closed, being the last remaining active coal mine in Essen.
- 1993: decommission of the Zollverein coking plant

Recent history

1986: The state of North Rhine-Westphalia bought the coal mine territory immediately after it had been closed down and declared shaft 12 a heritage site (symbol of the German heavy industry). —> obligation to preserve the site in its original state

1990: refurbishment and conversion measures for turning the site into an international center for culture (*preservation through conversion*)

1993: At the coking plant decommission, the state of NRW set the coal mine on a list of future exhibition sites.

2000: The cokery became an official heritage site.

2001: UNESCO declared the central shaft facilities of Zollverein XII, the Shafts 1/2/8 and the coking plant premises as a **World Heritage Site**.

2010: The Ruhr Area is European Capital of Culture with Zollverein as an international center for culture and the creative industry.



Today activities

History _ cultural highlights, guided tours, museums (Ruhr museum, portal of industrial heritage with multimedia-based information...)

Contemporary culture _ concerts, Performing Arts Choreographic Center, Contemporary design museum, art installations, art workshops

Seasonal leisure/sport events _ sun wheel, swimming pool, ice rink

Dining and drinking _ 5 restaurants

Rental event locations

_ a total of 150,000 square feet from small studios, offices, showrooms and galleries to large trade fair and exhibition halls

_ in 2009, Zollverein was voted as the most attractive event location in Germany (architecture, culture, leisure...).



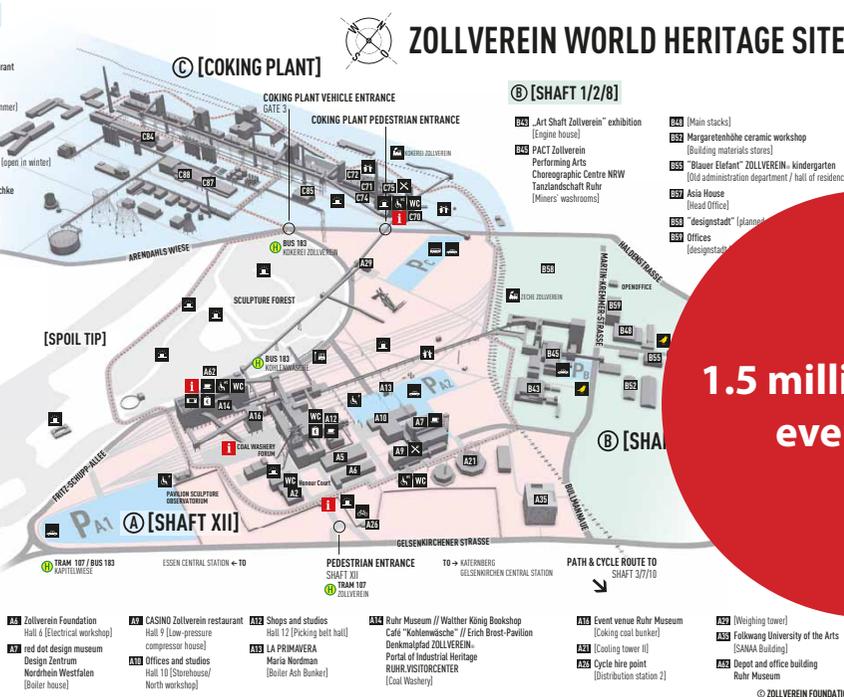
© [COKING PLANT]

- 071 Coking Plant Info Point
"die kokerei" - cafe & restaurant
Denkmalpfad ZOLLVEREIN:
(Mining plant)
- 072 Sun Wheel (open in spring/summer)
(Coke oven battery)
- 073 Solar power plant
(Quenching house, east)
- 074 ZOLLVEREIN-ice-skating rink (open in winter)
- 075 Works Swimming Pool
Daniel Mühnicke und Dirk Paschke
- 076 Erwin L. Hahn Institute for
Magnetic Resonance Imaging
(Control centre)
- 078 (Distribution station II)
(Salt loading area)
- 079 The Palace of Projects
Ilya und Emilia Kabakov
(Salt store)

- I INFO POINT
- R RESTAURANT
- C CAFÉ, SNACK BAR
- S SHOP
- Z ZOLLVEREIN- MEDIAGUIDE
- P PUBLIC RESTROOM
- N BARRIER-FREE RESTROOM
- A PLAY AREA
- O OUTDOOR ART
- D DESIGN PROMENADE
- T TRAIN STATION
- C CYCLE HIRE POINT
- P CAR PARKING
- D DISABLED PARKING
- C COACH PARKING
- B BUS STOP
- ... CIRCULAR WALK

Ⓐ [SHAFT XII]

- 051 Zollverein Foundation
Hall 2
(Transformer and
distribution station)
- 052 Event Hall
Hall 5 (Central workshop)



ZOLLVEREIN WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Ⓑ [SHAFT 1/2/8]

- 053 Art Shaft Zollverein" exhibition
(Engine house)
- 054 PACT Zollverein
Performing Arts
Choreographic Centre NRW
Tanzlandschaft Ruhr
(Miners' washrooms)
- 055 (Main stacks)
- 056 Margaretenhöhe ceramic workshop
(Building materials stores)
- 057 "Blauer Elefant" ZOLLVEREIN- Kindergarten
(Old administration department / hall of residence)
- 058 Asia House
(Visual Office)
- 059 "designstadt" (planned)
- 060 Offices
(designstadt)

1.5 million visitors
every year

- 051 Zollverein Foundation
Hall 4 (Electrical workshop)
- 052 red dot design museum
Design Zentrum
Nordrhein Westfalen
(Boiler house)

- 053 CASINO Zollverein restaurant
Hall 9 (Low-pressure
compressor house)
- 054 Offices and studios
Hall 10 (Storehouse/
North workshop)

- 055 Shops and studios
Hall 12 (Picking bott hall)
- 056 LA PRIMAVERA
Maria Nordman
(Boiler Ash Banker)

- 057 Ruhr Museum // Walther Kinig Bookshop
Café "Kohlenwische" // Erich Brost-Pavillon
Denkmalpfad ZOLLVEREIN-
Park of Industrial Heritage
RUHR VISITOCENTER
(Coal Washery)

- 058 Event venue Ruhr Museum
(Coking coal bunker)
- 059 (Cooling tower II)
- 060 Cycle hire point
(Distribution station 2)

- 061 (Weighing tower)
- 062 Folkwang University of the Arts
(SANA Building)
- 063 Depot and office building
Ruhr Museum

ZOLLVEREIN WORLD HERITAGE SITE



An industrial site developed as a park and cultural center (250 acres)

- > Permanent facilities and programs
- > Temporary programs
- > Events
- > Commercial activities

ZOLLVEREIN WORLD HERITAGE SITE

PERMANENT FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS



historical & art museums / historical monuments / guided tours



art installations



seasonal sun wheel / swimming pool / ice rink



performances & concerts



cultural festivals





art, culture, ceramic... workshops



rental venues for public & private events

WESTERGASFABRIEK CULTURE PARK

Site characteristics

- _ 35 acres
- _ 1 mile to Amsterdam historical city center
- _ located near to waterways, the rail network and access roads
- _ most of the buildings were built by architect Isaac Gosschalk in the Dutch Neo Renaissance style

Industrial history

1885: Among a larger program of 4 coal gas plant building in Amsterdam, the Westergasfabriek (Western Gas Factory) is completed, ranking as the largest gas extraction plant in the Netherlands.

1885: Amsterdam's City Council took over the running of the factory with a phase of production increase and site expansion.

1967: After natural gas was found in the North of the Netherlands, production of gas from the Westergasfabriek stopped permanently.



Recent history

1989: The remaining thirteen buildings of Westergasfabriek were recognized as **national industrial heritage monuments**.

1990 - 2003: Soil studies and cleanup process (\$27 million).

As removing the polluted soil was too expensive, it was isolated by a layer of cloth and a living layer clean soil.

1992:

- _ The District Council of Westerpark took over buildings and surroundings.
- _ Establishment of the Westergasfabriek project team.
- _ To prevent them from standing empty, buildings were rented to artists through one year-lease contracts for **creative and cultural temporary activities** (between 1993 and 2000: hundreds of events and over 100 temporary tenants).

1992 – 2000: **Active neighborhood organizations** played a major role (participation at a call for ideas program, at workshops to share their views on the park and at the choice of the landscape architect).

2000: **Business partnership** between the District Council and the property developer MAB (Meijer Aannemers Bedrijf). Westergasfabriek BV – a MAB subsidiary- restores, develops and operates the buildings.

2003: **The Westergasfabriek Culture Park** opened as a place for main and diverse cultural events.

_ The District Council financed the lay-out of the park (\$27 million) and pays for the maintenance cost.

_ MAB financed the building restoration thanks to a \$42.5 million loan from the National Restoration Fund.

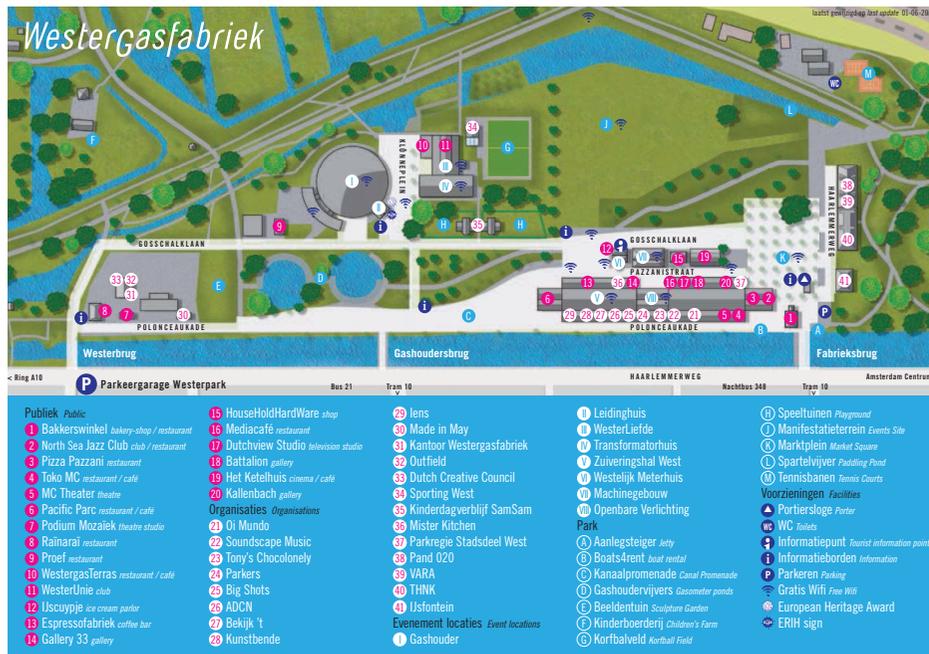
_ The Westergasfabriek project team with the Harvard Design School organized the international congress 'Creativity and the City' on creative economy and industries as motivators for social cohesion and opportunities in the urban environment.

Diversity of cultural activities

- _ mix between **permanent tenants** (theatre companies, restaurants) mainly in the form of cultural activities and **temporary rentals** for festivals and events
- _ The income from commercial events makes it possible for cultural events and neighborhood activities to take place at lower rate.
- _ The Westergasfabriek Foundation has been set up to strengthen the cultural identity.

Diversity of places

- _ a 215,000 sq feet events field able to withstand large crowds (compressed synthetic mats)
- _ ponds created in the foundations of 2 of the demolished gasholders, paddling pool and stream flows functioning with a closed water circulation system because of the soil contamination
- _ sport facilities and playgrounds
- _ diversity of natural atmospheres
- _ various places to eat and drink
- _ rental venues for cultural organizations, festivals, performances and parties



Recent awards

2007: Westerpark won the Landscape Institute Award (international prize for the best park larger than 12 acres).

2004: The Golden Pyramid was awarded to Westerpark district council (state prize for inspiring patronage).

WESTERGASFABRIEK CULTURE PARK



An industrial site developed as a park and cultural center (35 acres)

- > Permanent facilities and programs
- > Permanent tenants
- > Temporary programs
- > Events
- > Commercial activities

WESTERGASFABRIEK CULTURE PARK

PERMANENT FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS



art education center / daycare center



art galleries



night club

**FLYING SOLO
FESTIVAL**

Celebrating the
Art of Solo Performance



cinema / theatre

WESTERGASFABRIEK CULTURE PARK

PERMANENT TENANTS



studio complex



communication agency



international artists accommodation



broadcasting company



music agency

facilities, offices and accommodation for permanent tenants



local sport club



art exhibitions



short-term & flexible rental office spaces



performances & concerts



techno music festival



cinekid festival

AAF

The Affordable Art Fair



Affordable Art Fair Trade



outdoor/indoor rental venues for public & private events





international restaurants, cafés & terraces



stores



monthly Sunday market (homemade crafts and food)



LANDSCAPE DUISBURG NORD PARK

Site characteristics

- _ 450 acres
- _ 3.4 miles to Duisburg Hauptbahnhof (main railway station)
- _ ironworks built in the grandiose style typical of the time of advanced industrialization

Industrial history

1901: construction of a blast furnace complex, immediately adjacent to coal fields

1985: abandon of the coal and steel production plant because of overcapacity in the European steel market



Recent history

1988: The state of North Rhine-Westphalia acquired the site and made the ironworks a project of the Emscher Park International Building Exhibition (IBA).

1988 - 1989: **Citizen protestation** along with engagement of the Emscher Park IBA stopped the demolition of the plant.

1989: launch of an **international landscape architecture competition**

1991: Latz + Partner designed the park with **memory** and **temporality** as key concepts (10-year lay-out works / \$20 million)

1994: A first part of the park opened to public.

1996: Light installations by the artist Jonathan Park started turning on at nightfall.

1997: Founding of the Landscape Park Duisburg Nord GmbH (among the Duisburg Marketing GmbH) for looking after park administration, maintenance and events management.

2001: Opening of the first refurbished industrial buildings with new functions.

“The idea of making time visible”, Peter Latz

- _ park divided into different areas regarding the existing (roads, railways, plants that grew by themselves...)
- _ walkways and waterways on old railways and sewer systems
- _ series of intimate gardens on concrete bunkers
- _ pools for scuba divers on old gas tanks
- _ walls for rock climbers on concrete walls
- _piazza in the middle of the former steel mill

The Piazza Metallica turned into a place for events and performances. The steel plates are not meant to last, they will gradually erode and decay when more grass will grow between them...



Diverse places for diverse activities

- _ leisure / sports / culture / events



LANDSCAPE PARK DUISBURG NORD



An industrial site developed as a leisure, nature and culture park (450 acres)

- > Permanent facilities and programs
- > Temporary programs
- > Events
- > Commercial activities

LANDSCAPE PARK DUISBURG NORD

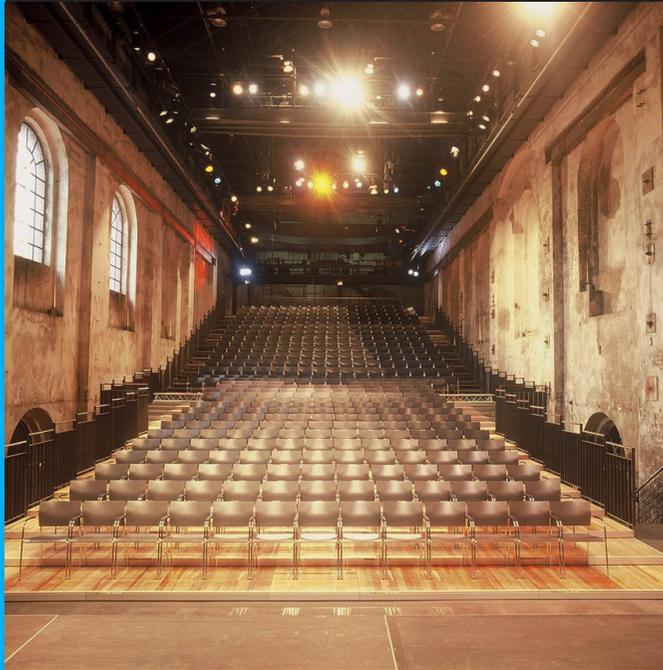
PERMANENT FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS



visitors' center



light installations



theatre



sport facilities



kitchen garden

farm school



...in and out restored industrial buildings
+ facilities for long-term residents (associations, firms, offices, sport clubs...)



art exhibitions



summer outdoor cinema



concerts & festivals



sport events



fair trades

LANDSCAPE PARK DUISBURG NORD

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES



restaurant, beer garden & snack



youth hostel with meeting and conference rooms



night clubs

ILE SEGUIN-RIVE GAUCHE DISTRICT

Site characteristics

- _ 182 acres divided in three different sectors
 - 92-acre mixed-use development
 - 28-acre international innovation hub dedicated to culture and the creative economy on the island
 - 62-acre urban renewal in an existed residential area
- _ 1 mile to Boulogne-Billancourt City Hall (a Paris bordering city)
- _ next to the Seine river, in a as dense as Paris neighborhood



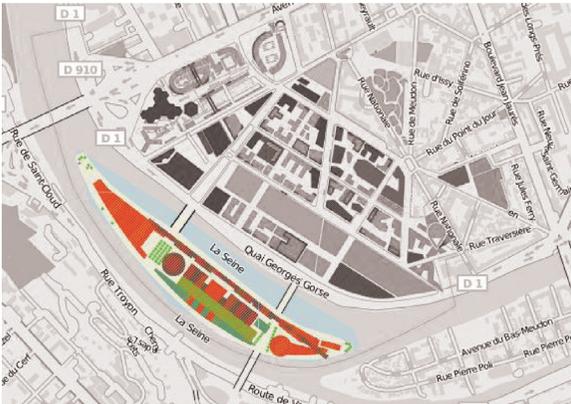
Industrial history

- 1889: foundation of the first Renault plot
- 1919: Renault plots expended reaching 90 acres, as one of the main supports of Boulogne-Billancourt economic development
- 1920s: the first Renault building was erected in Seguin Island
- 1939: the industrial site reached 250 acres
- 1992: the industrial production stopped because the site was no more adapted to new manufacturing processes.

Recent history

- 1997: Renault and the local authorities (the city of Boulogne-Billancourt, bordering cities, the *département* and the region) launched an urban planning program to outline a development plan.
- 2003: Boulogne-Billancourt City Council created a 182-acre joint development zone including an existing residential neighborhood and interchange in need of renovation.
- 2006: Construction works started.

The Seguin Island (28 acres)



a future international innovation hub dedicated to culture and the creative economy
_ open to the public since 2010, it now hosts installations in a prefiguration of its cultural future.

_ sustainable urban project (positive energy buildings, wastewater treatment, green roofs, natural infiltration, reuse of rainwater)

_ Boulogne-Billancourt residents could select the development project for the island among three ones devised by the French renowned architect Jean Nouvel

_ a mixed-use program focused on culture (music & live performance, contemporary arts & numerical circus, cinema).
The entire 2,700,000 sq feet program will be divided as: culture (33%) / accommodation (16%) / offices & activities (44%) / stores (5%) / sport facilities (2%)

_ a 130,000 sq ft park and 300,000 sq ft of open spaces

_ temporary events are today welcome before the project completion in a 4-acre park (500,000 visitors in 3 years):
a visual art center / art exhibitions / circus shows and concerts / an information pavilion to learn the island history and future development / a restaurant / a rental venue for private companies organizing their own events



SEGUIN ISLAND



An industrial site on a Seine river island to be developed as a international hub for culture and creative economy (28 acres), included in a larger mixed-use development and renewal project (182 acres)

> Temporary programs during project implementation (500,000 visitors in 3 years)



outdoor art exhibitions



performances & circus shows



guided tours



information pavilion



preview exhibition cruise



free open-day event (food, music, art installations...)



dismantable facility (restaurant + rental venue for public & private events)



Renault electric vehicles test center