

WATERFRONT BRIDGEPORT

JANUARY 2017



City of Bridgeport

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In memory of Regina Winters Toussaint, 1969 -
2016

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Bridgeport's waterfront, a center of industry in the 19th and 20th centuries, is now ripe for reimagining, reuse, and redevelopment for the 21st century and beyond. The sheer amount of vacant or underutilized land along the water presents a unique opportunity for change. This change requires a step-by-step approach framed within a unified vision.

A Waterfront for Everyone

Bridgeport's waterfront offers potential for new 21st-century jobs as well as recreation and access for both residents and visitors. Nowhere else on the Connecticut coast does such potential lie so close to neighborhoods, businesses, and Downtown.

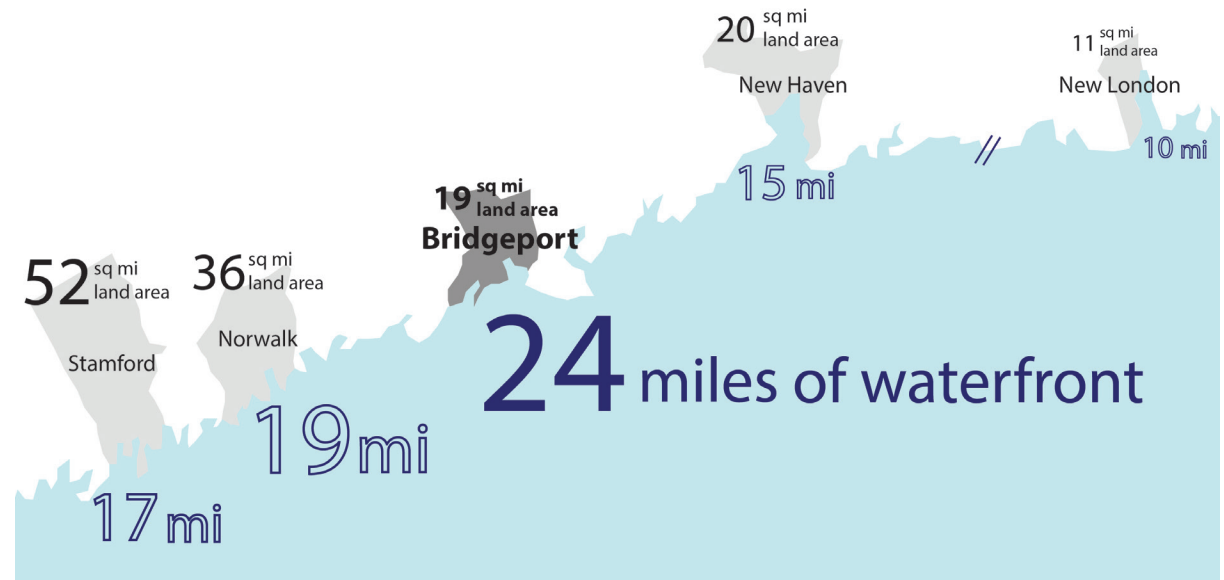
The Waterfront Bridgeport Plan has the following five goals for re-imagining the water's edge:

1. **Increase public access to and along the waterfront**
2. **Create jobs and economic prosperity for residents**
3. **Repurpose vacant or abandoned properties**
4. **Encourage water-based recreation and an active waterfront**
5. **Boost resiliency to protect against climate change effects**

The transformation of Bridgeport's waterfront begins today--and will continue for many decades. The focus is on action, not talk. Temporary activities and events as well as ways to provide waterfront access right now are all part of this plan and are meant to jumpstart change. This plan focuses on projects and actions that, within the next three to five years, can have a significant effect on how the waterfront is perceived, while establishing a framework for long-term change. The City of Bridgeport is committed to action through this multi-part strategy.

What does the future hold for the Bridgeport waterfront?

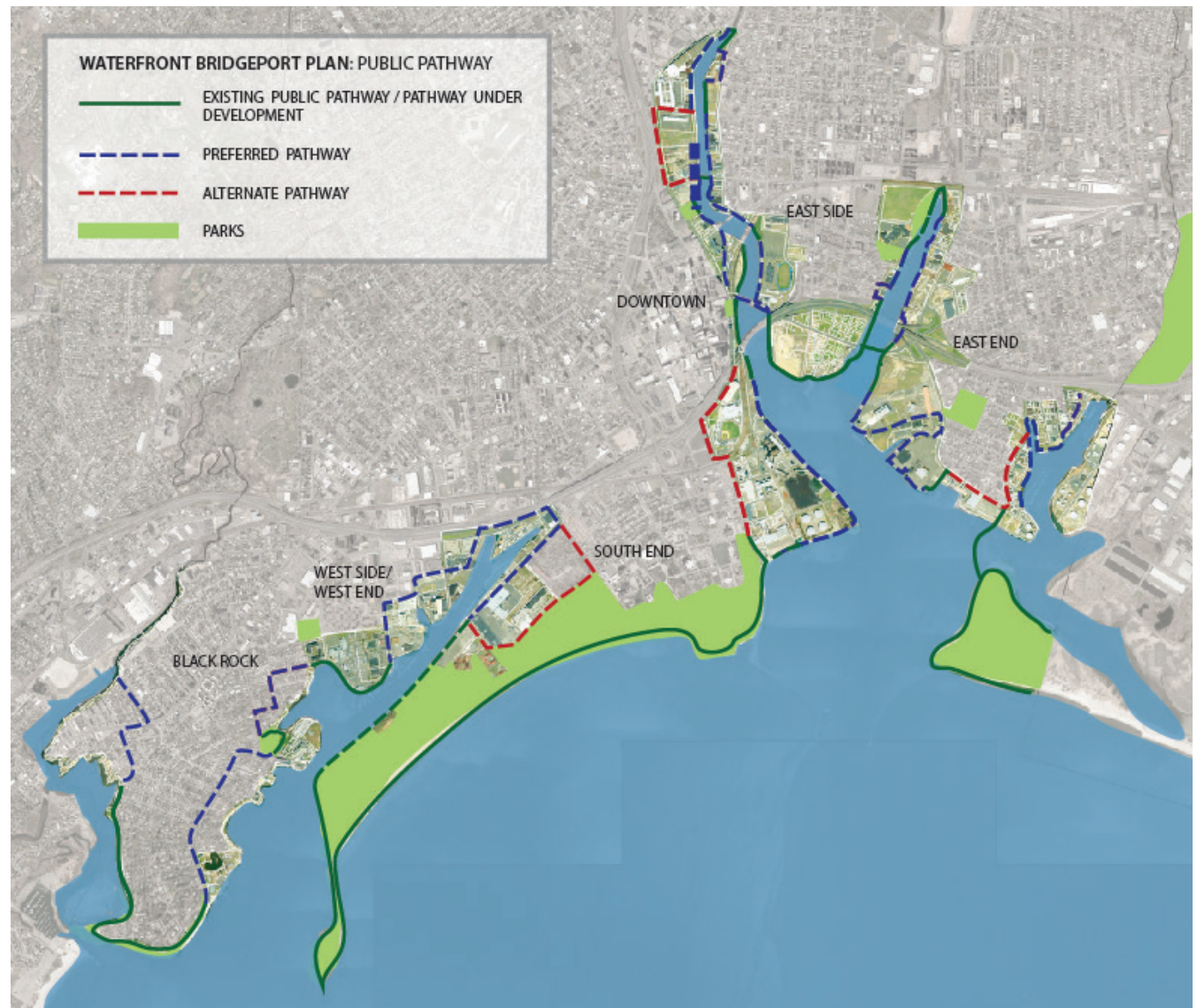
Bridgeport isn't a sleepy New England seaside village, and the city's industrial past gives a unique identity to the waterfront. Bridgeport's waterfront will benefit from a modern take on its industrial history. An embrace of high-tech, sustainable business and construction practices as well as economic innovation shapes



the waterfront guidelines and goals to offer a fresh and exciting take on waterfront living, working, and playing. The strategies in this plan recognize the past that served the city's economy so well, while paving the way for future economic growth that will be based on water access rather than heavy industry.

Expanded public waterfront access is within surprisingly close reach. Of the 24 miles of shoreline in the city, about 30% is already accessible as park space, roughly 50% represents publicly controlled land outside parks, and another 14% is controlled by private owners where public access could be negotiated. This plan envisions existing neighborhoods having newly established access to the waterfront through a continuous public pathway, one that connects to city streets and includes signage (see map at right). This is explored further in a separate Pathway Implementation Kit.

Opportunity sites abound along the water, and the public amenities, neighborhood access, and jobs potential they bring offer exciting



potential. Along the Yellow Mill Channel, **Seaview Avenue** can be home to innovation or co-working space, kayaking, and transit-oriented housing and service businesses, just a short walk from the planned Barnum Train Station. The sound of birds and the vegetation along the Yellow Mill provide a bucolic setting that is a delightful surprise in the core of the city and offers opportunities for long-sought neighborhood waterfront benefits.

On the Pequonnock River, the “**Sliver by the River**” can offer public access and enjoyment in the form of an onshore “beach” (a pocket park, rather than a swimming spot) and temporary dining adjacent to Downtown. Across the river, the **AGI/Shoreline Star** site can host more housing and perhaps a waterfront cluster of restaurants, cafes, and recreation. Connecting these sites is the **Stratford Avenue bridge**, which can play host to public art, signage, and lighting, just a short walk away from Steelpointe Harbor. The visibility of these sites for train commuters and I-95 travelers opens the waterfront to a regional market.





Activation strategies are key here, and public programming/placemaking is a core element of the Waterfront Bridgeport Plan. The entire waterfront—opportunity sites included—offers opportunities for year-round events programming to bring public spaces to life. This could include public art and LED lighting, a beer garden or outdoor café, a farmer’s market, winter-time ice skating, and much more.

This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan incorporates both activation strategies and specific visions for these opportunity sites within a larger framework for the whole waterfront, explored in three sections. It was developed through a comprehensive planning process with input from community members, the City of Bridgeport, public officials, and key waterfront stakeholders beginning in January 2016. Meant to be a guide for action, not simply a summary document, this plan includes detailed recommendations, case studies of similar examples, and goals for implementation.

THANK YOU...

The CivicMoxie team, along with the City of Bridgeport's Office of Planning and Economic Development, Planning Division, would like to thank the many generous members of the community who shared their time, ideas, feedback, and questions with us, shaping this plan for the Bridgeport waterfront. Their insights, which we have considered and incorporated into this plan as much as possible, have enriched this plan greatly and have helped envision a vibrant future for the waterfront.

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And a special thank you to the high school students who served on the Groundwork Bridgeport Green Team, who capably assisted with community engagement, public meeting coordination, and much more:

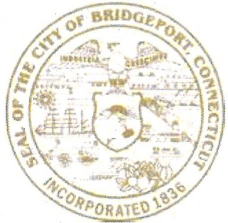
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In Memoriam: Regina Winters Toussaint

Regina, who passed away in April 2016, was a part of the project team and led community engagement efforts for the Waterfront Bridgeport planning process. Her work as an architect and urban planner in Bridgeport and neighboring cities will live on as a powerful legacy, inspiring those who knew her. The CivicMoxie team feels privileged to have worked with her on this project and holds true Regina's commitment to giving a voice to all stakeholders and community members.

...THANK YOU

LETTER FROM THE CITY



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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JOSEPH P. GANIM
Mayor

January 27, 2017

Dear Bridgeporters,

This Waterfront Master Plan was created to unite our City - our civic leaders, our businesses, our community organizations and our public officials - around an exciting new vision for a reinvigorated waterfront. At 24 miles, Bridgeport has the most waterfront of any Connecticut shoreline municipality. The waterfront is our greatest natural resource. Our industry once rose to national prominence on the varied banks of the creeks, rivers, and streams that pour into the Long Island Sound and run through the center of the City. Following the vision laid out in this Plan, our unique waterfront can once again become an engine of growth in a new 21st century economy.

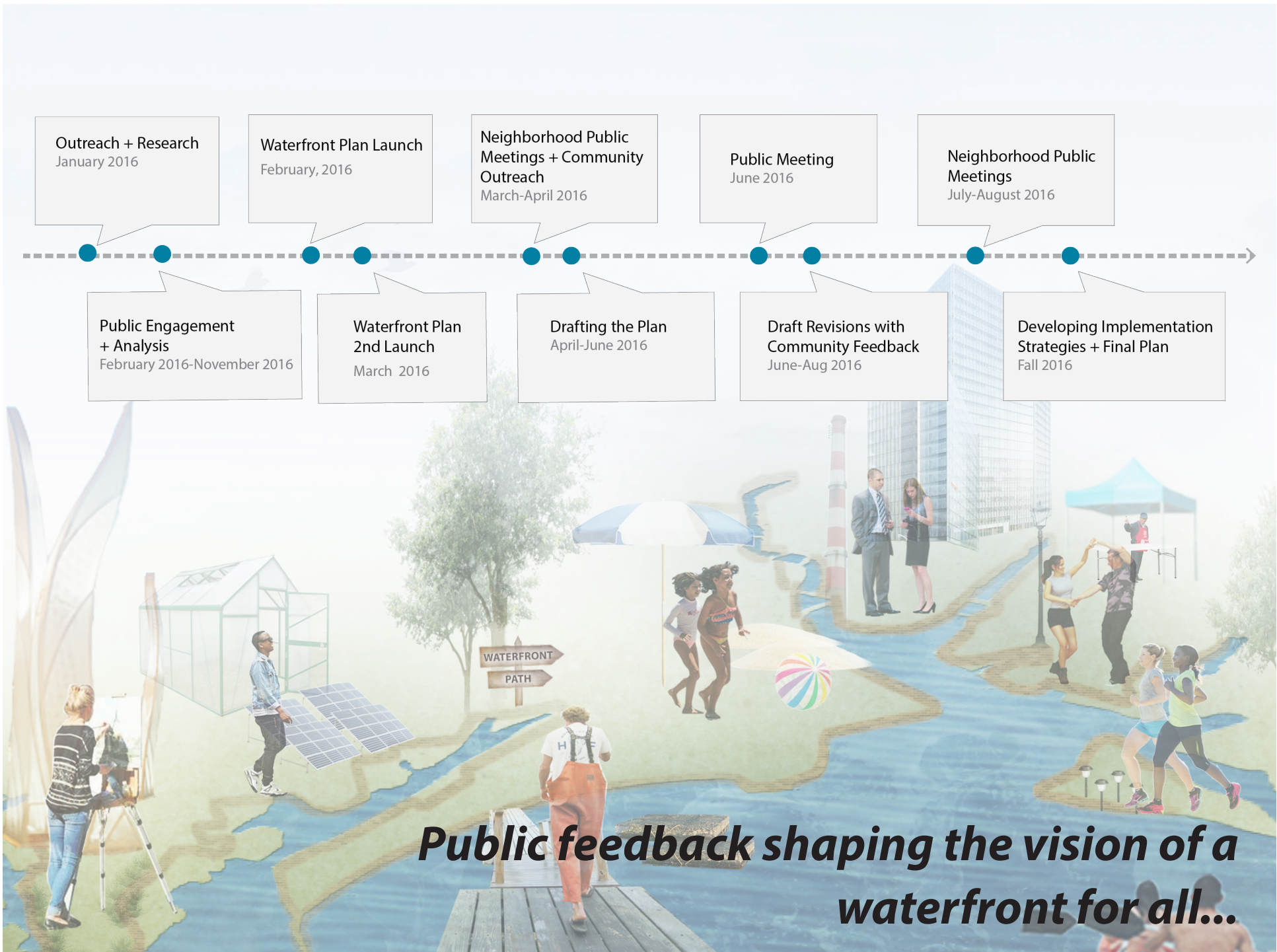
Cities around the world are transforming their once industrial waterfronts into pathways, parks, and points of access for water activities. With a newly clean and accessible waterfront comes new opportunity for business and job creation, while at the same time providing recreational amenities for communities long cut off from the water. We see a waterfront that can be repurposed to increase both health and wealth for all of the citizens of Bridgeport, and this Plan lays out a path towards achieving that vision.

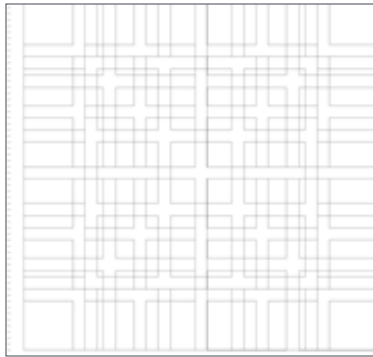
This Waterfront Plan comes from a year-and-a-half-long public engagement process that included six public meetings and dozens of interviews with businesses, city commissions, private developers and non-profit organizations throughout Bridgeport and the region. Implementation of this Plan will be guided by the City, but this Plan is unique in that it also establishes an advisory committee made up of organizations outside of the government that represent various communities and interests. We believe that this structure lays the groundwork for unprecedented grassroots collaboration between the citizens of Bridgeport and the City government.

With this Plan, the City of Bridgeport is expressing its commitment to working towards the transformation and redevelopment of our special waterfront. At the same time, the Plan is a call to action for any person or organization that is interested in the growth of our City, because we will need the help of citizens and businesses throughout the City and region to truly get the most out of our waterfront. I hope that this plan will energize you as much as it has energized us, to work together towards achieving the shared goals of economic growth and improved quality of life, by unlocking the vast potential of the Bridgeport waterfront.

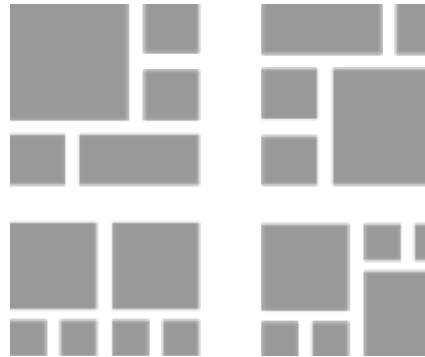
Sincerely,

Joseph P. Ganim
Mayor

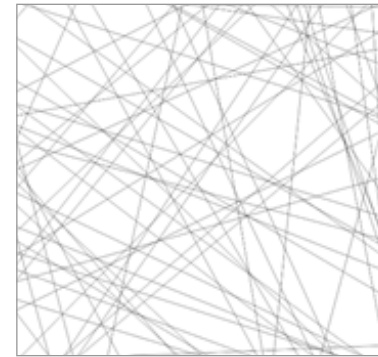




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Framework:

A comprehensive and cohesive approach to waterfront planning that offers clear guidelines for public access, design, and land use.

Opportunity Sites:

Thoughtfully-shaped development on identified opportunity sites to bring new uses and people to vacant and underutilized sites and foster job creation.

Activation:

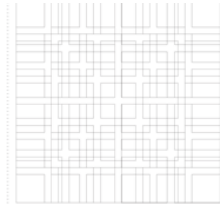
An active waterfront through placemaking, using activities, events, and temporary installations to bring people together and create new waterfront access, perceptions, and enjoyment.

WATERFRONT BRIDGEPORT

FRAMEWORK



Introduction



FRAMEWORK

Comprehensive structure to guide decision-making and action for the Bridgeport waterfront

This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan defines the city's relationship to its waterfront for the 21st century and beyond. Just as the waterfront hosted the industrial uses that were the city's economic backbone in the 1900's, in the future, new uses and activities will define a new era for Bridgeport. Mixed-use development, diversified jobs and entrepreneurship, vibrant public space and programming, coastal resiliency, and a connected waterfront pathway throughout the city will support economic vitality and an improved quality of life in Bridgeport.

What is the Waterfront Framework?

As part of the city's first comprehensive waterfront plan, this Framework will guide decisions about land use, public space and access, neighborhood connections, pathway characteristics, and more. This Framework addresses overarching elements of waterfront revitalization in Bridgeport, which will come into play for nearly every redevelopment project, renovated open space, or new construction along the waterfront. It thus sets the stage for the other two sections of the Waterfront Bridgeport Plan (Opportunity Sites

and Activation), and offers strategies for the following:

- 1. Economic Development:** Reduce uncertainty for residents, businesses, developers, and investors, ensuring everyone knows what to expect; streamline redevelopment to enable positive change; support the recruitment of businesses and investors from beyond Bridgeport, while boosting existing local businesses and entrepreneurs

- 2. Zoning + Compliance:** Recommend overall zoning changes and general enforcement actions to spur revitalization along the waterfront and improve near-term access.
- 3. Public Access + Amenities:** Suggest specific ways to improve quality of life and community access to the water, primarily through the creation of a public waterfront pathway.
- 4. Waterfront Design Standards:** Outline general design standards for waterfront redevelopment projects and public spaces, to enhance the quality and perception of the waterfront.
- 5. Natural Restoration + Resiliency:** Provide guidelines for low-impact development and natural restoration along the water's edge to improve resiliency against severe weather events and sea level rise, in coordination with related initiatives from

the Resilient Bridgeport initiative.

- 6. Waterfront Advocacy + Programming:** Shape the creation of a waterfront coalition to coordinate events, activities, and projects along the water, to promote grassroots implementation responsive to the desires of the community and regional appeal.

Why is a Waterfront Framework Necessary?

This Framework covers more than a plan for a single site or project along the waterfront. Setting the six elements described above into a comprehensive framework is critically important to the successful revitalization of Bridgeport's waterfront, because it gives the City, waterfront advocates, neighborhood residents and leaders, property owners, and developers shared guidelines for action.

As revitalization of the waterfront builds momentum, everyone connected to the water will have the information needed to understand shared goals, the challenges and possibilities involved, the recommended strategies for achieving them, and their own responsibilities and opportunities.

Other cities have used similar frameworks to guide their waterfront revitalization, with strong results. The 2001 *A Vision Plan for Pittsburgh's Riverfronts* plan provided community-wide momentum for revitalizing Pittsburgh's waterfront and constructing its riverfront parks, while the ongoing Waterfront Seattle program incorporates multiple complex projects to improve public access to the city's central waterfront, with a framework plan developed in 2012 as a guiding overall vision. Like these cities, Bridgeport and its waterfront will benefit from a thoughtful, broad structure to guide future projects anywhere on the water.

City's Commitment

The City understands that waterfront revitalization is a game changer for Bridgeport, which can catalyze further transformation away from the water's edge; its long but relatively underutilized shoreline represents untapped potential. City decision-makers recognize that revitalization will require partnerships and a long-term commitment to real action, and this framework lays out expectations for all involved. The City specifically is committed to build these partnerships, demonstrate the ability to move forward, and foster a collaborative spirit amongst residents, advocates, and businesses, as well as a sense of mutual trust within the community.

Public officials will also have an important role in zoning changes, compliance enforcement for waterfront uses, and the adoption of other measures suggested in this Framework to guide redevelopment, increase public access, and restore and support the natural environment. The City will also act as a key partner in a future waterfront coalition for advocacy and programming.

How This Framework Was Developed:

The following criteria were considered in aligning this Framework to neighborhood needs, business opportunities, economic forces, land characteristics, and overall City goals:

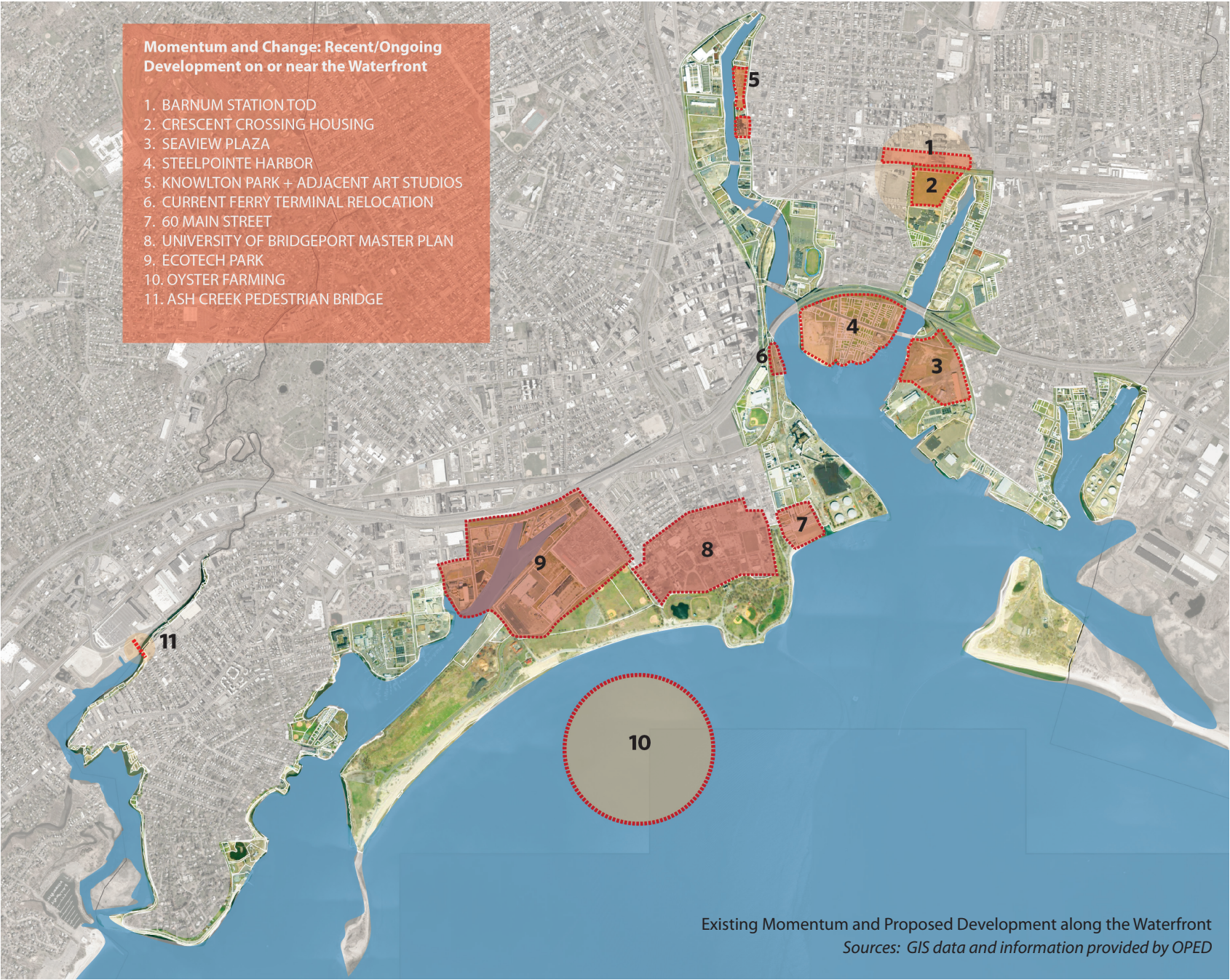
- **Neighborhood Connections** – the waterfront formerly provided jobs for residents at the price of physical access from the neighborhoods. Although the Bridgeport economy has largely shifted away from industry and shipping, vacant waterfront sites are still off-limits; this plan identifies new possibilities for jobs, physical and visual connections, and programming of spaces that relink the waterfront to neighborhoods.
- **Brownfields** – Waterfront properties that have some level of environmental contamination from industrial chemicals and other materials present particular challenges for reuse. Revitalizing these blighted properties can create positive change—by reducing contamination, improving the image of the waterfront, enhancing livability and safety, and expanding the tax base. This plan takes into account the environmental hazard data currently at hand and makes recommendations for redevelopment accordingly.
- **Water Dependent Uses** – The State of Connecticut recognizes that “[Water Dependent] uses include, but are not limited to marinas, commercial fishing or boating facilities and uses that provide general public access to coastal waters.” - Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) section 22a-93(16). This plan recognizes the activities that still rely on water access as well as potential water dependent uses, such as recreational waterfront activities and general public access. Many of the commercial property owners along the Bridgeport waterfront no longer depend on water access; relocation of these businesses to other sites or enforcement of easement regulations could open up public access to the water, promote economic development, and boost the city's image. Likewise, preserving existing public access and protecting active, value-generating water dependent uses enhances the vitality of the waterfront.
- **Market Forces** - What is the demand in the city and region for office space, housing, and

retail? What are the barriers to development in the city and along the waterfront? This Framework is grounded in real data and economic conditions, while accounting for the unique and added value that waterfront access adds to many development types.

- **Public/Private Ownership** – Parcels owned or otherwise controlled by the City of Bridgeport represent opportunities for early action and are thus considered high-priority. Likewise, sites with private owners interested in relocating and/or redeveloping are also high-priority, where they complement existing momentum for revitalization.
- **Existing Momentum + Development** – Where are the most visible and exciting signs of change on or near the waterfront? This plan builds on these initiatives to ensure that positive momentum continues. (See map on following page.)
- **Natural Restoration Opportunities** – Where can – and should – waterfront land be restored or allowed to return to its natural ecological state, even in small patches? In addition to traditional parks for active recreation, passive natural space (e.g. wetlands or grassy riverbanks) offers a multitude of community benefits, chiefly protection against storm surge and sea level rise. Other “green infrastructure” measures, such as permeable paving surfaces, should be incorporated into all waterfront developments to support the City’s resiliency goals and to protect residents and investments.
- **Flood Risk** – What are the most at-risk areas for flooding according to FEMA, which may also cause difficulties getting certain development projects permitted and/or funded? This Framework uses current information, including available data on risk from estimated sea level rise and severe weather, to shape recommendations.

Momentum and Change: Recent/Ongoing Development on or near the Waterfront

1. BARNUM STATION TOD
2. CRESCENT CROSSING HOUSING
3. SEAVIEW PLAZA
4. STEELPOINTE HARBOR
5. KNOWLTON PARK + ADJACENT ART STUDIOS
6. CURRENT FERRY TERMINAL RELOCATION
7. 60 MAIN STREET
8. UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT MASTER PLAN
9. ECOTECH PARK
10. OYSTER FARMING
11. ASH CREEK PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE



Existing Momentum and Proposed Development along the Waterfront
 Sources: GIS data and information provided by OPED

Economic Development

In addition to supplying underutilized properties available for redevelopment or natural restoration, Bridgeport's waterfront offers other advantages that can promote economic growth. First, a waterfront location is a major advantage to many users—it serves water dependent and water-related uses, draws visitors and residents with disposable income, and gives certain uses, such as restaurants, a unique feature that can enhance their market appeal. Second, significant existing engines of economic growth are located on or close to Bridgeport's waterfront, including the University of Bridgeport, EcoTech Park, Bridgeport Hospital, and the Downtown area, which can create a cluster effect promoting future, long-term growth. Another emerging industry that represents a strong growth opportunity for Bridgeport, shellfish aquaculture, is also water dependent. Lastly, even in the short-term, waterfront revitalization can create more jobs for residents, particularly construction jobs on waterfront opportunity sites and at pathway locations.

Other, more indirect economic advantages to revitalizing the waterfront include:

- Development stimulated in areas adjacent to the waterfront and beyond, as investors and developers see the potential of Bridgeport and as the local market grows

- Higher property values for homeowners and commercial property owners along and surrounding the waterfront
- Under-performing properties can be transformed into revenue-producing development that can contribute to the City's tax base.
- Increased walkability—which reduces traffic, the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and the risk of car accidents and is associated with higher economic growth as well as improved public health
- Improved water quality from more sustainable development practices, remediation of selected sites where necessary, and natural restoration along the water's edge, which could further promote aquaculture and water-based recreation industries
- Greater public safety, as vacant structures and fenced-off lots are transformed into mixed-use sites with better lighting, more users, and more activity—the “eyes on the street” that keep urban places safer

Three Rivers Revitalization, Pittsburgh PA

Pittsburgh's Riverlife coalition has taken action over the past 17 years to revitalize large stretches of its riverfront, particularly vacant former industrial lots, and to provide access to the water. The whole city has reaped the financial impacts of public-private investment in the waterfront—such as construction of public pathways—as a result. An independent economic analysis of Riverlife's efforts showed:

- Hundreds of housing units have been built near the riverfront
- For each dollar invested into the riverfront, \$32 has been invested into developing waterfront and adjacent properties, for a total of \$4.1 billion over 15 years
- Property values near riverfront improvements have increased twice as much as the average citywide increase

Some of the projects undertaken by Riverlife and its public and private partners did face funding problems and delays. On the whole, however, these coordinated efforts have contributed significantly to the local tax base, created jobs and housing, grown the retail market, and reshaped perceptions of Pittsburgh and its formerly gritty riverfront.



Public plazas created along the Three Rivers Trail system provide new venues for cultural events, entertainment, and recreation, attracting a broad consumer base from throughout Pittsburgh and the region. Investment in this public waterfront pathway has fostered another \$2.6 billion in private investment on and adjacent to the water over the last 15 years, and developers and property owners have worked together with the Riverlife coalition to achieve shared revitalization goals. Image Source: Strada LLC

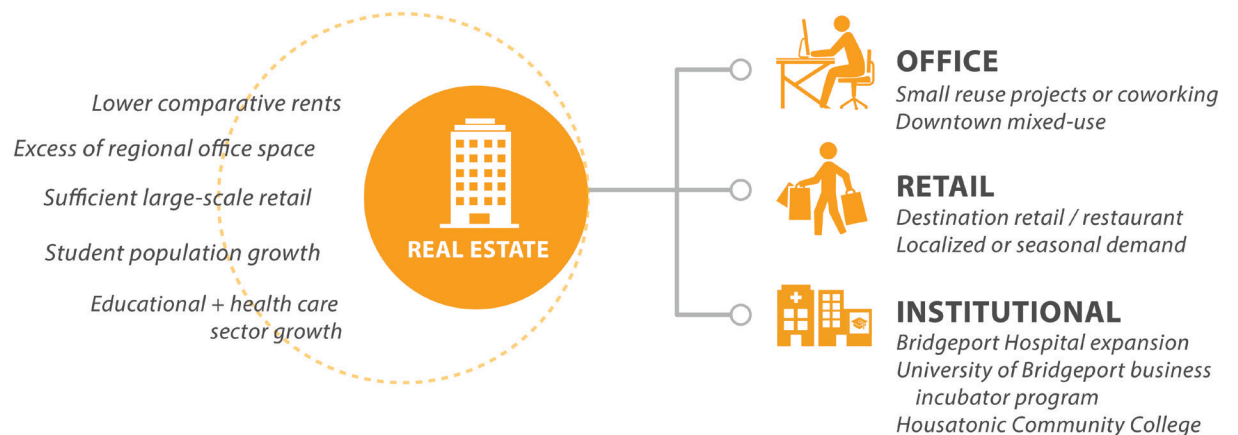
Market Analysis

The Bridgeport regional market has a diverse economy still recovering from the recession, but with certain areas primed for future growth. Compared to surrounding cities and towns, Bridgeport is underrepresented in accommodations and food services, retail, entertainment, finance, and professional services. Waterfront revitalization presents an opportunity to fill gaps in some sectors, such as dining and recreation, and support sustained growth in its education and health care sectors.

While offices might appear to be a strong economic development opportunity for Bridgeport, this Waterfront Plan does not propose building many office buildings close to the waterfront. Regional office demand is already rather weak at present, with a large inventory of vacant space. Also, given the 30,000+ square feet of office development planned for Steelpointe Harbor and the high office vacancy rate in Fairfield County, additional office construction along the Bridgeport waterfront over the next five to ten years is not supported by the market. One kind of office space that may be in demand is shared workspaces for small businesses, start-ups, and telecommuting; the success of the Bridgeport Trade and Technology Center (BTTC) and the B:Hive coworking space in Downtown Bridgeport could signal future opportunity. Large-scale retail is also not an appropriate

use for many parts of the waterfront for a few reasons. First, the Steelpointe Harbor development is still underway, and along with the nearby Seaview Plaza development it will provide for 750,000-800,000 square feet of new retail space. As a result, any new retail development will need to be a unique destination to attract shoppers from beyond Bridgeport, or perhaps address smaller, localized supply gaps that may still exist in some neighborhoods. One example of the latter is grocery stores, for which the market area is smaller, since most people do not wish to travel far to do their food shopping.

Second, general retail does not particularly benefit from proximity to water, in contrast to uses like restaurants and water-based recreation. An exception would be marine-related retail or seasonal outdoor markets, such as a holiday market at Captain's Cove with local small business vendors. These specific types of destination retail would benefit from proximity to the water itself, drawing customers. Service establishments with the strongest potential for economic development near the water would offer waterfront sit-down dining or recreation; other non-water-related services (e.g. hair salons or auto repair) would have less of an economic edge.



Waterfront Opportunities for Economic Growth

In addition to focusing on uses that maximize the waterfront advantage, economic development efforts along the water should emphasize specialization and emerging industries. One potential specialized use that would fit well along the waterfront is an indoor sports and recreation center combined with outdoor activities, amenities, and spaces. In the greater Bridgeport region, there do not appear to be any waterfront recreational facilities that combine water-based activities such as kayaking and sailing with an indoor center; a combination facility could provide both employment and entertainment for residents year-round, while also drawing visitors from surrounding areas.

Additionally, there are emerging markets that have the potential to generate new jobs and economic activity on or near Bridgeport's waterfront. These higher-potential industries--aquaculture and aquaponics, post-consumer product innovation, and renewable energy installation--are explored in more detail on the following page. The waterfront boasts two economic engines of particular note that could support growth in these industries: the EcoTech Park on Cedar Creek and the University of Bridgeport. EcoTech Park continues to attract renewable technology companies and recycling-related businesses, creating new "green" jobs. Meanwhile, the University of

Bridgeport's Center for Sustainable Energy and Environment as well as its Mechanical Engineering Lab could play an important role in prototyping and testing new products that use recycled materials.

The University also operates a business accelerator on its South End campus, which has helped create eleven new businesses over the past few years, and in 2015 launched a student entrepreneurship program. Over the coming years, there may be an opportunity to create "second-stage" growth space as student start-ups expand, perhaps by converting vacant industrial buildings or developing waterfront lots. More generally, local anchor institutions like the University of Bridgeport, Housatonic Community College, and Bridgeport Hospital could foster economic growth citywide through stronger connections with surrounding neighborhoods and local business vendors.

Aquaculture and Aquaponics

Bridgeport already has a strong shellfish industry, centered around cultivating and hatching "seed" oysters and clams; it also has a regional vocational high school dedicated to aquaculture science and technology. Opportunities for economic growth exist in aquaculture, which includes cultivation and harvesting of shellfish and seaweed, and aquaponics, which usually involves raising fish and growing vegetables indoors in a closed, efficient system. Successful examples of the latter exist in Milwaukee and Chicago, using former factory buildings and vacant lots.

Demand for aquaculture food products is projected to grow with the need to feed a rising national population and with overfishing and restrictions on Northeastern fisheries. Moreover, a growing interest in locally-sourced food and "farm to table" restaurants adds to the demand for Connecticut aquaculture; currently, the state's existing seafood hatcheries are at capacity. All these factors create a favorable market environment for an expanded aquaculture industry in the coming decades. Connecticut also has supportive policies and resources to foster growth in this green industry. State and regional investment could support initial startup costs, as well as water quality improvements where needed.

Zoning and Compliance

Design standards, resiliency guidelines, and waterfront access requirements all come together through zoning and compliance, which are two key mechanisms for the City of Bridgeport to influence the kinds of uses and activities that occur on the waterfront, as well as their impacts on neighbors and on the city's image. Specifically, this plan recommends creating a Waterfront Overlay Zone (WOZ). This Overlay Zone would serve as a multi-purpose tool to promote specific development projects such as vibrant mixed-use housing and commercial development, to increase public access, to set design standards, to protect the environment, and to encourage resilient design strategies and green infrastructure enhancements.

Geographical Area Application of the WOZ

The area included in the Waterfront Overlay Zone is highlighted on the map at right. All properties within the WOZ boundary would be subject to all WOZ requirements. In addition, some existing properties have easement and compliance agreements; the City should focus compliance efforts in this area to ensure all possible existing access and waterfront improvements are up-to-date.



Goals of the Waterfront Overlay Zone (WOZ)

The WOZ regulations would ideally come into effect for the following activities/site changes:

- Construction or placement of any structure, whether temporary or permanent
- Site filling or significant changes to site contours and natural or man-made features
- Change in use of a property or structures on the property
- Demolition or removal of structures
- Alterations or renovations of existing buildings that change the size or configuration of the structures

The level of compliance required should depend on the type and extent of the activities/site changes. Improvements or repairs to existing water dependent uses may not require compliance with the WOZ regulations. These types of improvements would include installing new cables or stabilizing/improving existing bulkheads and docks, to name a few.

The Waterfront Overlay Zone provides clear standards for development in the designated waterfront zone as shown on the map and seeks to protect and extend pedestrian access along the water's edge for walking, fishing, biking, and other recreation. Waterfront zoning also promotes mixed-use development and public activation of the waterfront, where appropriate, by designating districts within the waterfront and laying out design standards and specific zoning regulations for each of these areas.

The Downtown Village District-Waterfront (DVD-WF) zone has been used as a model for the WOZ, including the regulation of seasonal and temporary uses along the waterfront, as well as the use of bonuses to provide incentives for desired development and amenities. Sub-districts have been identified to ensure that land use regulations match the character and goals of specific waterfront areas. Waterfront development overall should support existing momentum and not detract from or compete with the momentum created Downtown or at Steelpointe Harbor. The Opportunity Sites and recommended zoning seek to complement existing goals and to support short- and long-term waterfront transformation within the overall economic market.

In alignment with the existing DVD-WF zone,

the proposed WOZ addresses both revitalization goals and design standards for the entire waterfront by enabling the:

- Creation of **public access and amenities**
- Establishment of overlay **massing, height, and use standards**
- Application of **general design standards**
- Promotion of **resilient and sustainable design practices**
- Refinement of the City's **design review process**

These elements of the Waterfront Bridgeport Plan are explored in the following pages; they will also be incorporated into zoning regulations.

Public Access + Amenities

Bridgeport is unique among Connecticut coastal cities – it has 24 miles of shoreline, compared to 19 square miles in land area, and much of that shoreline already is or can be made publicly accessible to all. This is the single most important aspect in redevelopment and changing perceptions of the waterfront—and of Bridgeport as a whole. The waterfront should be an inviting place for all residents, as well as for visitors. More than simply a geographic location, it should be a protected asset that bridges infrastructural barriers and connects across communities and neighborhoods, building a more inclusive and vibrant city and re-orienting the city towards its waterways.

A public waterfront pathway can become a local and regional draw for walking, biking, and other recreational activities. There are numerous successful examples of such projects from across North America, particularly Pittsburgh, Austin, Toronto, and Chattanooga, which suggest best practices and lessons for Bridgeport. Additionally, to enhance the social, economic, and civic impact of existing waterfront access, this plan identifies and recommends activities, events, and programs for waterfront spaces, and highlights who could coordinate them. This is included under Waterfront Advocacy and Programming towards the end of this Section, as well as in the more detailed Activation Section of the plan.

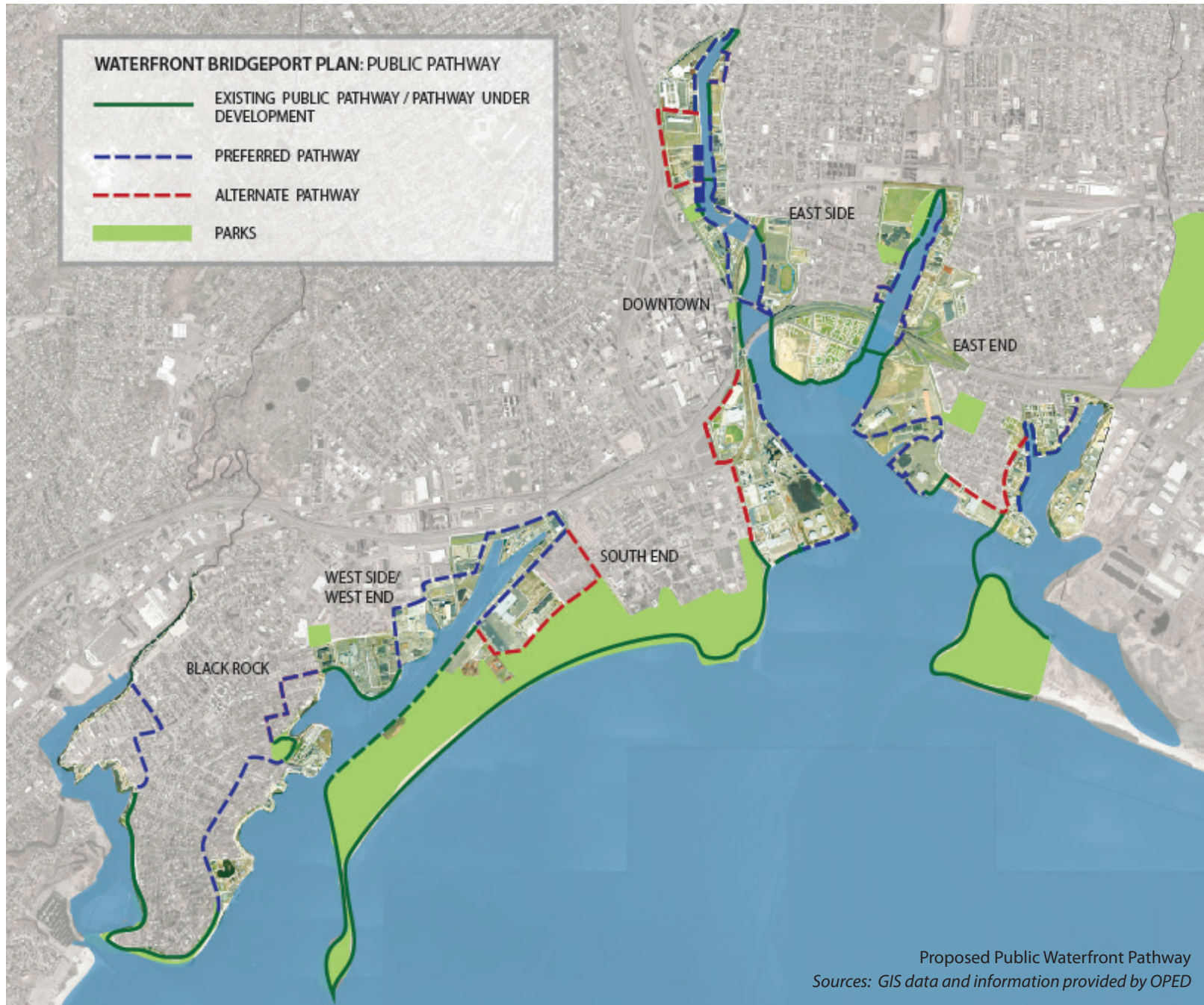
Waterfront access reverses years of barbed-wire fences and expanses of asphalt with neighborhood connections, water views, and healthy recreation. A pathway will redefine how neighborhoods, communities, businesses, and visitors interact with each other, and it all starts with this plan. Already, the waterfront planning effort has people talking about possibilities, partnerships, and an exciting future. There is a cycle of benefits here: community activism, volunteerism, and interest support the City's efforts to provide access, and each step forward can support everyone's efforts. As the pathway grows longer, public programming will increase and development and economic opportunities will follow. New development will support a growing network of attractive public spaces and recreational activities, as well as improved resiliency.

Defining and Strategizing for a Public Pathway

A parcel-by-parcel examination of the waterfront illustrates that the vision of a pathway is attainable. Existing ownership, land uses, and environmental conditions, as well as the location of momentum-building development sites all point to a waterfront that has good near-term potential for access. In the map on the following page, the proposed

waterfront path has been marked based on the current land use, existing and projected access, and site condition, as well as the possibility of negotiating access with land owners. Pathway segments fall into three categories:

- **Existing Pathway/Pathway Under Development:** Areas with existing waterfront access or access planned for the near future.
- **Preferred Pathway:** Areas that can accommodate public access through temporary means or as part of developer improvements in the more distant future
- **Alternate Pathway:** Where the proposed pathway follows water-adjacent city streets rather than the water's actual edge, due to utilities or private land uses not amenable to public easements.

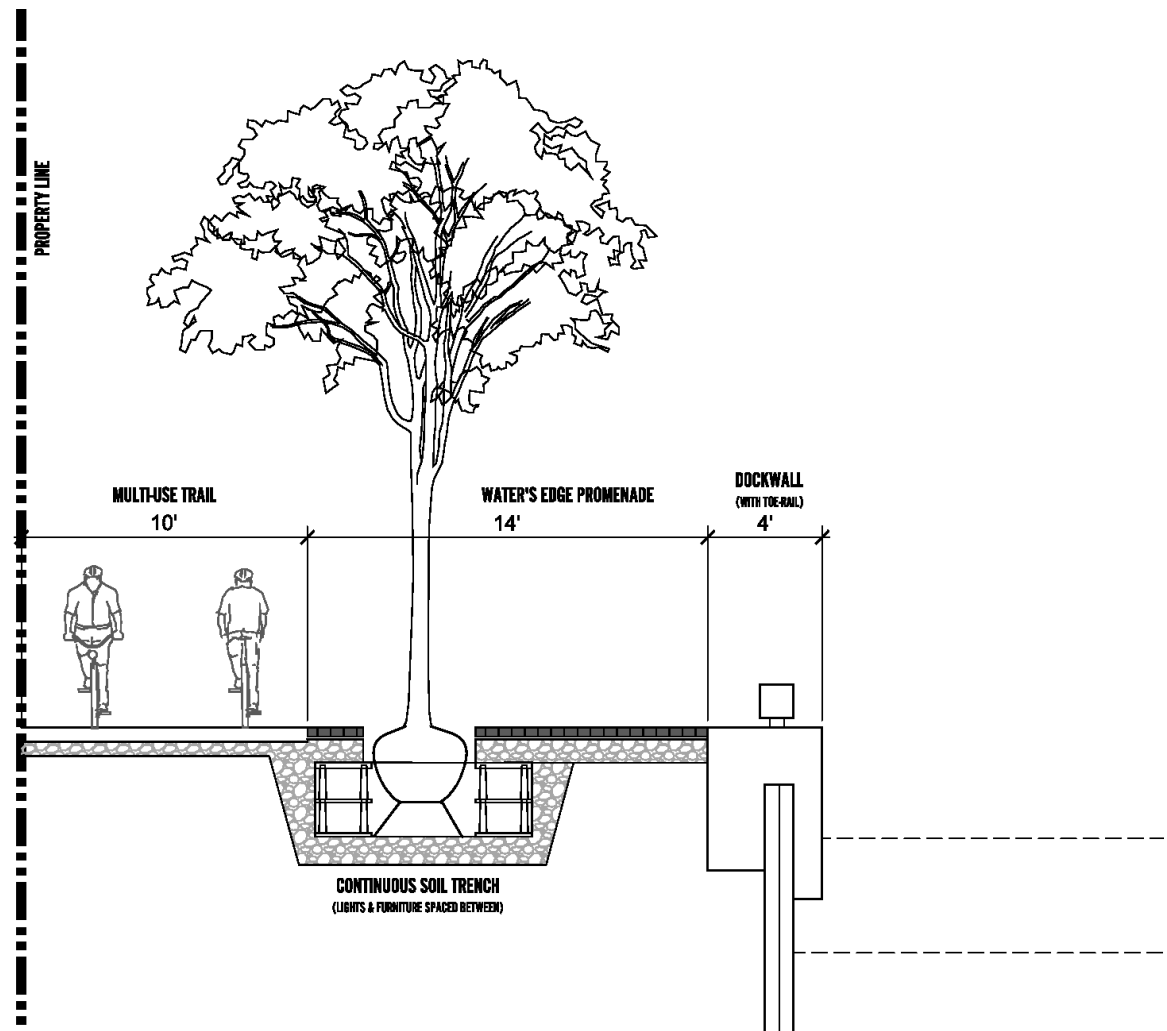


Design Requirements + Amenities

As waterfront redevelopment continues, various entities--property owners, developers, the City--will provide sections of public access at different points in time. This Waterfront Framework recommends general design standards for the whole waterfront, which align with design standards for the pathway included in a separate Pathway Implementation Kit. No matter who is providing public access, there will be consistent pathway dimensions, edge conditions, streetscape furniture/lighting, signage, and materials. It will be clear to a visitor or a resident walking from one end of the waterfront to the other that it is a single seamless place, a unique part of Bridgeport's story and a visible sign of dedication and investment.

Good connections to surrounding neighborhoods and public rights-of-way are also required to ensure the waterfront becomes a part of the overall public network of sidewalks, bike lanes, and public space. Zoning recommendations for the WOZ include:

- Properties located on the waterfront shall provide public access adjacent to the water, with a minimum width of eighteen feet for a shared water's edge promenade and a preferred width of twenty-eight feet which would accommodate an additional ten feet for a bike path/multi-use trail.



This cross-section of the access pathway illustrates one of many possible edge conditions along the waterfront.
Sample concept, not a proposal.

- Pathways should have separate pedestrian and cyclist lanes wherever possible.
- Pathways must connect frequently to city streets via existing public right-of-ways (ROWs) or by sidewalks through private parcels where ROWs are too infrequent.
- Pathways shall be built for accessibility and landscaped with plantings determined to be hardy in Bridgeport’s waterfront conditions, ideally native species.
- Some pathway segments may be boardwalks or piers, as required by site conditions and overall site design.
- All development projects shall maintain view corridors from adjacent neighborhoods to the waterfront.

It should be noted that where the principal use of a property is a one or two family dwelling, the pathway requirements do not apply.

Required Public Amenities

The waterfront should have amenities, signage, and street furniture that make it welcoming to the public and facilitate placemaking in the form of events, concerts, markets and fairs, and other activities. To support these goals, the following are recommended required elements of any waterfront development:

- Signage for public access routes
- Historical and other interpretive signs
- Benches and trash cans
- ADA accessibility
- Lightweight, movable chairs and tables
- Data, electrical, and water hookups
- Bike racks

Public Control of the Waterfront

Access along the waterfront can be created and protected by easements, leases, or transfer of ownership to the City of Bridgeport, to be programmed by the future waterfront coalition. Ultimately, public control of the pathway has benefits for all involved. There are significant benefits for property owners who transfer ownership of waterfront ROWs to the City:

- The creation of a waterfront pathway increases the value of adjacent property.
- City ownership of the pathway removes any ambiguity of ownership and allows liability to rest with the City, which is protected by the municipal liability web. The state legislature has strengthened this protection in the last decade.
- Donations of waterfront property could provide a tax deduction to property owners.
- Public ownership provides for unified maintenance and design standards that enhance all properties along the water

The benefits of ownership for the City include:

- Assurance that the right of public access will be protected in perpetuity.
- Ensures that any public funding of site improvements and infrastructure will remain with the “public” and not be lost to changes in use or re-privatization over time.
- Ensures design continuity across the waterfront.
- Makes it easier to fund public access improvements through a future Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, if one is desired.

- More readily facilitates volunteer maintenance efforts and programming of public space.
- Allows the City to coordinate marketing and other services more readily.
- Provides economies of scale on improvements, and selection/purchase of street furniture and pathway signage.

An alternative to public ownership of the pathway is the granting of access easements from the landowner to the City to allow public use. In this case, it will be important to ensure that the City reserves the right to transfer the easement to the Port Authority or to another suitable organization if a waterfront coalition is created in the future and becomes responsible for maintenance and programming.

In addition, the ROWs can be leased in perpetuity from property owners, under which arrangement the City's umbrella liability is still in force. State-owned land can also provide access solutions. In many ROWs in Connecticut, municipalities build, improve, and maintain trails on top of underground, state-owned utilities. These DOT or DEEP/City partnerships are stable and work well.

Making It Happen

A realistic plan for action is needed to make this pathway along the waterfront happen. To be included separately from the Waterfront Bridgeport Plan is the Pathway Implementation Kit, which provides more detailed action steps, resources, and information. The Kit is meant for use by the City, waterfront property owners, environmental organizations and other local advocates, public officials, and community members and groups—all of whom have roles to play in making the pathway a reality. Efforts in other cities offer lessons for Bridgeport. Waterfront pathway efforts will need broad cooperation and regional, as well as local support. The Kit highlights a range of possible supporters and funders for this initiative and offers a step-by-step action plan. Also included are suggestions about public access easement arrangements and other information needed to move this initiative along. Elements considered in the Kit include:

- Creation of a public/private collaboration for creating, programming, marketing, and maintaining the pathway
- Recommended first pilot projects
- Recommendations on creating access easements on private land, funding construction of the pathway, and providing maintenance.
- Design standards for the pathway
- Marketing suggestions

While the pathway is only one part of the Waterfront Bridgeport Plan, this component of the waterfront has its own Implementation Kit because the positive benefits of enhanced public access are significant. With 24 miles of shoreline, the city can offer a regional destination that can grow the economy in the city and enhance image. In addition, the pathway is one of the first projects that can happen in the short term, galvanizing action in surrounding areas on the waterfront and beginning the positive cycle of change.



Mill River Corridor: Stamford, CT

The Mill River Corridor and Downtown Mill River Park in Stamford, CT are projects that acquired land through donation and purchase to ensure land was publicly owned before improvements began. Much of the land was acquired by easement, and now the Mill River Collaborative is the caretaker of the properties. The Trust for Public Land was involved early on to assist with the original easement negotiations.

Interestingly, this project also affirms the widespread benefits of water access and open space, and it connects to a regional trail system. Over 1000 units of housing and \$4 million in new annual municipal tax revenues were generated in anticipation of the park, which was ultimately funded by the City with Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Design for the site also uses green infrastructure for greater resiliency.



Image Source: Mill River Collaborative

Waterfront Design Standards

Any re-envisioning of the waterfront requires imagining a new visual identity for the whole area as well as a series of “people places” where residents can aspire to live, work, and socialize, enjoying greater choices in jobs, housing, and recreation. This transformation of the city’s identity and physical environment requires specific standards for public access, connections to the surrounding neighborhoods, activity areas, and design elements. These standards seek to create a public realm that reinforces the concept of “waterfront for all” in the city, by contributing to the following goals across the waterfront:

- **Accessibility to all:** This can be achieved by ensuring visual and physical connections to the neighborhoods, ADA compliance for those with physical limitations, and inter-generational design and programming.
- **Appropriate relationships:** Thoughtful placement of active uses, “fronts” of buildings, and parking can support good spatial and use relationships between buildings, amenities, and the waterfront.
- **Consistency:** A consistent visual framework is important to create a sense of place and identity and to rebuild the image of the waterfront in the public consciousness, more closely aligning the image of Bridgeport with that of the

waterfront.

- **Trust and transparency:** This allows Bridgeport residents, public officials, businesses, developers, and other stakeholders to understand shared goals for the waterfront and expectations involved in achieving them.
- **Investor/developer confidence:** Design standards can help attract more interest for development and investment because they create a clear set of expectations, eliminating guesswork and uncertainty.
- **Consensus towards a vision:** A design framework enables everyone to imagine the future and take ownership of it, including waterfront neighborhood residents.
- **Celebrate the character of the city:** Bridgeport has its roots in industry and the waterfront should reflect the character of the city.

Who Should Use the Design Standards? And How?

These design standards can serve as the blueprint for the long-term design and development of waterfront properties and support the overarching goals of building access, economic growth and the city’s new identity. They should be used by everyone with an interest in waterfront revitalization, including designers, developers, the City, and residents to conceive, design, develop, approve, and advocate for a changed waterfront. It is recommended that these design standards become a part of the requirements in the Waterfront Overlay Zone (WOZ) and that the City provide oversight regarding permitting and compliance through the site plan review process of the existing City of Bridgeport Design Review Committee.

The Design Standards

A summary of recommended design standards is provided here; site-specific recommendations can be found in the Opportunity Sites and Placemaking Sections of this plan. These design recommendations draw upon previous planning of Resilient Bridgeport, the Parks Master Plan, and the Master Plan of Conservation and Development as well as best practices for waterfront design.

Waterfront Design Themes and Goals

Bridgeport is a city with an industrial history with major remnants of industry and water dependent uses along the waterfront. This industrial character is a strong point for the city—Bridgeport is not a quaint New England town—and this Waterfront Bridgeport Plan recommends that industrial design elements and motifs be incorporated into redevelopment projects and renovations in the Waterfront Overlay Zone where appropriate. Two levels of design standards apply:

1. Public Access Waterfront Pathway

Signage for the public access pathway should be consistent throughout the city. A standard stenciled/industrial font for all signage and promotional information can refer to the industrial heritage of the city without overwhelming the character of residential waterfront areas such as Black Rock or natural areas such as Pleasure Beach and Seaside Park. This industrial motif would be limited to pathway signage, maps, and pathway elements such as trash cans and bike racks.

2. Redevelopment and Site Improvements

Building construction and site improvements in Downtown, the East Side, and the East End should follow design standards that include:

- The use, wherever possible, of a factory/ industrial aesthetic (exposed structural

elements, large mullioned windows, etc.)

- Exterior materials such as steel, glass, and brick as opposed to stucco, wooden siding, elaborate wooden moldings and details.
- In any area of the waterfront, these redevelopment and site improvement design standards do not apply to single and two-family residential construction or historic areas.



**WATERFRONT
BRIDGEPORT**



Land Use Recommendations

The character of the waterfront varies throughout the city and appropriate land uses should reflect the character and goals for each sub-district. In general, however, the land use recommendations in this Waterfront Bridgeport Plan recognize that while the waterfront land in the city is currently underutilized, these properties have the extraordinary potential to be the most valuable in the city—representing an opportunity for highest and best use that far exceeds current market conditions.

The purpose of this plan is to set expectations appropriately for future redevelopment and to ensure that any development enables the waterfront achieve its full potential and power. With these goals in mind, land use recommendations are aspirational toward a future where the waterfront more closely resembles other revitalized waterfronts of the country—whether in large cities or small. This may mean that some properties will have long-term redevelopment potential only; this is appropriate and typical for a waterfront that represents a long-term game changer for the city. In addition, it is important to remember that new zoning does not affect existing land uses but rather looks toward future site improvements and redevelopment.

Discouraged Uses

Uses that are low density, auto-oriented, and focus on industry or replicate “suburban” type strip and big-box store development are not appropriate for the waterfront. Such uses detract from the goal to create a vibrant people-oriented environment that highlights waterfront access and draws pedestrians while accommodating public activities and a regional audience. Some of the uses not conducive to these goals are:

- Drive-through businesses such as restaurants and dry cleaners
- Gas stations and other auto service establishments
- Stand-alone fast food restaurants
- Heavy industry
- Truck and equipment parking
- Certain light industrial uses, such as materials storage yards

Permitted and Encouraged Uses

While each waterfront sub-district has its own goals as part of this plan and its own sub-set of permitted uses, in general, permitted land uses include those that draw residents and workers and that provide a mix of overall uses to encourage transit-oriented development when located in or near Downtown and the proposed Barnum Station. Destination uses that can draw from a regional market are also encouraged:

- Multi-family housing
- Mixed-use development
- Certain low-impact light industrial, such as businesses related to clean-energy technology and installation
- Innovation and co-working spaces
- Recreation and entertainment
- Dining
- Aquaculture and aquaponics
- Pop-up/temporary restaurant and retail

Site Design

The waterfront will be a new urban “street” for the city and site design should reflect the importance of activating the shoreline and supporting a vibrant public realm along the waterfront access pathway. Uses oriented toward the waterfront can also benefit from increased visibility and marketability. In recognition of the increased importance of the waterfront and the pathway, site design standards encourage a density of buildings and activities and discourage sprawling low-rise development with an emphasis on parking. Simple design rules can support activity on the waterfront pathway and support businesses that draw from a local and regional clientele such as restaurants, retail, and recreation:

- Buildings sited close to or on the waterfront access pathway
- Active and public uses on the ground floor along the waterfront access pathway.
- Water-facing facades with 50% transparent glass
- Avoid large gaps between buildings, unless space is designed as public open space
- Waterfront as a main or secondary front entrance
- Avoid loading docks, service entrances, and blank walls facing the waterfront
- Parking away from the waterfront, placed

in the interior of the site

- Utilize shared parking when possible to reduce the number of parking spaces/ asphalt

Height and Massing

Density along the waterfront is desired. The more people who live, work, and play in the waterfront zone, the better; density supports revitalization efforts and encourages more activities and life on the waterfront and makes redevelopment more attractive to investors. A summary of height and massing requirements includes:

- Taller buildings are encouraged near highways and rail infrastructure.
- Upper levels of buildings should be stepped back, with lower levels at the property line/waterfront pathway line to provide a consistent “street” wall and human scale for pedestrians.
- Minimums are set for height and number of building stories
- Maximums are set for parking and impervious surfaces

Natural Restoration + Resilience

Historically, urban waterfronts in the US were dominated by industrial and commercial port uses, and Bridgeport is a classic example. However, as the larger economy moved from industry and manufacturing to services, these once-bustling ports slowly fell into decay. Many cities in the Northeast and Midwest have struggled to re-purpose and revitalize underutilized, often vacant and contaminated land along their waterfronts. Redevelopment and revitalization of many of these former-industrial properties is the goal of this Waterfront Bridgeport Plan. However, some of these properties may provide excellent opportunities today for natural coastal buffers, supporting efforts towards resiliency in the face of climate change and stronger, more frequent storms and floods.

Through the implementation of green infrastructure and careful restoration, the water's edge can be softened and returned to a functional ecology, protecting inland development and creating natural oases within the city. "Renaturalization" or natural restoration of formerly developed land to marshes, urban wilderness areas, or forest can provide several benefits:

- Create wildlife habitat, including fish nurseries
- Generate revenue as ecotourism attraction

- Buffer inland areas from storm surge and sea level rise
- Capture storm water and reduce environmental and financial costs of water treatment
- Improve water and air quality as well as public health

The 2012 Bridgeport Parks Master Plan recommended renaturalizing the edges of Seaside Park and "small, underutilized parks" to reduce maintenance costs and increase ecological benefits, and the ongoing Resilient Bridgeport planning also highlights the need for low-impact development and naturalized waterfront buffers against storm surge. Natural restoration can also prove a good option for vacant parcels too small (and therefore costly) for redevelopment.

Though parts of the Bridgeport waterfront would be unsuitable for "soft" water's edge treatments and similar forms of natural restoration—either because of existing bulkheads that would be expensive and difficult to remove, because of severe environmental contamination, or because of existing water dependent uses—other parts are already renaturalizing on their own through neglect. Concerted efforts to guide natural restoration—including replacing invasive species with native

wetland seedlings and organizing volunteer cleanups—could build on this existing potential and preserve more resources for existing developed park areas, park maintenance, and programming. See following page for potential areas for natural restoration along the water's edge.

The Case for Coastal Resiliency

Bridgeport residents, local leaders, and regional organizations have been working hard to prepare and strengthen the city in the face of climate change-driven severe weather and flooding. There is some urgency in these efforts as parts of the city experienced significant flooding during Hurricane Sandy. From Climate Preparedness Workshops held in 2011-2012, to post-Sandy analysis of the city's strengths and weaknesses, to current efforts at implementing resiliency pilot projects through the Resilient Bridgeport initiative, much work has already been done to identify issues and outline solutions.

The key is to turn resiliency from a one-time project to an integral part of every redevelopment proposal, park renovation, affordable housing construction, and infrastructure improvement along the

waterfront, with identified goals and step-by-step strategies. Integrating efforts into new development and revitalization plans is efficient and cost-effective.

Making Natural Restoration + Resiliency Projects Happen

Zoning is one of the City's best tools for achieving land use goals and resiliency standards, and should be included in waterfront regulations to ensure best practices are integrated into all revitalization efforts along the waterfront. A good model to guide Bridgeport regulatory changes is New York City, which passed a Flood Resilience Zoning Text Amendment in 2013. Existing zoning in some parts of Bridgeport may need to be amended to allow or account for storm protections; for example, elevating a building above FEMA flood levels may make its ground floor less visually engaging or active, so zoning standards should require streetscape enhancements, as this amendment did in NYC. As for designing resilient waterfront spaces, the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance's Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines (WEDG), developed for New York City in 2013 by resiliency experts using the LEED green building certification program as a template, can also guide developers.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)

Riparian and Coastal Buffers

- Leaving a permeable strip of native vegetation along the water's edge provides a natural protection for storm surges and stormwater management.
- Each district outlined in the WOZ requires setbacks for the waterfront access pathway and development to accommodate natural vegetative buffers and other sustainable design techniques.

Low Impact Design (LID)

- Zoning shall encourage LID practices such as porous asphalt, permeable pavers, rain gardens and green roofs in all waterfront development and site improvements (see Opportunity Sites Section for more details)

Ground Floor Uses

- New development throughout the WOZ, except in areas with existing residential development, which shall be excluded from these requirements, shall have public uses and amenities on the ground floor.
- Public uses include retail,

restaurant, arts and cultural uses, educational, civic, and park space.

Natural Restoration and Materials

- Wherever possible, development setbacks, landscaped areas, and waterside embankments or bulkhead replacements shall be designed as natural restoration areas with LID techniques and native vegetation.



Save the Bay cleaned up a vacant, contaminated coastal site on Narragansett Bay, RI. It now features an educational center inside an LEED certified building. LID and stormwater management practices are seen throughout the site, as well as a restored salt marsh zone protecting the low-lying point from storm surge. Image source: Save the Bay

Funding for coastal resiliency and natural restoration projects may come from a variety of sources, such as state and federal environmental departments, national and regional foundations, and conservation organizations. The National Fish and Wildlife Service, for example, has funded projects for coastal wetland restoration through its National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. Local and regional non-profits, the City, and area foundations will all need to play a role in making Bridgeport's waterfront safer and stronger in the face of extreme weather.



The recent construction of Bridgeport's Knowlton Park included a biofiltration swale with native grasses (above, on right) and a stretch of riparian buffer, both local examples of LID. Not only does the biofiltration swale create an attractive view for park visitors, it also protects the shoreline against erosion and the park itself from flooding.

Waterfront Advocacy + Programming

The waterfront will need a strong coalition of public, private, and non-profit partners to achieve the goals of this Waterfront Bridgeport Plan. Some cities have non-profit advocacy organizations or “Friends of” groups responsible for raising money and organizing programming. Others use Business Improvement Districts to oversee waterfront programming and improvements. Still others create redevelopment areas and grant jurisdiction to city agencies for property acquisition and redevelopment.

Bridgeport has the opportunity to use the public access pathway as a pilot project to create an informal coalition, building advocacy and awareness for waterfront access and development. Full recommendations for this group are included in the Pathway Implementation Kit and are summarized below:

- Start with a small coalition to launch a pilot planning project.
- Ensure the City (planning and economic development, parks, public works), non-profit, and private entities are involved.

As the group pursues projects, it will be important to include waterfront neighborhood representatives from the NRZ and other groups as well as to seek core partners who have skills and resources in:

- Pathways and open space acquisition and construction
- Programming and placemaking
- Marketing

It will also be important to recruit two or three larger businesses located in the city or region to be founding sponsors of the waterfront initiative

As the initiative gains momentum, the pilot project can grow to include other areas of waterfront revitalization such as keeping a website and common calendar for events and programs. It will be important to think of the regional attraction of the waterfront and to look toward regional partners to grow the web of supporters and funders:

- Regional health organizations
- Children’s non-profits (who may use recreational facilities on the waterfront)
- Walking and biking associations and clubs
- Water advocacy groups and nature and conservation groups (such as Save our Sound and the Nature Conservancy)
- Arts and cultural groups
- Urban agriculture advocates

A small pilot can test assumptions and can lead to a more formal organizational structure, which

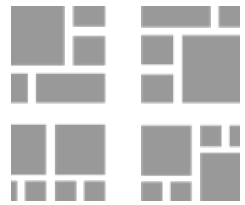
can attain non-profit status and make grant applications. Eventually, this group should have a very high profile presence in the region and can assist developer recruitment, fundraising, programming, and marketing.

WATERFRONT BRIDGEPORT

OPPORTUNITY SITES



Introduction



OPPORTUNITY SITES

Key projects that will lead the transformation of the waterfront and catalyze economic growth...

A. Yellow Mill East

B. Seaview Plaza

C. Current Ferry Terminal

D. Shoreline Star / AGI

E. Sliver by the River

F. Bridgeport Brass Co.

This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan defines the city's relationship to its waterfront for the 21st century and beyond. Just as the waterfront hosted the industrial uses that were the city's economic backbone in the 1900's, in the future, new uses and activities will define a new era for Bridgeport. Mixed-use development, diversified jobs and entrepreneurship, vibrant public space and programming, coastal resiliency, and a connected waterfront pathway throughout the city will support economic vitality and an improved quality of life in Bridgeport.

The Bridgeport waterfront presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. A key reason for creating this very plan is to make the highest and best use of that opportunity, raising expectations within the city for waterfront development. With careful planning and a view toward the long term, development of the waterfront will transform obsolete industrial sites into visible, vibrant spaces for work, living, and play.

This Opportunity Sites Section offers a window into the future. It is meant for residents as a promise of a better waterfront, for City officials as support against pressure to approve mediocre or unimaginative development proposals, and for potential investors as a signal that Bridgeport is ready to support quality development and a world-class waterfront unlike any other in Connecticut.



Why Focus on Opportunity Sites?

After decades of living with an under-utilized waterfront, it is easy to think mostly about the short-term, reasoning that “anything is better than nothing.” This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan and particularly the Opportunity Sites Section set a higher standard, because Bridgeport deserves more on its waterfront. Water-adjacent sites offer higher value than other types of property, and taken altogether, 24 miles of urban shoreline offer unparalleled opportunity for Bridgeport. Savvy cities across the globe understand the power of the waterfront—and of having and implementing a waterfront vision—and Bridgeport’s waterfront requires a similarly holistic, forward-thinking vision.

This Opportunity Sites Section lays the groundwork to shift expectations. Just look at Pittsburgh, where twenty-five years of public and private efforts went into revitalizing its formerly industrial riverfront, or the City of Somerville, which persevered to ensure that short-term, generic big-box development did not foreclose future opportunities at Assembly Row on the Mystic River (see sidebar). Or even Boston, which waited almost thirty years for the South Boston waterfront to come into its own.

Development—and the expanded investment that goes with it—can provide amenities such as public spaces and access, programming, and events that invite community use and

enjoyment of a waterfront for all. Thoughtful shaping of the Opportunity Sites in this section can yield higher-quality development that engages the waterfront as a public good, as a way to enhance Bridgeport’s image, and as an economic engine for the 21st century.

To envision this future, this Section features key sites along the waterfront where near-term opportunities for positive change are greatest. Development of these sites makes sense because of market conditions, site location, interested parties, or adjacent momentum. The six sites presented here build on existing momentum and create highly-visible signs of positive change. These are places where revitalization could happen quickly and have great effect on perceptions of the waterfront, adjacent neighborhoods, the local tax base, and the image of the city. This Opportunity Sites Section complements the Framework and Activation Sections in this Plan but can stand on its own as a vision for developing these key sites.

Transforming Expectations



Somerville’s Assembly Row development on a former industrial site turns outlet shopping on its head, with outdoor dining and movable seating, a walkable urban street grid, and a riverfront park that includes space for live music and events. Image Source: Assembly Row/Instagram



Pittsburgh’s Three Rivers Park system took many years to come together through careful public-private partnerships. Now it is a popular attraction generating further redevelopment along the waterfront. Image Source: Ohio River Trail Council

City's Commitment

The City commits to being a staunch advocate for exceptional waterfront development and understands that waterfront revitalization is a game changer for Bridgeport. This advocacy has many facets and began with the City commissioning of this Waterfront Bridgeport Plan. During waterfront planning, the City supported a robust public participation process and painstakingly researched, parcel by parcel, the potential for a public waterfront pathway. With this Opportunity Sites Section, the City sets a clear and transparent standard for waterfront development that provides consistent guidance for investors.

No matter where the development, City officials will provide support for investors in the following areas:

- **Waterfront zoning** outlining desired uses, required public amenities, and design requirements –clear and transparent requirements that remove the guesswork.
- **Streamlined permitting** process that works with developers who are committed to quality and world-class outcomes (a good example is NYC's online Waterfront Navigator).
- **Active recruitment of regional developers** with experience in waterfront and dense urban development.
- Support for **comprehensive waterfront**

marketing through partnerships with a waterfront coalition meant to enhance visibility, marketability, and value along the city's shoreline.

- **Public programming** support to the above waterfront organization, in coordinating activities, identifying funding sources, and drawing local and regional audiences.
- **Enforcement of city regulations** including blight ordinance, access to City Rights-of-Way and properties, Land Development Agreements, and zoning approval conditions.
- **Infrastructure and streetscape improvements** on City property adjacent to sites, where possible.

Prioritization of Opportunity Sites

The Opportunity Sites included here were selected based on a set of criteria chosen to identify those waterfront parcels that serve as the best near-term catalysts for positive change:

- Identify sites that **offer much-needed public access and open space** for neighborhoods that lack parks and waterfront access.

- Identify sites that have **brownfield remediation underway or that need little or no cleanup** for development.
- Look for sites that can **draw momentum from existing and new water-based recreation** such as marinas and boat launches while **protecting existing water-dependent uses** such as shellfishing.
- Focus on **parcels owned or otherwise controlled by the City of Bridgeport** and on **privately-owned property where owners have expressed interest in relocating and/or redeveloping**.
- Identify **property adjacent to or near existing momentum for positive change** such as new waterfront development, infrastructure improvements, or new businesses.
- Identify waterfront land that can, even in small patches, be **restored or allowed to return to its natural ecological state** to support coastal resiliency (see sidebar on next page as well as Framework Section for more details)
- **Avoid or mitigate flood risk** by identifying appropriate land uses in areas most prone to storm surges and flooding.

Overall Strategy

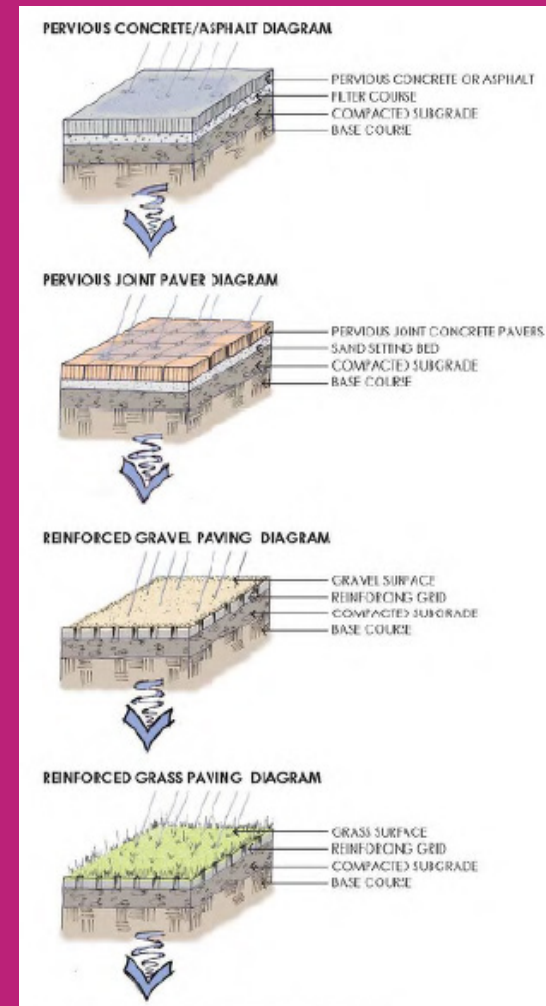
The Opportunity Sites highlighted here support an overall waterfront revitalization strategy that focuses efforts in key places to build on existing momentum, maximize visible positive change, and utilize a range of tools to activate the waterfront. Some sites support transit-oriented development (TOD), particularly near the planned Barnum Station project and adjacent to the Downtown train station. Others recognize development limitations due to flood constraints and utilize placemaking and natural restoration as activation strategies. Still others look to near-term uses as longer-term development strategies address complex issues of environmental cleanup and site access.

In all, these opportunities illustrate ideas for the City, property owners, and others, in thinking big about the possibilities inherent in the waterfront and collaborating to ensure that these 24 miles of shoreline are the catalyst for positive change in the city.

Building for Resiliency

Redevelopment of any site along the waterfront in Bridgeport should factor in long-term environmental needs and City goals for resiliency. Storm surges and sea level rise will affect many lower-lying or less-protected sites, so elevation or flood protections may be needed. The Resilient Bridgeport project currently underway is designing flood protection infrastructure for parts of the South End. Additionally, a setback from the water's edge is recommended on all sites, which not only protects development from flooding but also provides room for public water access and the public pathway.

Even on higher-elevation sites, Low Impact Development (LID) building practices should be incorporated to reduce stormwater runoff, thereby improving water quality and mitigating flash flooding. The 2011 Pequonnock River Watershed Plan provides useful details on a wide range of LID elements and how they could be incorporated into local sites. These elements include "green" gutters, rain gardens, permeable paving (see diagrams at right), and natural restoration of the shoreline.



Permeable paving options to reduce runoff. Image Source: Pequonnock River Watershed Plan.

Opportunity Site A: Yellow Mill East

NUMBER OF PARCELS	34
CURRENT USES	LIGHT + HEAVY INDUSTRIAL, RESIDENTIAL
ACREAGE	22.25
SHORELINE:	0.56 MILES OR 2,941 FEET
ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:	MIXED; SOME PARCELS MAY REQUIRE REMEDIATION
FLOODPLAIN STATUS:	VAST MAJORITY OF SITE OUTSIDE FEMA FLOODPLAIN; ONLY VERY SMALL PORTION OF SOUTHERNMOST PARCEL WITHIN ZONE AE (EL 14 FT)
CURRENT STATUS:	MIXED; SOME OWNERS INTERESTED IN REDEVELOPING OR RELOCATING



Site Summary

The highly accessible Yellow Mill East site serves as a main connector from Downtown and I-95 to Bridgeport Hospital and the planned Barnum Station. This particular section of Seaview Avenue runs from Stratford Avenue at Exit 29 of I-95 along the Yellow Mill Channel in the East End neighborhood, up to Crescent Avenue. The properties comprising this Opportunity Site are located between the western side of Seaview Avenue and the Channel, are under multiple ownership, and include industrial uses and a few single-family homes. Surrounding this Opportunity Site

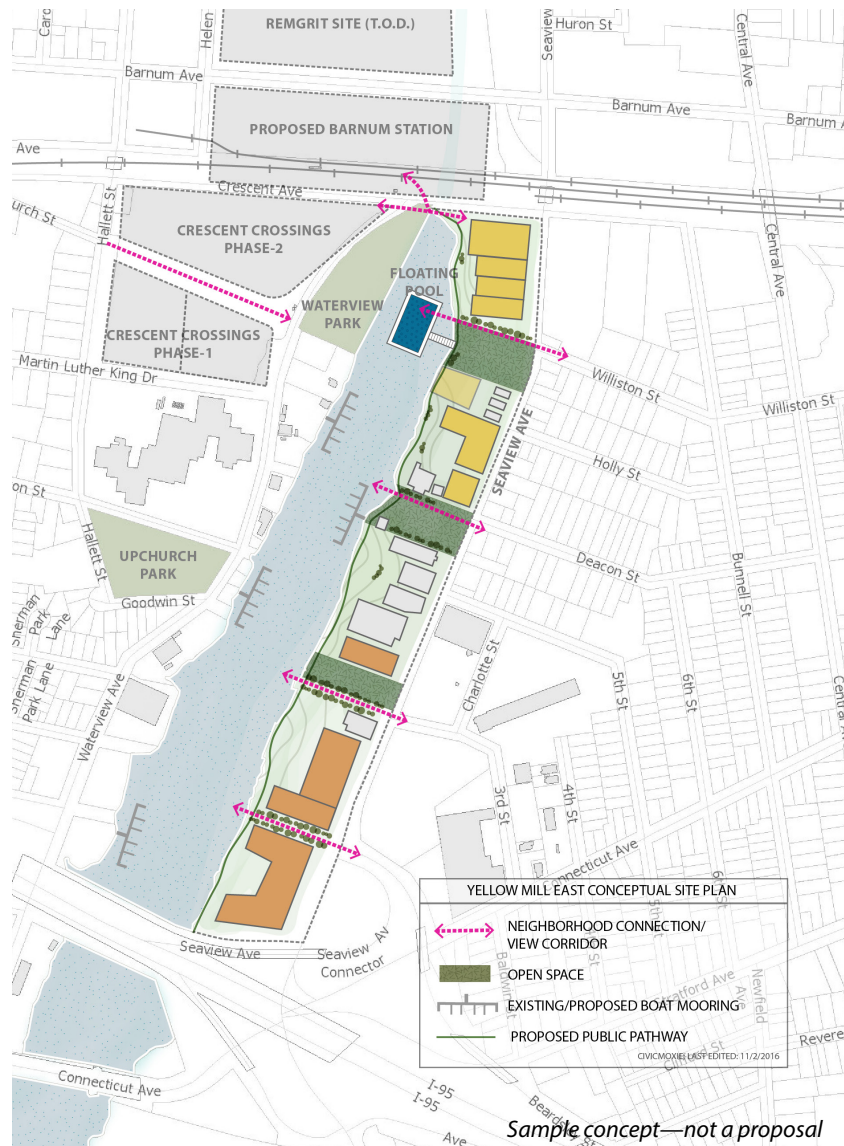
are signs of change, including the redevelopment of the former Father Panik Village into the Crescent Crossings mixed-income residential development on the west side of the Yellow Mill, as well as potential Transit Oriented Development (TOD) residential projects near the future Barnum Station. There is a concentration of single-family homes in the area, some of which are part of the Deacon's Point Historic District, and Bridgeport Hospital is working within the community to improve this physical gateway to the hospital.



Why Here + Why Now?

This Yellow Mill East Opportunity Site benefits from three factors: momentum, visibility, and prime location. Located along the Yellow Mill Channel, the site is a hidden gem and surprisingly bucolic; it sits on a calm stretch of water that could host water-based recreation and create ideal opportunities for East End neighborhood connections to the waterfront. Combining easy transit access with a water location, this site offers many benefits and unique opportunities for redevelopment:

- Proximity to the future Barnum Station (set to open in 2021).
- Surrounding momentum from other housing developments (Crescent Crossings and planned TOD development near Barnum Station).
- Bridgeport Hospital/Yale New Haven Health has made investments in improving the corridor; current improvements to the Seaview Avenue corridor farther north are ongoing.
- A current landowner, O&G Industries, wishes to relocate from this site in the future.
- Other owners are open to discussing the establishment of public access (via pathway) along the water.
- Yale New Haven Health currently has a 20-year option on developing several properties along the corridor that runs out in August 2017; a partnership with the City could lead to beneficial redevelopment of these parcels.
- This Opportunity Site is not within the hundred-year floodplain, and thus is better suited for housing than some other locations.
- High visibility and easy access from I-95 make it an ideal site for revitalization and redevelopment of the site can support momentum for other waterfront change.
- Improvements at intersection of Seaview Avenue and Crescent Avenue will enhance sightlines and ease traffic flow.



Suggested Uses + Amenities

The goal is to maximize the development potential of this site, fostering 21st-century jobs and lifestyle choices. As a medium-density TOD development, this Opportunity Site would have the potential to draw Millennials as a place to live, work, and play. Including work-live units for young artists, co-working spaces, or maker labs, and combining these forward-looking spaces with a mix of housing, recreation, and open space can provide a waterfront development unique in Bridgeport:

- TOD housing (northern portion of site)
- Child care facilities (northern portion of site)
- Co-working and innovation space (southern portion of site)
- Artist live/work
- Maker space (a shared creative lab or workspace, often with equipment like 3D printers)
- Water recreational access/facilities
- Green infrastructure/green roofs

Site Design Considerations

The Yellow Mill East site can create a new waterfront image as a mixed-use site with public space and active ground-floor uses with the following goals:

- **Active ground floor public uses:** pathway and public gathering spaces, access to water-based recreation (a floating pool, kayaking, paddleboats, etc.), childcare, office/maker space.
- **Appropriately scaled** four-to-five story buildings on the northern end of the site transitioning to relatively high-rise mixed-use residential/innovation uses on the southern end, meant to act as icons for the waterfront and be visible from I-95.
- **Pedestrian and bike connections to Barnum Station and Crescent Crossings** via the waterfront path.
- **View corridors** between buildings provide points of access to the pathway from Seaview Avenue and the existing residential neighborhood to the east.
- **Green design and natural restoration** including the possible transformation of a combined sewer outfall from Deacon Street (as well as one where Crescent Avenue crosses the Yellow Mill) into a green bio-filtration area.

Activation Options

Specific waterfront programming and recreation opportunities appropriate for this Opportunity Site are listed below. Additional details for these can be found in the Waterfront Activation Section:

- Kayaking and canoeing
- Pocket park and play area with BBQ grills and eating areas for neighborhood residents and all potential users
- Raised community garden beds
- Floating pool on Yellow Mill Channel



View from Deacon Street looking across a small open space or pocket park proposed for this site on Seaview Avenue, intended to better connect the East End neighborhood to the waterfront pathway and provide views of the Yellow Mill Channel, as well as green space for neighborhood families and residents of future development. *Sample concept—not a proposal*

Opportunity Site B: Seaview Plaza

NUMBER OF PARCELS	1
CURRENT USES	VACANT INDUSTRIAL + BOAT STORAGE
ACREAGE	28
SHORELINE:	0.27 MILES OR 1,427 FEET
ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:	DOCUMENTED BROWNFIELD, HAS REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN (RAP) BUT HAS NOT YET BEEN REMEDIATED
FLOODPLAIN STATUS:	SMALL STRIP ON WESTERN SIDE WITHIN FLOODPLAIN (WATERFRONT PATHWAY WOULD BUFFER SITE)
CURRENT STATUS:	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUBMITTED FOR ZONING APPROVAL

Site Summary

Seaview Plaza, the former site of CarTech on Seaview Avenue, not only serves as a future gateway for the relocating Port Jefferson Ferry terminal (and the East End as a whole), but it also has high visibility from I-95 and neighboring Steelpointe Harbor development. This Opportunity Site offers potential to connect the momentum and future amenities of Steelpointe Harbor to the surrounding neighborhoods, helping forge a stronger link across the Yellow Mill Channel and into the East End while creating direct connections to the waterfront from the adjacent neighborhood and Newfield Park.

Access to waterfront recreation from this site is a high priority, since the parcel occupies a prime location where the Yellow Mill Channel opens into the harbor. It is also right across the channel from the Bass Pro Shops, and part of the site is used for dry boat storage by the retailer. Seaview Bridgeport, LLC has submitted a general development plan for the site, which is awaiting zoning approval.



Why Here + Why Now?

Currently, Seaview Plaza has perhaps the greatest momentum of any waterfront redevelopment location, with strong developer interest and site readiness. Ideally situated for access and visibility, this site can benefit from comprehensive waterfront planning and vision.

- This site **builds on nearby existing and planned development** at the new Port Jefferson ferry terminal and Steelpointe Harbor.
- Proximity to the new ferry site offers potential to **attract many of the approximately one million ferry passengers each year** for shopping, farmer’s markets, and dining.
- There is enough acreage to support **significant public space** for events and special programming.
- Possibilities abound to **offer much-needed waterfront access to the East End** by designing strong connections between the site and neighborhood.
- A public pathway segment here, when added to the access planned for Steelpointe Harbor, will **establish a significant piece of the pathway...** creating a local and regional destination.
- This site has high value for **attracting a regional market beyond the typical big-box retail site**. This waterfront location is a



unique advantage for growing the market and putting Bridgeport ahead of other coastal communities in Connecticut.

Suggested Uses + Amenities

The goal is to encourage a dense and vibrant site that takes full advantage of the urban waterfront location. Seaview Plaza must offer something unique; uses and tenancies here should be geared toward local and regional demand and can also provide convenient, attractive shopping options for Port Jefferson Ferry passengers as they arrive and depart from the relocated terminal.

This site can accommodate multiple uses. The goals should be the inclusion of active ground floor destinations along the waterfront path to capitalize on the waterfront access and extract maximum value for the location. A grocery store has been proposed for this site, which would be a welcome addition for East End residents who lack access to fresh, healthy food. Food destinations could also draw from the potential customer base of nearly one million annual future Port Jefferson ferry passengers.

However, a grocery store alone will not make this waterfront site a successful, vibrant place. Without accompanying programming, a walkable site plan, and other attractions for foot traffic, development will add little to

the neighborhood fabric and will not take advantage of the greater value and potential wider market exposure a waterfront site provides. Grocery stores are also traditionally inward-looking, and the other uses on the site, as well as careful site design, must offset the disadvantages presented by a possible suburban-style big-box format.

The size of the site, and its ability to provide waterfront connections to the East End make this an ideal location for hosting more public uses and employing placemaking/activation strategies (see case study sidebar and Activation Options, following pages) adjacent to the grocery store and public pathway that will enhance the site's success by:

1. Ensuring the waterfront becomes a centerpiece instead of a mere backdrop
2. Drawing more visitors and residents for longer visits, rather than just brief grocery runs
3. Ensuring this site promotes water and pedestrian access instead of just automotive use
4. Giving the site a unique identity

Recommended uses and site features include:

- Destination food and retail
- Grocery store that has urban development

experience and a track record

- Cooking school/event space
- Brewpub/micro-brewery
- Public gathering space with electrical, water, and data hookups
- Farmers' market, which can be established as early as summer 2017 while the grocery store is under construction, and which can complement a larger theme of health and food access in collaboration with the store once it is open
- Indoor/outdoor public market hosting regional foods and showcasing local agriculture and shellfishing.

Site Design Considerations

Seaview Plaza can set a new standard for the Bridgeport Waterfront development and support the success of the future build out of Steelpointe Harbor by increasing visibility of the city's waterfront and creating a regional destination for permanent and temporary uses. Design goals include:

- Establish a central axis connecting Seaview Avenue and the adjacent East End

neighborhood to the waterfront.

- Provide a view corridor from Seaview Avenue to the waterfront.
- Provide public open space in the form of a plaza and gathering space.
- Site smaller-scale uses and buildings along the waterfront access path with outdoor tables and seating.
- Break up the mass of buildings to allow visual and physical access to the waterfront, with shorter buildings at the waterfront and taller buildings at Seaview Avenue and along adjacent property lines.
- Larger uses should be sited to avoid blocking views and access to the waterfront.
- Employ a shared parking strategy to minimize parking.
- Locate parking away from the waterfront path so that active uses and buildings can contribute to the use of the public pathway.
- Situate buildings to create a plaza connected to the waterfront, which can host a seasonal farmer's market and other activation programming throughout the year.

ReFresh Project: New Orleans, LA



Spanish-language cooking and nutrition class held in the ReFresh Project's Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine Image Source: ReFresh Project/Facebook

The ReFresh Project is a community-centered healthy food hub anchored by a vacant former grocery store building renovated in 2013-2014. Tenants include a Whole Foods Market, Liberty's Kitchen (a café/culinary training program for at-risk youth), and the Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine (run by Tulane University), as well as offices for a charter school, children's services center, the Crescent City Community Land Trust, and a neighborhood development organization called Broad Community Corporation (which developed the mixed-use site).

The ReFresh site, also hosts a teaching farm in partnership with local urban agriculture organizations and a small farmer's market. Whole Foods used a smaller floor-plate "urban format" to keep prices more affordable for residents of the lower-income neighborhoods along Broad Street; ReFresh combines this fresh food access with regular programming, cooking and exercise classes, education, and job training to promote holistic community wellbeing along the Broad Street corridor.



Outdoor events in the parking lot of the ReFresh Project site draw in residents of the surrounding neighborhoods and increase the market's customer base, while fostering a stronger sense of community. Image Source: Broad Community Connections

Activation Options

An outdoor farmer's market with cooking demonstrations, kids' activities, music, and other programming could enliven parts of the site before and during construction, while providing much-needed neighborhood access to fresh food in the short term. In the long term, a market could be incorporated into a public plaza built as part of the site plan, as a unique waterfront attraction.

- Seasonal outdoor farmer's market with live music, art vendors, or healthy cooking demonstrations.
- Outdoor eating areas and seating facing waterfront and pathway.
- Flea markets and holiday markets.
- Seasonal programming.
- Water-based recreation access including a visitor public boat landing (useful for grocery store runs) and sailboat rentals.
- Exercise stations along the pathway, morning boot camp or jogging sessions.
- Food truck or weekend food festival events
- Ice rink for wintertime recreation and temporary site activation.



Penn's Landing in Philadelphia features an annual ice rink as part of its WinterFest, coupled with an outdoor holiday market, winter beer garden, and fire pits. The rink is sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield and other local businesses and agencies. Image Source: M. Edlow/Visit Philadelphia

“This opportunity area is a gateway for the future Port Jefferson ferry terminal, has high visibility from the Interstate, and is a gateway for the East End as well. Seaview Plaza offers potential to connect the momentum and future amenities of Steelpointe Harbor to the neighborhoods surrounding that development. This site makes the link across the Yellow Mill Channel and into the East End. Uses here should be geared toward local and regional demand.”

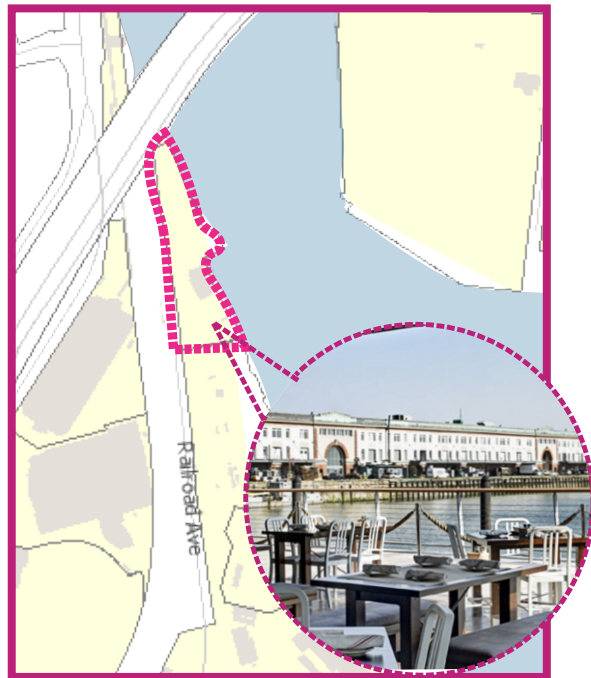
Opportunity Site C: Current Ferry Terminal (330 Water Street)

Site Summary

NUMBER OF PARCELS	1
CURRENT USES	TRANSPORTATION/INDUSTRIAL
ACREAGE	0.76 ACRES
SHORELINE:	0.27 MILES OR 1,427 FEET
ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:	NO DOCUMENTED BROWNFIELDS
FLOODPLAIN STATUS:	ENTIRELY WITHIN FLOODPLAIN
CURRENT STATUS:	OWNED BY BRIDGEPORT PORT AUTHORITY AND LEASED BY PORT JEFFERSON STEAMBOAT COMPANY

The Bridgeport-Port Jefferson Steamboat Company, founded in 1883, currently operates its ferry service from this site, which it leases from the Bridgeport Port Authority. Sandwiched between the Downtown train station and the Harbor Yard sports complex, this relatively small site is visible from the northbound lanes of I-95, but has generally weak visibility and physical connectivity to the rest of Downtown and South End. Once it secures the necessary approvals and permits, the ferry company will relocate across the harbor to the former Turbana Corporation dock southeast of Seaview Plaza, another Opportunity Site.

Jefferson Steamboat Company has a 100-year lease on this site with the Port Authority, which will remain in effect if a water-based use is located here (including boat moorings). The condition of the moorings and bulkhead thus should be further investigated, and the permitting time frame for the ferry's relocation should be established to clarify redevelopment options.



This Opportunity Site presents a valuable chance to enhance waterfront connections to Downtown and establish a public dock for visitors and excursion boats. The site currently has a bulkhead and moorings suitable for docking; it also has a small deck that could be expanded over the water to create a unique public plaza. This is the only current Downtown opportunity to dock boats and offer a public landing, and its proximity to the train station, with existing pedestrian access, makes it a prime location to attract visitors by boat, foot, and train. It should be noted that the Bridgeport-Port





Adjacent to the train and other Downtown attractions, this is a key Opportunity Site for the area. This conceptual site plan for the current ferry terminal highlights improving access and activity. *Sample concept—not a proposal*

Why Here + Why Now

Downtown water access and temporary boat moorings are in short supply. This current ferry site is the only spot in Downtown that could easily support a public boat dock.

- Proposed ferry relocation offers a potentially vacant site with an **opportunity to create stronger, more public connections between the waterfront and Downtown.**
- The **bulkhead and boat moorings here can offer the only opportunity Downtown to expand boat docking space** and provide visitor public landing/ hourly or transient docking (note: bulkhead and mooring condition must be examined).
- **This site is walkable to the Harbor Yard sports facilities, new and proposed Downtown housing, and the Downtown train station;** it is across the river from Steelpointe Harbor, just a short walk over the Stratford Avenue bridge.
- Even if the ferry company retains the lease by running water shuttles or other water-based activity from the site, **these activities could still support ancillary uses.**

Suggested Uses + Amenities

A range of uses is suggested here to accommodate two different scenarios for the relocation of the current ferry terminal. Because the ferry has a 100-year lease with the Port Authority, which remains valid if a water-dependent use is on site, there is a possibility that this site could host a water shuttle—something proposed by the Steamship Company, in which community members expressed some interest at public meetings. An alternative scenario is that the company vacates the site completely, leaving more flexibility in reuse and re-imagining this Opportunity Site.

In either scenario, some combination of the following could be accommodated on the site:

- Restaurant and event space in a barge moored at dock.
- Visitor kiosk highlighting the waterfront and offering maps.
- Public landing for water shuttles, water taxis, excursion boats, and quick drop-offs and pick-ups.
- Visitor mooring for hourly or daily rental for those traveling through, attending events, or dining on-site or nearby.
- Extended dock or a barge moored at the dock to create a new public “plaza” with movable deck chairs, tables, and umbrellas.

To create the new public space on this Opportunity Site, the small existing wooden deck that extends from the ferry terminal building could be expanded. Alternatively, a barge could be moored onsite, possibly with a floating dock connection. Finally, adding more lighting and seating, in the form of movable deck chairs and café tables, would make this a unique public plaza with water views on three sides. This plaza could be a lunch venue for Downtown office workers, a scenic photo spot for passengers awaiting their train or boaters tying up for the day, or a relaxing catch-and-release fishing pier for locals.

Similar examples are Boston's Charles River, where two decks along the popular Esplanade pathway draw summer sunbathers, students, and tourists, and Milford's Lisman Landing, a transient marina near the historic downtown that also hosts concerts and an oyster festival. New York City's Water Club (see sidebar) offers an unusual model as well, using a nautical theme and moored barge expansion to create an attractive destination.

The Water Club: Manhattan, NYC



The Water Club in Manhattan expands the waterfront site on the East River with a barge converted to a restaurant and event space.

The Water Club on the East Side of New York City is a good example of how a waterfront site can be expanded, in this case by the use of a barge for both upscale dining and event space and a seasonal outdoor rooftop cafe and bar. This iconic spot is a destination on the waterfront adjacent to the raised FDR Drive. The highway, while blocking the site from the adjacent neighborhoods, does offer good visibility and accessibility, and the lights of the building serve as a beacon along the East River. The combination of event space, restaurant, and informal roof deck make this spot a success at attracting customers across a range of demographics.



The restaurant solves the limited parking problem by offering free valet service, advertising it as the only restaurant in NYC where you can "park at the front door."



The roof deck is transformed to the Crow's Nest in warm weather with a bar and cafe offering light fare. Image source for all images above: The Water Club



A short walk from Downtown Bridgeport, the train station, and the Harbor Yard sports complex with existing moorings, the current Port Jefferson Ferry Terminal site is a prime location for attracting visitors by boat. Image Source: Brian Pounds, CT Post

Site Design Considerations

Connectivity and visibility are key goals at this Opportunity Site. The ferry terminal site can continue to host water shuttle services while accommodating other uses such as dining and event space, as well as public docking. Goals for the site include:

- Provide public space for movable seating and tables and chairs
- Use signage to connect the site to both Downtown and the South End as well as to the key destinations of Seaside Park and the Harbor Yard sports complex.

Activation Options

This site can host a multitude of activities to draw the public at various times of year:

- Visitor kiosk offering information and maps for the entire waterfront
- Summer movie series
- Special events in the restaurant or event space
- Movable deck chairs along the water
- Tables and seating for the Downtown lunch crowd
- Bike racks or even seasonal bike rental kiosk
- Catch-and-release pier fishing competitions



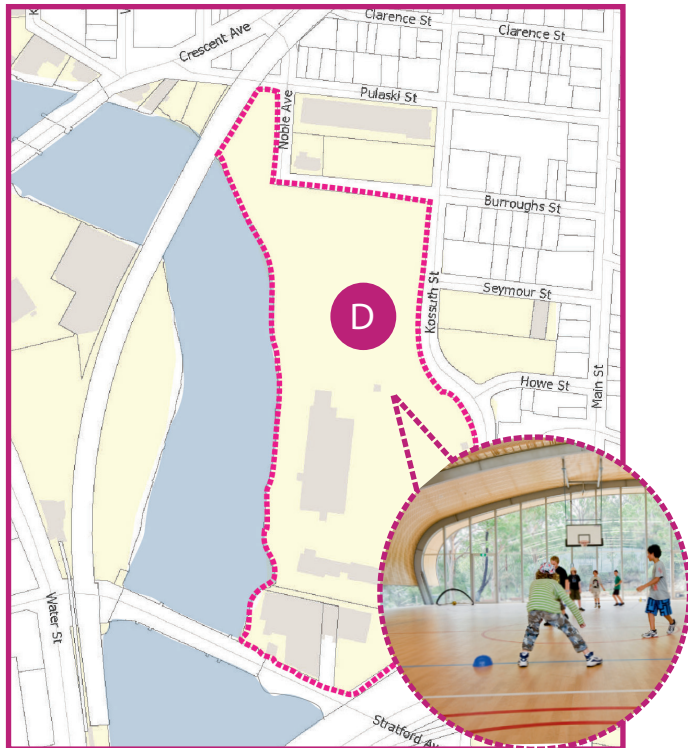
Boat moorings by the hour, a water's edge deck for relaxing, fishing, or enjoying an outdoor lunch, and clear connections to other destinations along the waterfront and in Downtown Bridgeport would all complement reuse of the Port Jefferson ferry terminal building. *Sample concept—not a proposal*

“Conversion of the ferry terminal building into a restaurant with open-air seating would add to the small but popular list of waterfront restaurants in Bridgeport; alternatively, a larger restaurant and event space on a barge moored at the dock could draw residents from Bridgeport and neighboring cities alike seeking a venue for business meetings, weddings, or other events and celebrations.”

Opportunity Site D: Shoreline Star/AGI

(141 Stratford Ave + 255 Kossuth St)

NUMBER OF PARCELS	2
CURRENT USES	VACANT INDUSTRIAL + COMMERCIAL
ACREAGE	22 ACRES
SHORELINE:	0.27 MILES OR 1,427 FEET
ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:	AGI PARCEL IS DOCUMENTED BROWNFIELD, UNDERGOING SITE PREPARATION
FLOODPLAIN STATUS:	PARTIALLY WITHIN FLOODPLAIN ON SOUTHERN END AND SMALL STRIP ON NORTHERN RIVERFRONT EDGE (EL 12 FT)
CURRENT STATUS:	CITY OWNS AGI SITE, SEEKING DEVELOPER; SHORELINE STAR OWNER INTERESTED IN REDEVELOPING



Site Summary

This 22-acre site is composed of two parcels, the larger of which includes the shuttered Shoreline Star greyhound racing track, a simulcast betting facility, and an expansive surface parking lot. The former AGI Rubber Company complex is the gateway to the site from the Stratford Avenue bridge and Downtown. The three-acre AGI parcel, acquired by the City through foreclosure and undergoing the early stages of remediation thanks to a \$200,000 EPA grant, has been a detractor to the image of Downtown for several years.

Why Here + Why Now?

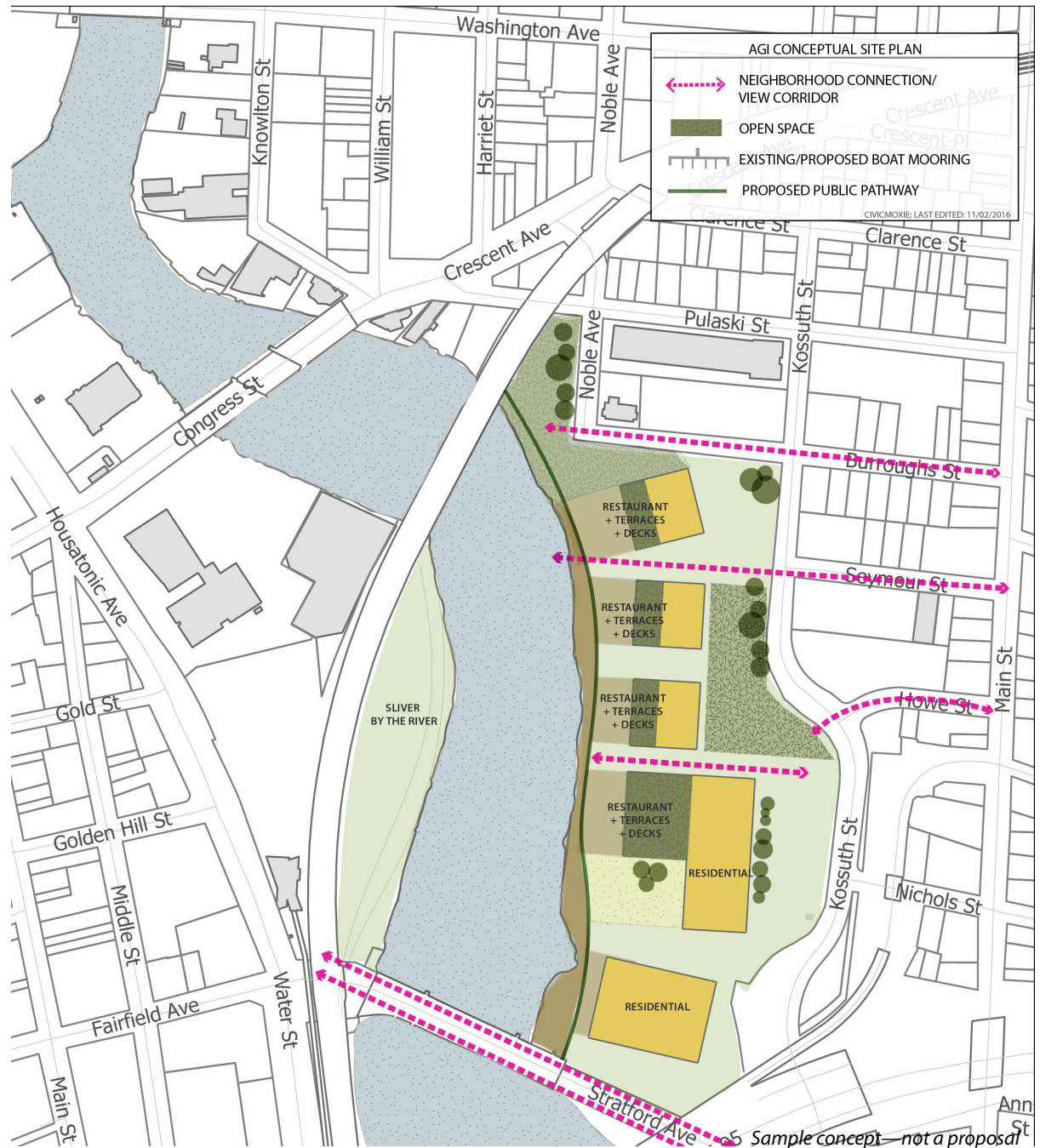
This Opportunity Site could play an important role in catalyzing waterfront revitalization citywide and offers a strong case for encouraging significant economic development and public use at the site:

- This site has high **visibility from local roadways, the rail line and train station, and I-95.**
- Taken together with the “Sliver by the River” Opportunity Site and the Stratford Avenue bridge as a waterfront access path, **this Opportunity Site feels like it is part of Downtown—** helping to expand the reach of the



waterfront to this up and coming urban center and providing a unique chance to re-cast visitors' and residents' perceptions of Bridgeport.

- As another activity node, this site **creates an interim destination and area of interest between Downtown and Steelpoint Harbor/Seaview Plaza** – “shortening” the perceived distance between these areas and supporting increased visibility and momentum for all.
- The City is in the process of **site preparation** in anticipation of issuing a development RFP in 2017.
- The Shoreline Star greyhound **racing track is no longer in use**, leaving a significant part of that parcel empty.
- The two **parcels have been rezoned to DVD-WF**, which permits restaurants, entertainment, and retail as of right, already opening up greater opportunities for this site.



Suggested Uses + Amenities

This Opportunity Site is a prime TOD site and should be considered part of Downtown because of its proximity to the train station and its high visibility. It should be noted that the southern portion of the site (including all of the AGI parcel) is within the FEMA-designated 100-year floodplain. Adding fill to raise the base elevation of the site will be necessary, and LID (Low-Impact Design) features such as permeable surfaces and rain gardens are recommended to reduce runoff into the Pequonnock River.

Uses and amenities that could be hosted here include:

- Mixed-use transit-oriented development and housing; daycare for residents' kids
- Co-working space
- Ground-floor cluster of several restaurants (right on the waterfront) to create a regional dining destination
- Public space for programming and events
- Water-based recreation, such as kayaking

Buffalo Canalside: Buffalo, NY



Templeton Landing, a popular restaurant with outdoor seating and lighting (background), is right off the Erie Basin Marina. This part of Canalside is just a short walk from downtown Buffalo. Image Source: The Buffalo News

The former transportation and industrial hub of Buffalo, New York has seen a revitalization of its downtown waterfront, particularly the Canalside area where the city's famous canal used to enter Lake Erie. Some of the waterfront's crumbling grain elevators and brownfield sites have been demolished, others remediated and repurposed through a careful planning process.

These sites now support a diverse range of redevelopment uses: mixed-use offices and housing at the Erie Freight House; a hockey/roller derby rink, restaurant, brewery, and beer garden at RiverWorks; a wintertime park with canals that

freeze over to create a skating "trail;" and theater shows and poetry readings at the artsy Silo City. One notable location is the Erie Basin Marina, a public marina that allows hourly and daily dockage and offers easy access to a cluster of restaurants, boat tour pickups, a waterfront path, and a public park.



Remediation and reuse—or in some cases, demolition—of former industrial structures along Buffalo's riverfront has opened up new opportunities for recreation, dining, and entertainment. The RiverWorks complex includes rinks for hockey and roller derby, a microbrewery and distillery, outdoor dining, event spaces, and temporary boat slips, as well as kayak and paddleboarding rentals. Image Source: Ed Healy

Site Design Considerations

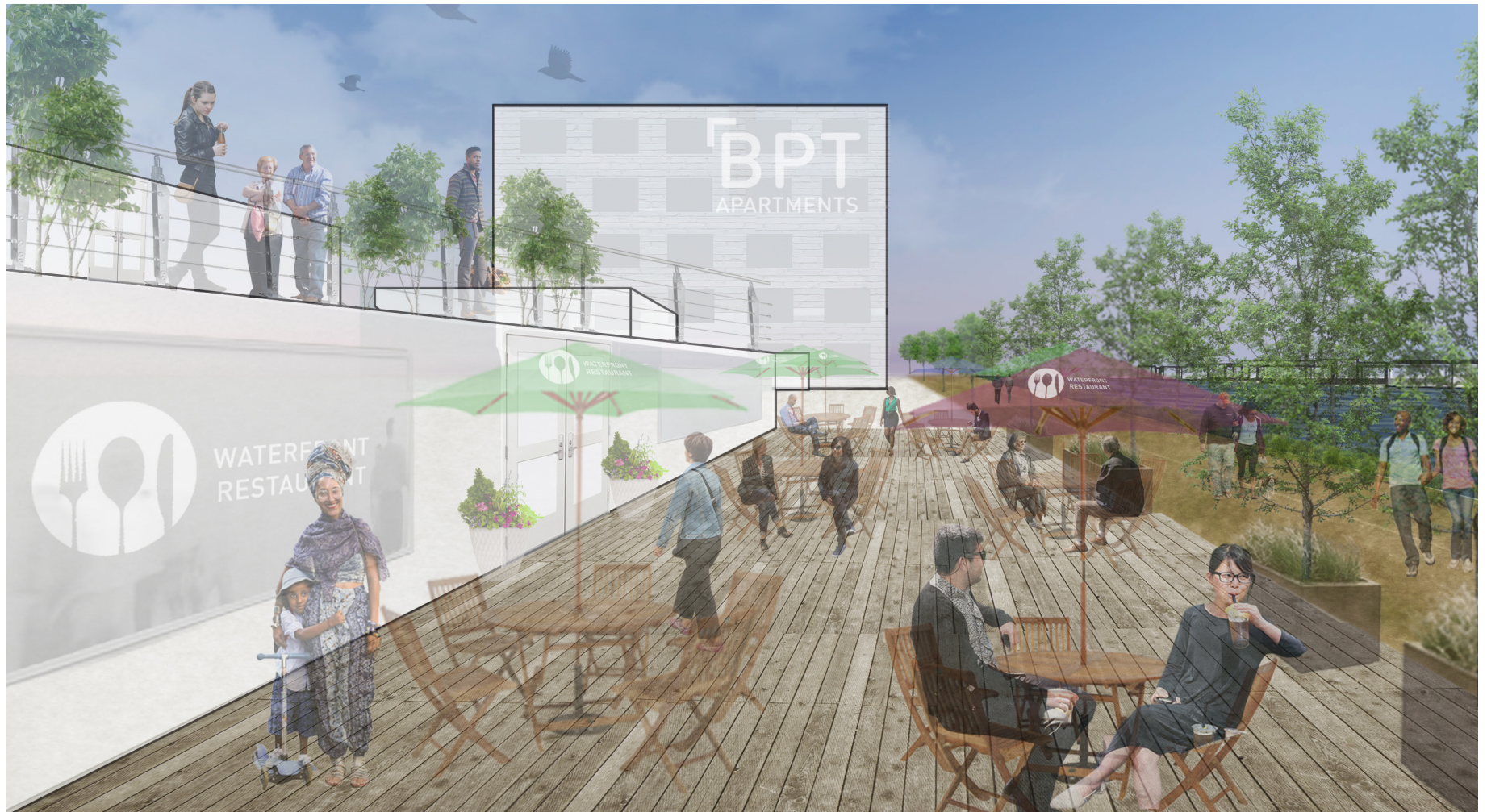
Design considerations should treat this Opportunity Site as part of Downtown because of its adjacency to the Stratford Avenue Bridge and high visibility. Design goals include:

- Encourage taller buildings near the bridge and I-95 and reduce the scale of structures at the water's edge and closer to existing residential areas.
- Establish significant waterfront promenade where people can linger and ground floor restaurants can provide outdoor dining areas or live music.
- Treat the juncture with the Stratford Avenue bridge sidewalk as a seamless transition to strengthen the perception that this is a continuous pathway and that the bridge is part of this experience.
- Incorporate public art or digital media art in a highly visible location along the pathway to create a destination and support marketing of the site.

Activation Options

Bold moves will be needed to create a strong link with Downtown and create a local and regional destination. Activation suggestions include:

- Outdoor dining and seating adjacent to restaurants; open space throughout
- Signature interactive media wall or public art that sets site apart; could become a stop on the Bridgeport Art Trail
- A micro-brewery or signature restaurant
- Outdoor summer movies adjacent to restaurants and bars (customers can dine and drink outside while watching, as on Rowes Wharf in Boston)



With ample space for a mix of complementary uses, this high-potential site should be redeveloped as a transit-oriented center for entertainment, dining, and water access. Building heights should step up closer to the highway on the southern end of the Opportunity Site, and outdoor seating should be incorporated throughout. *Sample concept—not a proposal*

“Highly visible from I-95, the Downtown train station and rail line, and the Stratford Avenue bridge, this location provides a unique chance to re-cast visitors’ perceptions of Bridgeport...there is also significant opportunity for economic development, converting the entire site to more active and productive use.”

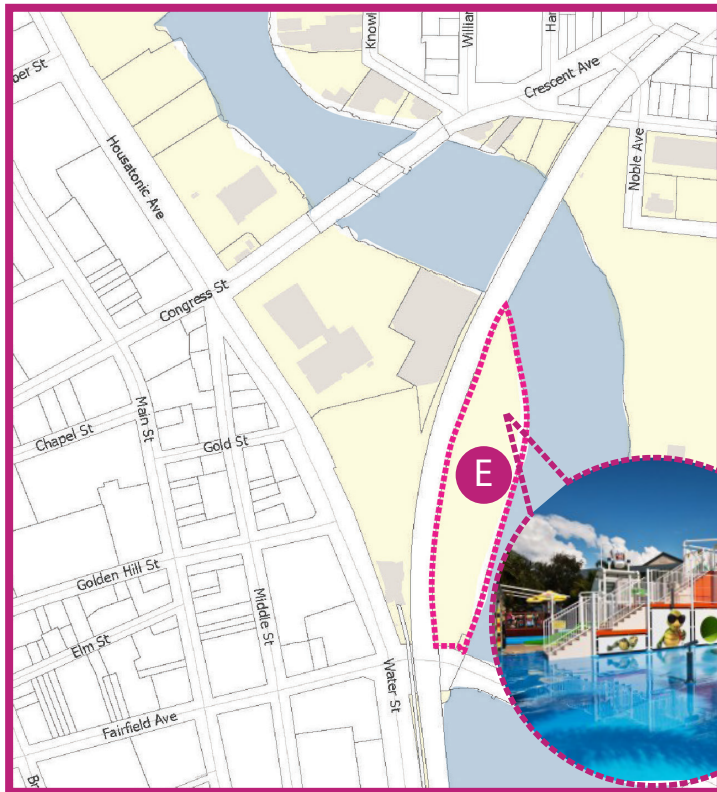
Opportunity Site E: Sliver by the River

NUMBER OF PARCELS	1
CURRENT USES	VACANT INDUSTRIAL/PARKING
ACREAGE	4.11 ACRES
SHORELINE:	0.2 MILES OR 1,078 FEET
ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:	NOT A DOCUMENTED BROWNFIELD
FLOODPLAIN STATUS:	ENTIRELY WITHIN FLOODPLAIN (EL 12 FT)
CURRENT STATUS:	CITY-OWNED, POSSIBLE RESILIENCY PROJECT SITE

Site Summary

Owned by the City of Bridgeport, the Sliver by the River site, which is within the floodplain, is a long and narrow overflow employee parking site for the nearby bus terminal. Piers are still evident where a floating restaurant, using an old Staten Island Ferry boat, once tied up here—a tantalizing sign of what an active waterfront could look like once again on the Pequonnock.

The Stratford Avenue bridge serves as a part of the public pathway and is considered part of the Opportunity Site here to accommodate public art, special lighting, and enhanced wayfinding to link the Sliver by the River to Downtown and across the Pequonnock River to the Shoreline Star/AGI Opportunity Site and Steelpointe Harbor.



Why Here + Why Now?

The Sliver by the River along with the Shoreline Star/AGI Opportunity Site across the river, offer an extraordinary opportunity to create a major node of waterfront activity and development near Downtown. The Stratford Avenue bridge is also an important part of the larger pathway:

- The bridge is a highly visible link between Downtown and the momentum of waterfront development at Steelpointe Harbor and placing an activity node at Sliver by the River enhances its importance.
- With a dearth of Downtown waterfront access, the Sliver by the River can offer a much-needed respite on the water.
- Placemaking and public art opportunities, such as dramatic or colorful lighting of the bridge and temporary activities, can make the area a positive icon for the City.
- This can tie ongoing efforts at creating housing Downtown (to draw retirees and Millennials) to waterfront development.
- The site is owned by the City with no current structures; virtually shovel-ready.
- Because the Sliver by the River's low elevation makes it unsuitable for development, it offers an exciting opportunity to introduce temporary pop-up uses and rotating programming.

Suggested Uses + Amenities

Because this site is in the floodplain and is quite narrow, it should be thought of as a blank canvas that can host changing uses and pop-ups. That means this site offers the best opportunity on the waterfront to test low-risk and high-return programming. This site has also been considered for a resiliency/natural restoration pilot project by MetroCOG. Pop-up uses and programming are compatible with restoration and resiliency strategies here:

- Partial natural restoration of the shoreline to promote resiliency
- Pop-up shipping container and temporary structures offering:
 - Beer garden
 - Seasonal restaurant
 - Ice cream stand
- Recreation area:
 - Beach volleyball
 - Bocce court
 - Horseshoe pits

Spruce Street Harbor Park: Philadelphia, PA



Spruce Street Harbor Park, a pop-up park in its third year highlighting local dining, is popular with locals and visitors alike on Philadelphia's riverfront

This pop-up park on the Delaware River is a seasonal feature that attracted over 750,000 visitors in 2015 to Penn's Landing. The boardwalk-style park includes a beer garden, lawn games, hammocks, a floating restaurant, and brightly-colored LED lighting—open to the public all summer long.

It also highlights local restaurants, with new chefs each year selected with a big announcement, as well as local art, with a weekly pop-up art market. The attractions continue onto the water itself, with boat and paddleboard rentals available. Sponsors include a regional bank and area corporations, and an NEA ArtPlace grant funded placemaking and programming on the site.

Site Design Considerations Activation Options

The Sliver by the River can change according to trend, season, and the group or business that can best activate the site at any given time. Basic design features should accommodate this flexibility:

- The **existing boardwalk behind the train station just south of the site should connect to the Sliver by the River** and extend that waterfront walkway access—or offer a quiet fishing spot.
 - **Permeable surfaces and a “soft” water’s edge treatment (e.g. marsh grasses)** are recommended.
 - **Temporary structures and activities** can take place further from the waterfront, closest to the main entrance to the site off Stratford Avenue that connects to transit and Downtown.
 - Security concerns can be mitigated by attracting many people, and using **nighttime lighting to highlight the festive nature of the spot.**
- Outdoor “beach” with volleyball, rentable umbrellas, chairs, and equipment; not a swimming beach, but a unique kind of pocket park and a seasonal draw
 - Temporary/pop-up restaurants, beer gardens, or food trucks with movable, temporary chairs and café tables; site could also host cook-offs or food festivals
 - Could also include temporary/pop-up vendor stalls to support small businesses
 - Special lighting as a lure to make this a destination and beacon on the Downtown waterfront



Like the Beach at Detroit's Campus Martius Park or Paris Plage in France, a seasonal "beach" on the Sliver by the River would quickly become a gathering place, where families and children go to play, where young people hang out, or where Downtown workers stop by after work. Its location--right behind the bus station, highly visible from the train, highway, and local roads--makes it an ideal spot for creative pop-up uses, like food stands or vendor stalls inside of repurposed shipping containers. Movable chairs, rentable umbrellas, and volleyball would all help set the scene for a one-of-a-kind waterfront site. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

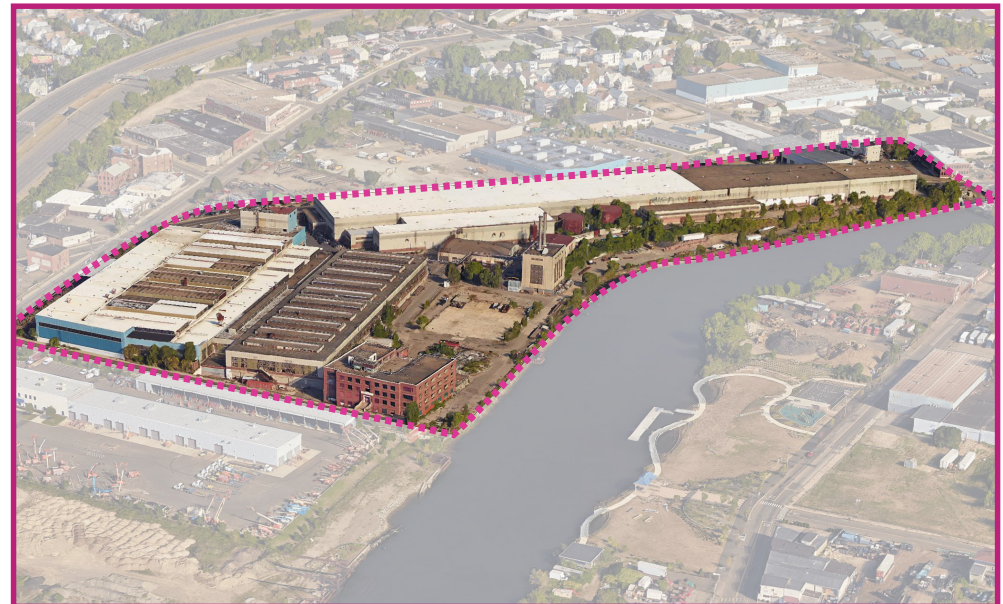
Opportunity Site F: Bridgeport Brass Co

NUMBER OF PARCELS	14
CURRENT USES	LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND VACANT
ACREAGE	22 ACRES
SHORELINE:	0.37 MILES OR 1,979 FEET
ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:	A NUMBER OF PARCELS DOCUMENTED AS BROWNFIELDS, BUT NOT REMEDIATED
FLOODPLAIN STATUS:	PARTLY WITHIN FLOODPLAIN ALONG EASTERN EDGE (EL. 10 FT), MOST OF SITE OUT OF FLOODPLAIN
CURRENT STATUS:	CITY HAS OWNERSHIP OF SEVERAL INDUSTRIAL CONDOMINIUM PARCELS ON SITE

Site Summary

Situated between the Pequonnock River and North Washington Avenue, the 22-acre Bridgeport Brass complex hosts a diverse group of light industry-zoned condominiums, almost half of which are owned by the City of Bridgeport. This site sits along major city thoroughfares and has excellent highway access and visibility from CT Highway 25/8, Exits 3 and 4. Two major structures on the site are vacant

and deteriorated, with visible graffiti and past illegal dumping issues; this site is a priority for anti-blight and environmental remediation efforts. The riverbank here is lined with deteriorating rip-rap, with old pilings in one area, and could benefit from either natural restoration or replacement. It is otherwise a quiet stretch of the Pequonnock, with good views of Knowlton Park.



Why Here + Why Now?

This Opportunity Site requires a long-term vision for highway-accessible uses on a quiet stretch of the Pequonnock River:

- City ownership of almost half of the business condominiums presents an opportunity to control the future of this site.
- The large floor plate, high-ceilinged facilities make them uniquely suited to uses such as sports and recreation that cannot easily be accommodated on other waterfront sites.
- The site's location on the banks of the Pequonnock River, right across from Knowlton Park, provide potential waterfront recreation opportunities that can strengthen the appeal of Bridgeport as a "waterfront access for all" city and provide a strong concentration of waterfront activity.

Suggested Uses + Amenities

The sheer size and scale of Bridgeport Brass, both in acreage and building volume/height, presents unique opportunities for regional sports, entertainment, and waterfront recreation along the lines of Chelsea Piers in Stamford, CT. Thirty minutes and 23 miles away by car, the Stamford facility boasts 400,000 SF of recreation, indoor sports, and athletics space

with an additional 65,000-square-foot health and fitness club. Early estimates of market demand indicate this could be an area for growth in Bridgeport, which currently lacks a similar facility.

Due to environmental challenges, full redevelopment and reuse of this Opportunity Site will likely require a longer-term investment. In the short term, a waterside berm or boardwalk (which would also continue the pathway along the river) and fencing with vegetative screening around these structures could provide protection for the public while improvements for the rest of the site are underway. Suggestions for the near and long term:

- Indoor/outdoor skate park
- Climbing wall, gym
- Arts/performance space with former industrial vibe
- Strategy/physical game location (such as Boda Borg) to create a unique regional draw
- Grand event space
- Water-based recreation such as kayaking and canoeing
- Maker space, artist work space, or innovative small businesses

Chelsea Piers: Stamford, CT



Chelsea Piers Connecticut, located in Stamford, is a massive indoor entertainment complex, with trampolines, climbing walls, and other kinds of recreational facilities. Image Source: Great Places

Located in two renovated former factory buildings in Stamford, CT, this sports and recreation facility features three floors of indoor playing fields and courts, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, ice rinks, gyms, and batting cages, as well as event rooms and food concessions. The entire center covers 418,000 square feet, completed in 2012 with a final construction cost of \$50 million. It often hosts group events, corporate outings, sports leagues, and parties.

Site Design Considerations Activation Options

This Opportunity Site should exude a fun and thoroughly industrial ambience:

- Every element of this site should reflect the same overall design sense – industrial, large-scale, even a sense of worn materials and decay.
- Treatment of the site as a playground and “blank canvas” to host large scale elements and gather many people for recreation or events.
- Maintain physical and visual connections from North Washington Avenue and across the river from Knowlton Park to ensure the overall visibility of the development.
- This section of the public pathway could have steps providing access to the water as well as offering a social gathering space.

- Outdoor recreation (such as a climbing wall or skate park) and kayaking or canoeing
- Fun recreation elements – big bouncy balls, climbing walls...offerings that aren't provided anywhere else
- Public art, including temporary environmental installations or mural-painting projects
- Outdoor spaces could also provide seasonal “classrooms” for fitness classes

Portland Brownstone Quarries: Portland, CT

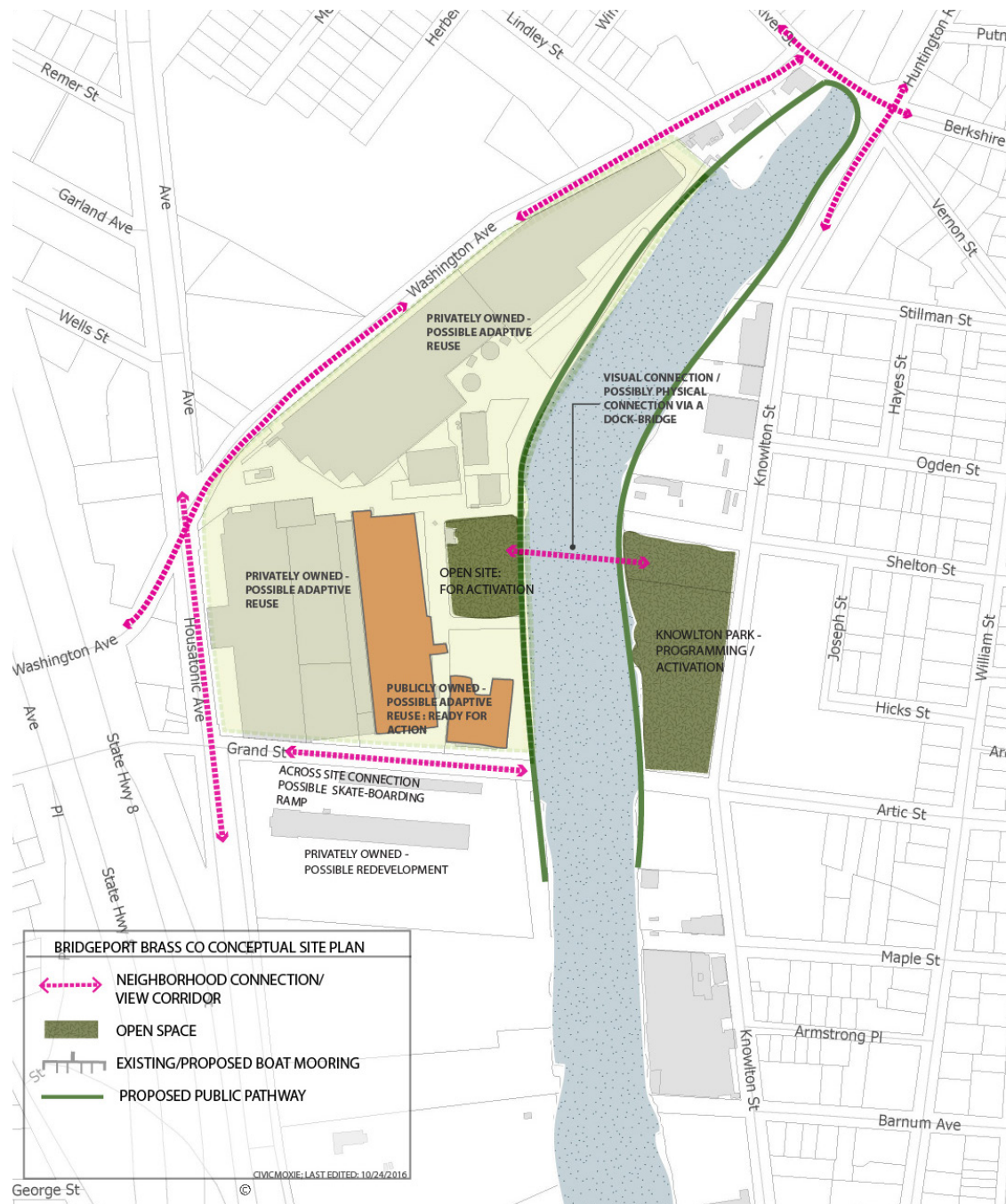


This water-to-land obstacle course incorporates quarry materials from the site's former use. Image Source: Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park

These quarries are on the National Historic Register and have been leased by the Town of Portland to Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park, as a local recreation and adventure park. The intent is to use increased visitor-ship to the quarries as a way to strengthen the local economy while providing interpretive experiences of the historic importance of the quarries. Since 2000, the Park has expanded its attractions to include scuba diving, climbing and rappelling, swimming, snorkeling, canoeing and kayaking, hiking, mountain biking, wake boarding, cliff jumping, giant inflatable toys, and challenge courses for group team building.



The Bridgeport Brass Co site's large warehouse-style buildings, though they may require some initial cleanup, offer a valuable blank canvas for indoor-outdoor recreation, murals and event spaces, and innovative activation ideas to attract out-of-town visitors and younger residents. The site is also large enough to support multiple public space activation strategies, such as sculptures, outdoor recreation, and a section of the public pathway. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*



Moving Forward

The City's Roles in Waterfront Redevelopment

A proactive approach means that the City of Bridgeport must commit to a number of roles:

- **Master Planner:** This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan has completed the first phase of waterfront revitalization planning. The designated opportunity sites were selected because they have all or most of the factors in line for redevelopment. The concept schemes shown in this Plan offer suggestions for uses based on the market research, and site layouts based on the goals of activating the waterfront and creating public access that can support development. The next step for many of these sites is for the City to prepare a master plan showing actual uses, square footages and massing, and site layouts including public space and parking. These conceptual plans will articulate the vision to allow property owners and investors to see the future and begin to make real the vision.
- **Facilitator:** Development rarely happens without many conversations between many people. The City can facilitate and be a part of these conversations to ensure that the right people are part of the planning and to build trust that momentum is indeed building toward positive change on the waterfront. What should this look

like? The City should meet with property owners, discuss site redevelopment possibilities, learn of private owner intentions, and keep conversations going as options are explored.

- **Property Owner:** In most cases, the City will not choose to be a redeveloper of publicly-owned property and will need to articulate City-goals in adherence with the Waterfront Bridgeport Plan and take action accordingly to ensure development moves forward. This will mean:
 - a. Deciding where to sell property and when to partner or lease.
 - b. Understanding the power of assemblage and working with adjacent private property owners to create larger parcels where transformative development has a better chance of success.
 - c. Upholding the high quality goals set forth in this Waterfront Bridgeport Plan to ensure that the best possible value (and tax revenue, jobs, and overall city perception benefits) is derived from development.
- **Recruiter:** City waterfront development is not suburban development. It may very well be necessary to recruit developers experienced in urban waterfront

development to the city. Public officials will need to take on the role of recruiters. This Master Planning process has begun this role of recruitment through the focus groups, interviews, and outreach done by the planning team. The City will need to continue these efforts by identifying the type of development it wants and then actively recruiting and working with developers to get the development it wants and creating the conditions favorable to this development.

- **Quality Control Enforcer/Gatekeeper:** This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan raises the bar on expectations for the city and the waterfront. A major way the city can show commitment to this vision is to stick with the plan. Insist on adherence to the waterfront guidelines and seek quality urban development.
- **Placemaker:** Redevelopment is a chicken-and-egg dilemma. What comes first? The foot traffic and interest from more housing and jobs? Or the development that brings those things? The City can start things moving by acting as a placemaker to facilitate the activation of public waterfront space to demonstrate the potential of the waterfront and get people there NOW.

Sample Steps

Roles for the Placemaker can include:

- a. Act as a lead partner in a coalition for the pilot segments of the public pathway.
- b. Provide streamlined permitting and assistance for all groups wishing to host events, festivals, and other programming on the waterfront.
- c. Assist and support others in writing grants for activities.
- d. Seek temporary public uses of publicly owned waterfront property and assist in the implementation of these.

To illustrate how these roles should play out in the near future, three opportunity sites are highlighted following with recommended next steps for each.

1. Yellow Mill East:

The Yellow Mill East site consists of privately owned parcels. The City can show support for redevelopment by working with property owners to develop a master plan and assist those owners by offering other services and support to move the redevelopment of these parcels forward. It is important to note that the City can provide public support to the private owners to allow the market to take over for this Opportunity Site. The tax revenue, potential jobs, enhanced image of the waterfront, and benefits for the surrounding neighborhoods in terms of public access, all justify the City assisting these owners' redevelopment efforts. That assistance can include the following:

1. Master Plan: use the conceptual plan presented in this section to prepare a master plan for Seaview Avenue for the following properties:
 - a. From Deacon Street to Crescent Avenue consists of three city blocks and a significant stretch of water. Four property owners have site control here and there are only three houses – one is for sale, one is owned by Bridgeport Hospital, and the other is a privately-owned two-family house. These properties

are situated on a prime location on a navigable stretch of the Yellow Mill Channel; the future Barnum Train Station project also makes it a prime TOD site. The Master Plan should include:

- i. Conceptual layout with uses and approximate square footage
 - ii. Public space and pathway access including view corridors from Seaview Avenue to the Yellow Mill.
 - iii. Parking layout
 - iv. Phasing proposal to allow for build-out of master concept over time
 - v. Detailed walkway proposal for pedestrian connection to planned Barnum Station
 - vi. Plan to enhance the pedestrian experience from this site to Bridgeport Hospital
2. Meet with property owners to discuss the master plan ideas and invite participation. Property owners could then chose to:
 - a. Not participate (in which case other individual owners could still be involved because plan would include

phasing)

- b. Sell to a developer
 - c. Work with a developer/partner in the development
 - d. Self-develop
3. If necessary, City should recruit a developer to the discussions (this is all privately-owned property) or with the owners' agreement, the City could issue an RFP for the property after the owners agree on goals and level of participation.

2. Shoreline Star/AGI:

These two sites, one owned privately, with AGI owned by the City of Bridgeport, form a key TOD opportunity within a short walk of the Downtown train station. To have a combined site of 22 acres with such high visibility from Downtown and I-95 is extraordinary, and the City should do everything it can to ensure that this site is developed as a dense, urban mixed-use project that exemplifies the best possible waterfront development outcomes. Next steps should include:

1. Determine the value of the AGI site and estimate extent and cost of additional cleanup.
2. Talk with the current Shoreline Star owner about conceptual TOD ideas for the combined sites.
 - a. Mixed-use housing
 - b. Explore potential for current Shoreline Star uses in first phase of the plan
 - c. Public pathway
 - d. Public art opportunities to increase visibility from Downtown, railway, and highway
3. Create a phased master plan for the combined sites including calculation of tax

benefits, jobs, public access benefits.

4. Appraise value of AGI parcel as part of the master plan scenario
5. Move forward with City RFP for AGI parcel disposition according to master plan

3. Sliver by the River:

Downtown Bridgeport currently has scant waterfront access, and this site, which sits in the floodplain, could offer a strong connection between Downtown and the Pequonnock River. The site is known as “Sliver by the River” and it has high visibility from the Stratford Avenue bridge, the railroad and train station, and I-95. Currently a site for overflow parking for the adjacent bus terminal, this is a prime location for a partial natural restoration project and pop-up seasonal placemaking opportunities. Next steps for the City include:

1. Meet with organizations that have expressed interest in undertaking a natural shoreline restoration project here and determine interest. Explore ways to make this site an educational experience for shoreline restoration and to create a high-visibility demonstration project here with non-profit or advocacy sponsorship.
2. Identify alternative parking areas for current users of this site.
3. Use the Pathway Implementation Kit as a guide for best practices and ideas for outreach for seasonal uses.
4. Recruit a sponsor for a temporary beer garden/pop-up restaurant on the site for

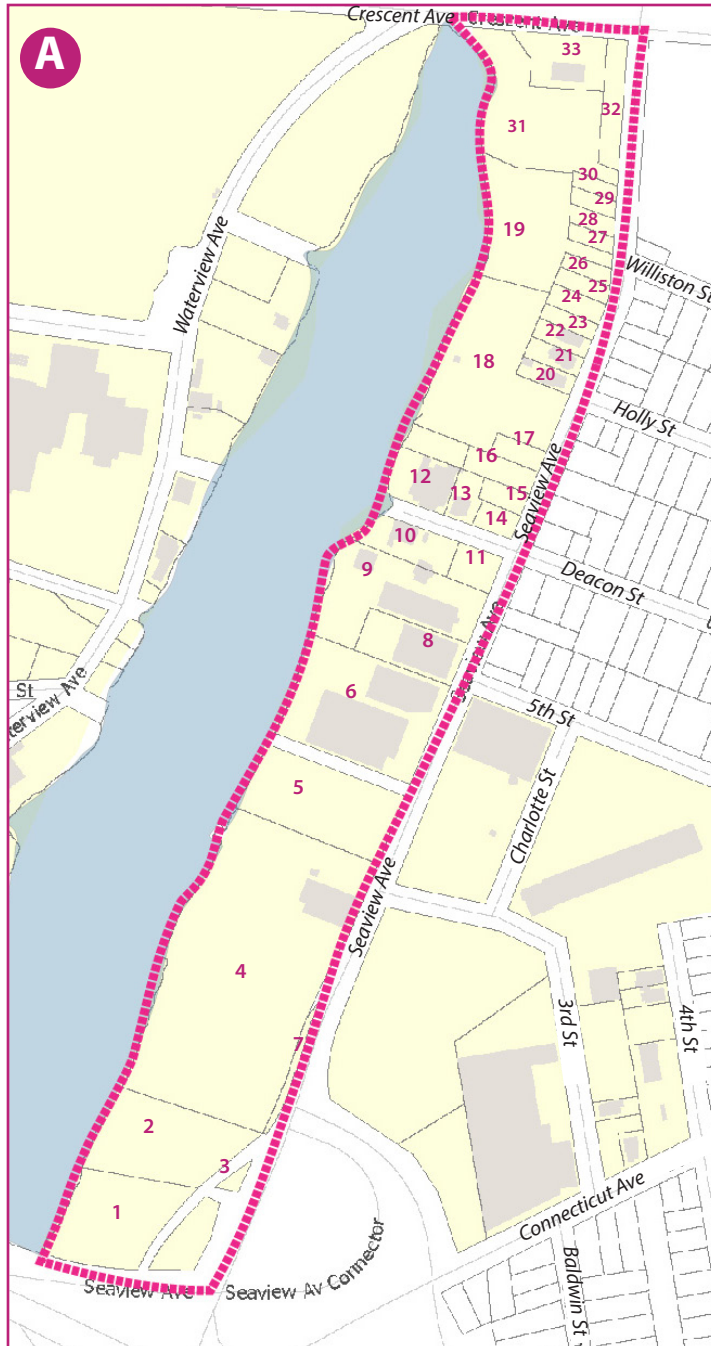
spring 2017.

5. Explore turning over programming and management of the site to the Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) with the following goals:
 - a. Recruit a regionally known celebrity chef to be the pop-up restaurant partner for spring-summer 2017.
 - b. Provide outdoor programming on the site with an aim of attracting Downtown workers, residents, and a regional clientele to the site:
 - i. Volleyball
 - ii. Bocce
 - iii. Small concerts
 - iv. Outdoor summer movie nights

These three sample sites offer strong short-term potential to demonstrate that the waterfront is undergoing a transformation. In each case, the City’s efforts to support redevelopment and public activation of the sites involves a wide range of actions that only partially have to do with expending direct funding. The City of Bridgeport has a powerful role to play as facilitator, enabler, and partner

to bring the necessary people, land owners, businesses, and organizations to the table to get things done. This will set the stage for further redevelopment, public access, and activation beyond individual sites to the whole waterfront.

APPENDIX: Parcel Details



Opportunity Site A: Yellow Mill East

1. 1023 Seaview Ave (741-1D)

Size 1.24 acres; 54,014 ft²
Access to Water Workable-Relocation; Enforcement Action
Land use/zoning 200; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

2. 1135 Seaview Ave (741-10A)

Size 1.36 acres; 59,242 ft²
Access to Water Workable-Relocation; Enforcement Action
Land use/zoning 200; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

3. 1127 Seaview Ave (741-1E)

Size 0.05 acres; 2,178 ft²
Access to Water N/A
Land use/zoning 500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

4. 1225 Seaview Ave (741-8A)

Size 5.51 acres; 240,016 ft²
Access to Water Workable-Relocation; Enforcement Action
Land use/zoning 300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs Yes

5. 1267 Seaview Ave #1273 (741-7A)

Size 1.2 acres; 52,272 ft²
Access to Water Workable-Relocation; Enforcement Action
Land use/zoning 500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

6. 1309 Seaview Ave #1347 (743--4A)

Size 1.86 acres; 81,022 ft²
Access to Water Workable-Negotiation; Private with proposed public access easement
Land use/zoning 300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs Yes

7. 1151 Seaview Ave (741-9A)

Size 0.54 acres; 23,522 ft²
Access to Water N/A
Land use/zoning 200; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

8. 1363 Seaview Ave (743-2X)

Size 0.52 acres; 22,651 ft²
Access to Water N/A
Land use/zoning 300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs Yes

9. 1387 Seaview Ave (743-2Y)

Size 0.51 acres; 22,216 ft²
Access to Water Workable-Negotiation; Private with proposed public access easement
Land use/zoning 300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs Yes

10. 46 Deacon St #48 (743-1)

Size 0.46 acres; 20,038 ft²
Access to Water Workable-Negotiation; Private with proposed public access easement
Land use/zoning 500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

11. 1401 Seaview Ave (743-9)

Size 0.18 acres; 7,841 ft²
Access to Water N/A
Land use/zoning 500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

12. 45 Deacon St (750-6B)

Size 0.14 acres; 6,098 ft²
Access to Water N/A
Land use/zoning 500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

13. 1425 Seaview Ave (750-7)

Size 0.11 acres; 4,792 ft²
Access to Water N/A
Land use/zoning 200; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

14. 1431 Seaview Ave (750-8)

Size 1.2 acres; 52,272 ft²
Access to Water N/A
Land use/zoning 500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs No

15. 46 Deacon St #48 (743-1)

Size	0.46 acres; 20,038 ft ²
Access to Water	Workable-Negotiation; Private with proposed public access easement
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

16. 1441 Seaview Ave #1443 (750-9A)

Size	0.42 acres; 18,295 ft ²
Access to Water	Off water; Privately owned
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

17. 1453 Seaview Ave (750-10)

Size	0.4 acres; 17,424 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

18. 1481 Seaview Ave (750-11A)

Size	3.18 acres; 138,521 ft ²
Access to Water	Workable-Negotiation; Private with proposed public access easement
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

19. 1553 Seaview Ave (750-11B)

Size	1.23 acres; 53,579 ft ²
Access to Water	Workable-Negotiation; Privately owned
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

20. 1491 Seaview Ave (750-13)

Size	0.1 acres; 4,792 ft ²
Access to Water	Off water; Privately owned
Land use/zoning	100; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

21. 1501 Seaview Ave (750-14)

Size	0.12 acres; 5,227 ft ²
Access to Water	
Land use/zoning	100; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

22. 1509 Seaview Ave #1511 (750-15)

Size	0.12 acres; 5,227 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	100; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

23. 1519 Seaview Ave (750-16)

Size	0.09 acres; 3,920 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	100; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

24. 1523 Seaview Ave #1525 (750-16)

Size	0.12 acres; 5,227 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

25. 1529 Seaview Ave #1533 (750-18)

Size	0.10 acres; 4,356 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

26. 1547 Seaview Ave (750-19)

Size	0.09 acres; 3,920 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

27. 1557 Seaview Ave (750-20)

Size	0.08 acres; 3,485 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

28. 1567 Seaview Ave (750-21)

Size	0.09 acres; 3,920 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

29. 1569 Seaview Ave #1571 (750-22)

Size	0.08 acres; 3,485 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

30. 1575 Seaview Ave #1577 (750-13)

Size	0.08 acres; 3,485 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	500; Vacant
Existing bldgs	No

31. 1581 Seaview Ave (750-1F)

Size	0.85 acres; 37,026 ft ²
Access to Water	Workable-Negotiation; Private owned
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

32. 1611 Seaview Ave (750-1A)

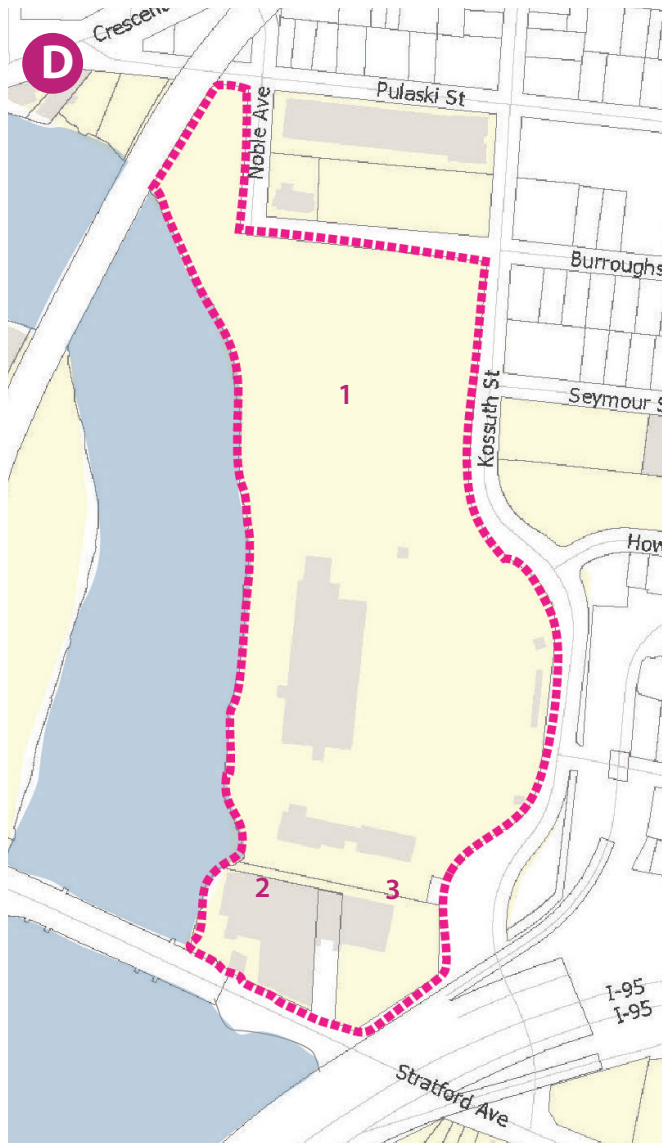
Size	0.28 acres; 12,197 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	No

33. 640 Crescent Ave (750-1D)

Size	0.53 acres; 23,087 ft ²
Access to Water	Workable-Negotiation; Privately owned
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

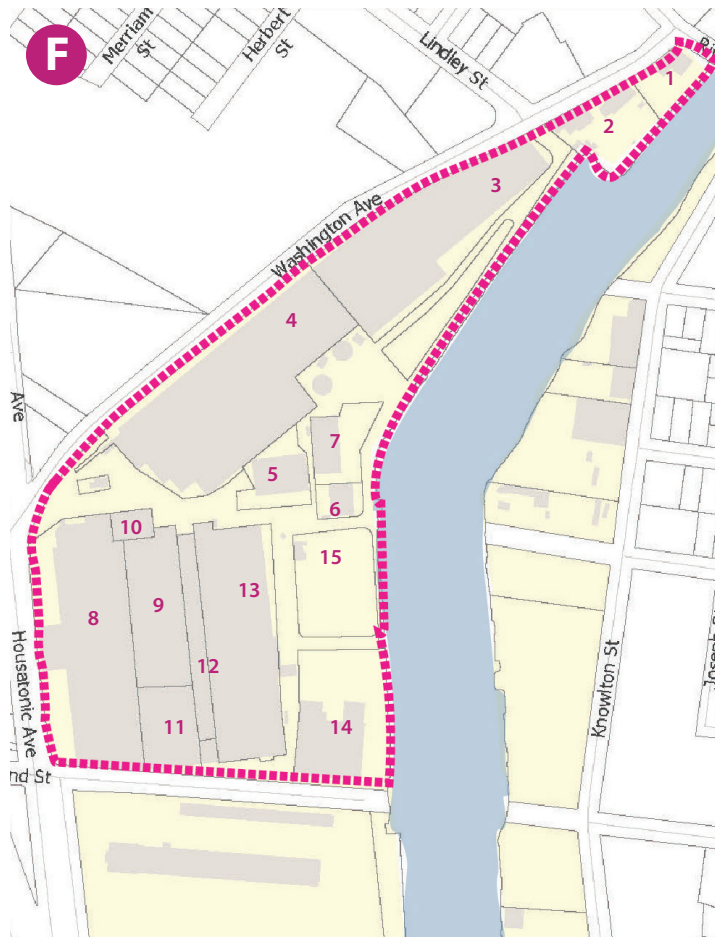
APPENDIX: Parcel Details

Opportunity Site D: Shoreline Star/AGI



1. 255 Kossuth St (804-1X)	
<i>Size</i>	16.13 acres; 702,622 ft ²
<i>Access to Water</i>	Workable-Negotia- tion, Enforcement
<i>Land use/zoning</i>	200; Recreation
<i>Existing bldgs</i>	Yes
2. 1401 Seaview Ave (805-5A)	
<i>Size</i>	1.7 acres; 74,052 ft ²
<i>Access to Water</i>	Access; Public Unimproved
<i>Land use/zoning</i>	200; Vacant
<i>Existing bldgs</i>	Yes
3. 173 Stratford Ave (805-8F)	
<i>Size</i>	1.27 acres; 55,321 ft ²
<i>Access to Water</i>	Access; Public Unimproved
<i>Land use/zoning</i>	200; Vacant
<i>Existing bldgs</i>	No

Opportunity Site F: Shoreline Star/AGI



1.	742 N. Washington Ave (1526-1)
Size	0.26 acres; 11,325 ft ²
Access to Water	Unknown, Privately Owned
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

2.	688 N. Washington Ave (1526-2)
Size	0.71 acres; 30,927 ft ²
Access to Water	Workable-Negotiation; Private with Proposed Public Access Easement
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

3.	560 N. Washington Ave #01 (1530-11)
Size	3.33 acres; 145,054 ft ²
Access to Water	Unknown; Private with Proposed Public Access Easement
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

4.	560 N. Washington Ave #02 (1530-12)
Size	3.82 acres; 166,399 ft ²
Access to Water	Off Water; Privately Owned
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

5.	560 N. Washington Ave #03 (1530-13)
Size	0.58 acres; 25,264 ft ²
Access to Water	Access, Public Unimproved
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

6.	560 N. Washington Ave #04 (1530-14)
Size	0.23 acres; 10,018 ft ²
Access to Water	Unknown, Privately Owned
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

7.	560 N. Washington Ave #05 (1530-15)
Size	0.53 acres; 10,018 ft ²
Access to Water	Unknown, Privately Owned
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

8.	560 N. Washington Ave #06A (1530-16A)
Size	2.84 acres; 12,3710 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

9.	560 N. Washington Ave #06C (1530-16C)
Size	0.99 acres; 43,124 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

10.	560 N. Washington Ave #06E (1530-16E)
Size	0.21 acres; 9,147 ft ²
Access to Water	Access; Public Unimproved
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

11.	560 N. Washington Ave #06G (1530-16G)
Size	0.71 acres; 30,927 ft ²
Access to Water	Access, Public Unimproved
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

12.	560 N. Washington Ave #06H (1530-16H)
Size	0.53 acres; 23,086 ft ²
Access to Water	N/A
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

13.	560 N. Washington Ave #07 (1530-17)
Size	2.26 acres; 98,445 ft ²
Access to Water	Access, Public Unimproved
Land use/zoning	100; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

14.	560 N. Washington Ave #08 (1530-18)
Size	1.95 acres; 84,942 ft ²
Access to Water	Access; Public Unimproved
Land use/zoning	300; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

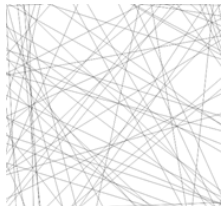
15.	560 N. Washington Ave #0 (1530-19)
Size	1.3 acres; 56,628 ft ²
Access to Water	Access; Public Unimproved
Land use/zoning	500; Light industrial
Existing bldgs	Yes

WATERFRONT BRIDGEPORT

ACTIVATION



3.1 Introduction



ACTIVATION

Activities and events that can enliven public spaces on the Bridgeport waterfront in the short term...

This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan defines the city's relationship to its waterfront for the 21st century and beyond. Just as the waterfront hosted the industrial uses that were the city's economic backbone in the 1900's, in the future, new uses and activities will define a new era for Bridgeport. Mixed-use development, diversified jobs and entrepreneurship, vibrant public space and programming, coastal resiliency, and a connected waterfront pathway throughout the city will support economic vitality and an improved quality of life in Bridgeport.

What is Activation?

Cities are exciting because they are places where people come together, explore new opportunities, and enjoy a concentration of diverse activities and experiences difficult to find outside of urban centers. The waterfront can serve as a vibrant and highly visible "connector" of such opportunities and experiences in Bridgeport – the pathway where locals and visitors come to walk, bike, or rollerblade; the public space that hosts a holiday market or an outdoor salsa dance lesson; or the dock where a kayak can be rented

or a sailboat taken out for an afternoon cruise.

This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan employs strategic placemaking (see sidebar) to achieve the following goals, in addition to activating public space on the waterfront:

1. Shift perception of the Bridgeport waterfront by offering innovative, fresh, even whimsical activities and public spaces that are engaging and positive
2. Activate public space in specific focus areas or energy spots to build on existing

momentum and visibility, so people can see change in these areas

3. Support new business recruitment, as well as existing businesses, and spark future development and investment by changing perceptions, demonstrating new opportunities, and attracting more people

This Activation section highlights locations and activities—from simple to ambitious—in each waterfront district (see map on page 6), based on inventive placemaking efforts in other cities as well as on feedback and ideas from public meeting participants and online comments. Some placemaking will come from recruiting developers who regularly use programming and public space activation in their projects to build a market and enhance the bottom line while benefiting the overall community. Other placemaking will be led by local community groups or non-profit organizations.

In addition to developers, local groups, and businesses, the strategy for Bridgeport includes reaching out to a regional network of potential stakeholders and funders. Local organizations and residents do not have enough capacity to create the critical mass necessary for wholesale change along the waterfront; neither can the City of Bridgeport implement every single event or placemaking idea on its own. Regional organizations and businesses must be part of

the mix and will increase the regional draw of waterfront development.

The Opportunity Sites outlined in that section of this plan illustrate recommended placemaking sites and connections from surrounding neighborhoods, to connect key sites and catalyze change. Used in conjunction with these Activation recommendations, strong guidance is offered for placemaking that fits the locations and conditions along the waterfront. Specific sites are explored in detail in the rest of this section, with information about recommended activities, seasonal considerations, possible partners, and funding sources. Overall recommendations for placemaking coordination and collaboration, as well as thoughts about broad funding possibilities, are found at the very end of the section.

Placemaking 101

The term placemaking is used in a variety of ways by various people, and the terms activation, placemaking, and programming are used interchangeably in this Waterfront Plan. At its heart, placemaking is about using a multi-faceted grassroots approach to create places that are enjoyable for people to work, live, and play.

Components of placemaking include both physical improvements and activities or events to activate public places and attract a wide diversity of people. From NYC's Times Square to Blue Back Square in nearby Hartford to small-town Main Streets all across the country, placemaking brings spaces alive and neighbors together. Placemaking needs the following elements to be successful:

- Focus on action in the short term
- High-quality design using accepted design principles
- Funding for programming (activities and events)
- Management entity (someone or some organization to make decisions on activities, space maintenance, coordination, fundraising)
- Public input and involvement—this is key!

Why Focus on Activation?

Public space activation can also bridge the gap between the present and a future with new development, uses, and jobs on the waterfront. Development projects will take a while to get off the ground—literally—and in the meantime, residents are hungry for visible change along the Bridgeport waterfront. In the short term, programming public space with a range of activities can support future revitalization by making vacant or underutilized sites more visible and attractive. Many cities have successfully used placemaking to change the perception of an area, build a stronger sense of community, attract foot traffic to support existing businesses, and create a positive buzz while long-term changes are still ongoing.

Additionally, placemaking is generally easier and less expensive than brick-and-mortar development, and the barrier for participation is low: various groups within the community can organize events, activate the waterfront, and create signs of immediate change. Local and regional organizations, businesses, individuals, school and church groups, and the City itself will all have different roles to play in bringing new life to spaces on and near the water. Some activities and placemaking efforts will be better suited to the warmer months or to temporary (pop-up) installation, while others can be year-round, permanent features or physical improvements. A diverse range of offerings,

geared towards residents and visitors of all ages and backgrounds, will have the greatest chance of success in drawing people to the waterfront and its public spaces.

City's Commitment

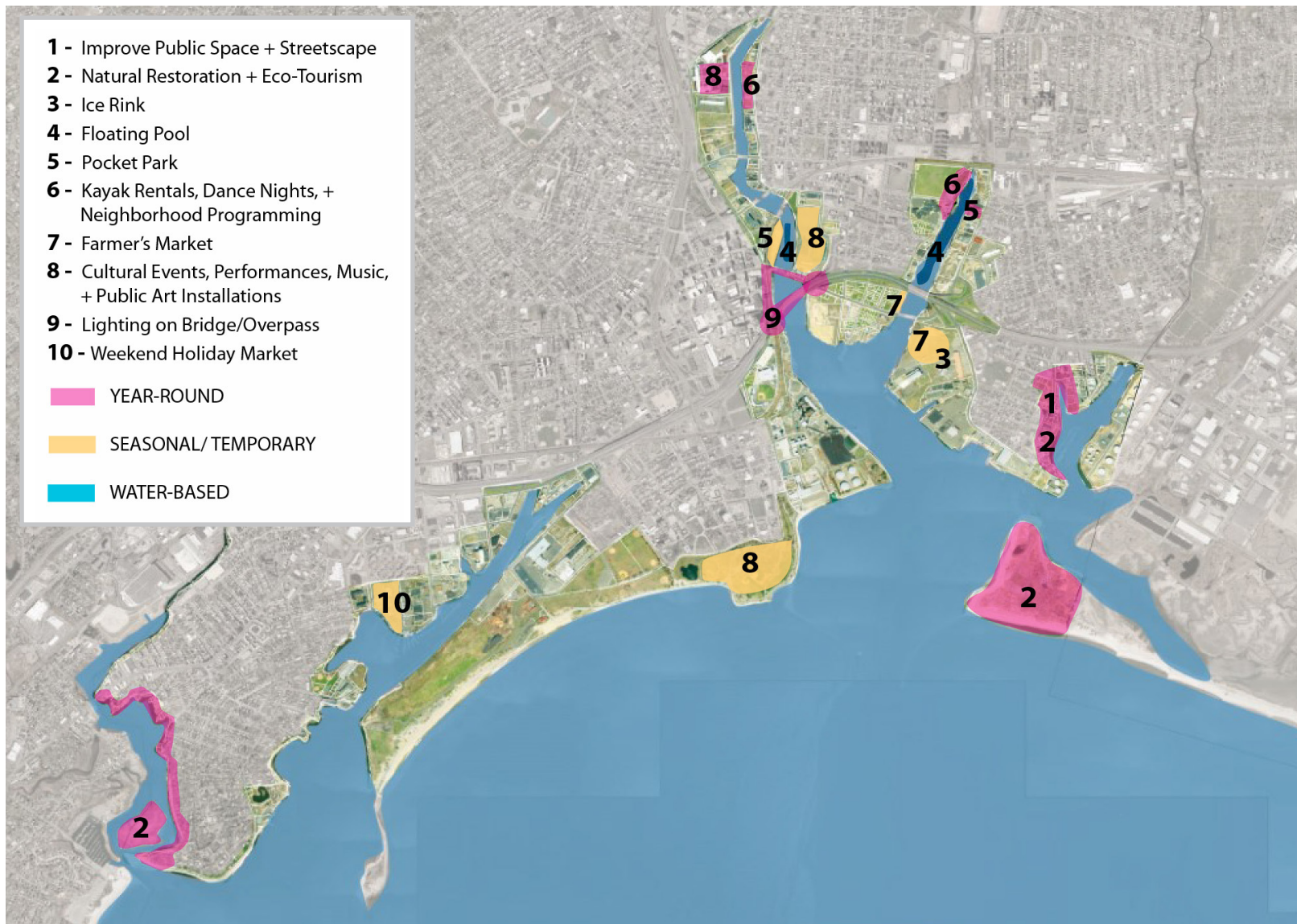
An active waterfront is going to take collaboration and cooperation. Resources, expertise, and interest will be needed from near and far to create a web of programs and activities along the city's shoreline. The Waterfront Bridgeport Plan is an indication of the City's commitment to supporting revitalization of and public access to the waterfront. The City is also taking the lead on the first pilot project to come out of this planning effort – the public waterfront pathway. City officials have reached out to potential collaborators to move forward on creating the public pathway and on forming a waterfront coalition that brings together the best of public, non-profit, and private-sector expertise and resources. Such collaborations between the City and local and regional partners will also help in waterfront placemaking efforts.

As the City moves from planning to implementation on the Bridgeport waterfront, it will be reaching out to community members and other stakeholders to contribute to ideas and action steps. The waterfront is truly a waterfront for all, and the City is committed to marshalling the resources, knowledge, time, and energy of all stakeholders for positive change.



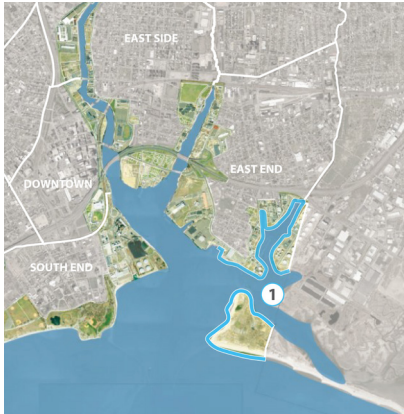
This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan identifies eight distinct waterfront districts, areas which share geographic, physical, and historical characteristics as well as a sense of future momentum in a particular direction. These districts provide a way to break down the 24-mile waterfront into logical pieces and think about specific strategies for activation that best suit particular places.

Placemaking: A Menu of Possibilities



This map highlights potential site-specific activities and public programming throughout the waterfront, and throughout the year. The goal is to create activity hubs that become destinations and points of interest along the waterfront pathway, drawing people towards the water. Such activation efforts will also contribute to economic development by building positive buzz and visibility, supporting local businesses, and attracting both a local and regional market.

District 1: Johnson's Creek



Johnson's Creek offers opportunities to establish a naturally-restored oasis within an urban neighborhood, where East End residents and visitors alike could enjoy a stroll along a wetland boardwalk or watch osprey hatchlings take their first flight. Currently, part of the western bank of Johnson's Creek and all of Pleasure Beach are publicly owned, and some areas are low-lying and overgrown.

These conditions, along with recent efforts to promote ecological restoration and coastal resilience in this area (see sidebar) make it an ideal location for nature-focused activation strategies, as well as streetscape improvements. Natural restoration will also allow residents greater access to the waterfront in an area that currently lacks it, while protecting the public against soil contamination from earlier industrial uses.

What does this mean in practice?

- Conducting trash cleanups along the water's edge—a great opportunity for community organizations or churches, members of the Miamogue and East End Yacht Clubs, or nearby businesses to help.
- City of Bridgeport securing access to publicly-owned shoreline and to privately-owned parcels through easements and negotiation with proactive property owners.
- Replacing stone, metal, or wood bulkheads with soil, grasses, and native vegetation, then building a public boardwalk or raised part of the waterfront pathway.
- Installing interpretive signage about the wildlife and plants returning to Johnson's Creek and Pleasure Beach, in English and Spanish.
- Scheduling birdwatching tours or eco-tourism field trips held by local and regional environmental organizations like the Audubon Society or Save the Sound.
- Improving the streetscape along Central Avenue leading to the area: providing better lighting and sidewalks, cutting back overgrown vegetation, and enforcing parking bans on right-of-ways.
- Introducing kayaking, canoeing, or paddleboarding.

Johnson's Creek: Bridgeport, CT



West side of Creek. Image Source: The Nature Conservancy

The 2015 Regional Framework for Coastal Resilience initiative, led by SCRCOG in partnership with Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments (MetroCOG) and The Nature Conservancy, identified this area as a pilot site for ecological restoration and storm surge protection. The project envisioned restoring marsh grass along the Creek's banks and replacing neglected riprap and retaining walls to protect the shoreline from flooding.

The Trust for Public Land had also in the past expressed interest in purchasing properties along Johnson's Creek for open space, on behalf of the community. Building on these longstanding partnerships is key to activating Johnson's Creek, making it just as valuable for residents, for storm protection, and for the local environment as the salt marshes of nearby Pleasure Beach or the Ash Creek estuary.

Vision



In addition to natural restoration and a waterfront boardwalk or pathway along the banks of Johnson's Creek, the area could benefit from streetscape improvements and enforcement by the City of Bridgeport on Central Avenue. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

Next Steps

- Form an informal coalition of “Friends of Johnson’s Creek”
- Invite organizations who have expressed interest in the Creek and in Pleasure Beach, as well as East End residents
- Make sure all the relevant “actors” are at the table:
 - City of Bridgeport (Planning and Economic Development, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Public Safety, Code Enforcement, etc.)
 - East End NRZ
 - Audubon Society, Trust for Public Land, Nature Conservancy
 - Regional and state agencies such as MetroCOG and CTDEEP
- Set short- and long-term goals and priorities
- Identify funding sources and submit for grants, where applicable
- Get to work!

Funding + Support Possibilities

1. Funding for natural restoration and public boardwalk on Johnson’s Creek could come from conservation organizations like the Trust for Public Land or the Nature Conservancy
2. Additional support from CTDEEP and possibly EPA or other federal grantmaking agencies



Parts of Pleasure Beach are already undergoing renaturalization, with salt marsh and wildlife returning to its shores. In the long-term here and on Johnson’s Creek, eco-tourism and appreciation of nature could draw East End residents and visitors alike. Plantings and cleanups, a waterfront boardwalk or pathway, and sustainably-designed nature center could make the offshore park a regional attraction--and a buffer against future storm surge. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

District 2: Seaview Plaza/Harborside East End



This part of the waterfront has long been cut off from the rest of the East End neighborhood, but redevelopment of the Seaview Plaza site and the future relocation of the Port Jefferson Ferry terminal to this district offer new opportunities for public access to the water's edge. One desire often repeated at public meetings is fresh food access (in the form of a much-needed grocery store), which could be part of a broader health theme for activating this waterfront district. A seasonal outdoor farmer's market with healthy cooking demonstrations and free dance or exercise classes could be the first step towards this holistic health hub, even while the area is being redeveloped. Later on, access to the public pathway for walking or jogging and recreational boating access along the Yellow Mill Channel edge of the district could draw people to outdoor spaces here while emphasizing active living.

Other ideas for enlivening public space in this district include:

- Outdoor eating areas and seating on or facing the waterfront pathway
- Exercise stations along the pathway, morning boot camp sessions
- Flea markets and holiday markets, along with live music and art vendors at the farmer's market
- Seasonal activation, such as winter ice rink or summer grill-off competitions in public plaza space
- Water-based recreation access, sailboat rentals, and temporary daytime docking (useful for grocery store runs)
- Food truck or food festival events on weekends
- Seafood market or clambake promoting Bridgeport's current and future shellfishing/aquaculture industry

Eastern Market: Detroit, MI



Detroit's Eastern Market not only provides fresh produce and other locally grown goods, but it also serves as a community gathering place.

This public market in Detroit, one of the largest in the country, is in the middle of a food desert and serves thousands of people each week. It is one of the few places in Detroit where people of every race, social, and economic class come together. The market is on City property but is leased and managed by a non-profit entity that has grown the offerings to include reduced-price food for the elderly, a commercial kitchen for use by food entrepreneurs, and special discounts for low-income shoppers when they buy local and organic. The surrounding neighborhood has also seen new businesses, including restaurants and a brewery, grow up around this community hub.

Vision



A waterfront farmer's market could provide healthy food access, activities for families and children, and cooking demonstrations, making Seaview Plaza (or a part of it) more vibrant even before it is fully built out. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

Next Steps

- Coordinate with developer of Seaview Plaza to organize interim activities on the site as it is developed; these temporary placemaking efforts will contribute to the developer's ability to sign tenants and market the site for a regional market.
- Include neighborhood leaders, nearby businesses, and interested organizations
- Set short- and long-term goals and priorities
- Identify what minimal site improvements must be made to provide public access to the waterfront in this district.
- Identify possible funding sources.
- Move forward!

Funding + Support Possibilities

The healthy foods and active living theme is appropriate for the entire waterfront, but it can have a strong anchor here, particularly if a grocery store is a tenant on the Seaview Plaza site. Funding possibilities are numerous and include:

- Local hospitals and banks
- Health insurance companies
- Sponsor for farmer's market (e.g. Bridgeport Bucks program*)
- Large retail businesses
- Waterfront site developers
- CT Department of Agriculture grants or technical assistance
- Urban agriculture grants from private foundations

*Bridgeport's existing farmer's markets already participate in the Bridgeport Bucks matching program, in which every dollar spent using SNAP/EBT or WIC buys \$2 in produce. Any outdoor farmer's market anywhere on the waterfront should accept SNAP/EBT and WIC and ideally offer Bridgeport Bucks or a similar bonus program to promote affordability.

District 3: Yellow Mill Channel



Yellow Mill Channel has the potential to be the “backyard” of both the East Side and the East End. The Channel can connect rather than divide these neighborhoods, especially once the Yellow Mill East area is transformed to more welcoming uses (see Opportunity Sites section) and transit-oriented development brings new activity to the Barnum Station/ Crescent Crossings area. Placemaking in this district should focus on the existing assets—Waterview Park and the water itself—and on neighborhood-scale open spaces to be created along the waterfront, such as a pocket park and play area (with BBQ grills and eating areas for residents and visitors alike) and the public pathway.

The approach for this district includes both large and small activation strategies—things to draw attention from those passing by on

the train or on I-95, as well as attractions for residents walking or driving along Seaview Avenue, such as:

- Floating pool on Yellow Mill Channel
- Events/programming at Waterview Park, such as picnics or movie showings
- Birding excursions on east side of the Channel (with private property owner’s permission)
- Kayaking, canoeing, and pedalboating (a dock could be installed at Waterview Park and at the Opportunity Site across the river at Seaview Avenue)
- Raised community garden beds (built and managed by Groundwork Bridgeport, Green Village Initiative (GVI), Urban Roots, or another local urban agriculture/gardening organization)
- Pocket park for residents to play, relax, and spend time with their families
- Neighborhood cleanup team for litter along water’s edge and the waterfront pathway (formed by volunteer residents, youth, or nearby church members)

The Floating Lady: NYC, NY



The Floating Pool Lady is a barge converted to a floating pool by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation. Image Source: Jonathan Kirschenfeld

The Neptune Foundation converted a barge to a floating pool with cabanas and donated it to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation in 2007. The pool, known as the Floating Pool Lady, has seven lanes and comes complete with bath facilities and an open deck. Each swim season it is moved from its winter storage to Barreto Point Park in the Bronx. During its first season at Brooklyn Bridge Park, 50,000 people visited the pool and its unique character raised the visibility of parks and recreation and NYC’s efforts to make the city’s waterfront available to more people.

Another, more recent pool effort is + Pool, which is in the proto-typing phase of creating an in-water filtration system using the walls of the pool as a natural filtration system. This effort has been funded to date largely through crowdsourcing. Savvy media and high-profile corporate partners have provided good visibility for fundraising for + Pool.

Vision



A floating pool and kayaking or canoeing could make the Yellow Mill Channel a unique destination for people from Bridgeport and beyond. In addition, lighting, benches, and plantings would beautify public access via the pathway along the banks of the Channel. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

Next Steps

- Form an informal coalition of “Friends of Yellow Mill Channel”
- Invite organizations who can help with activities in and along the Channel
- Make sure all the relevant “actors” are at the table:
 - City of Bridgeport (Parks and Recreation, Planning, etc.)
 - East End NRZ and East Side NRZ
- Community gardening and urban agriculture organizations: Groundwork Bridgeport, Urban Roots, GVI, etc.
- Contact those with regional know-how in water-based recreation rentals for kayaking, canoeing, such as Fairfield Kayak Company or Downunder Westport
- Explore the possibilities of commissioning the construction of a floating pool by contacting The Neptune Foundation
- Set short- and long-term goals and priorities and identify funding sources
- Start moving!

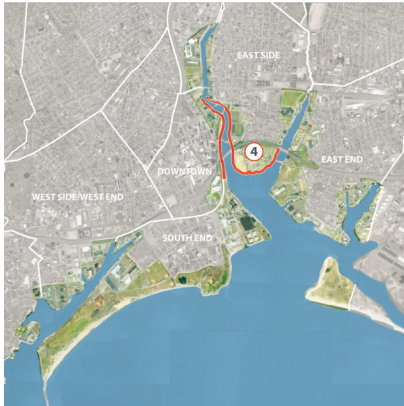
Funding + Support Possibilities

1. Crowdsourced funding for a floating pool, as in the + Pool example, through sites like GoFundMe and Kickstarter.
2. Communities in Michigan and Massachusetts are also using a new “civic crowdgranting” platform pairing placemaking projects with state agencies and foundations that match donations, called Patronicity.
3. Kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards might be stored at a marina near Waterview Park during the winter months if the owner agrees.



Colorful lighting on the highly-visible Stratford Avenue bridge could be coupled with public art to provide a unique gateway into Steelpoint Harbor, the Shoreline Star/AGI Opportunity Site, and the rest of the East Side. Lighting would not only catch the attention of visitors from the highway and train lines, but also create a special destination for residents and foster a sense of safety for pedestrians, better connecting this part of the waterfront with Bridgeport's Downtown. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

District 4: Steelpointe Harbor/Lower Pequonnock



This waterfront district benefits from new energy and high visibility; those interested in activating the shoreline here should think big and bold. It is also the area most likely to achieve the first large stretch of new public pathway, so access to the water and attractions to draw people along the path should be key goals of placemaking for this district. Colorful lighting of the Stratford Avenue bridge would make it a waterfront icon visible to all, while creating a public “beach” on the Sliver by the River, with pop-up dining or a seasonal ice-cream stand and beach games, would activate a publicly-owned but underutilized site just steps from Downtown and the train station (see Opportunity Sites section). Activation of the site would create a cool destination for office workers and provide reasons to stay Downtown after work.

Across the river, the Shoreline Star/AGI Opportunity Site could be a much more vibrant location with placemaking, waterfront seating, outdoor summer movies or music, and public art. Meanwhile on the Steelpointe Harbor site, recreational boating and moorings as well as benches along the public waterfront pathway are already planned; when built, they will reconnect this peninsula to the water surrounding it, while enlivening the future development.

This is a large and centrally-located stretch of the waterfront where proximity to Downtown and to new development offer an instant market for placemaking efforts. These include:

- Along the Pequonnock River near the Stratford Avenue bridge:
 - Lighting of Stratford Ave Bridge and/or I-95 underpass
 - Floating pool
- On the “Sliver by the River”:
 - Partial natural restoration and shoreline resiliency treatments (to address flooding and sea level rise)
 - Pop-up shipping containers or other temporary structures housing:
 - Beer garden
 - Seasonal café featuring a local celebrity chef each season
 - Ice cream stand
- Outdoor “beach”/recreational area:
 - Volleyball
 - Bocce court
 - Horseshoe pits
 - Rentable umbrellas, chairs, and sand toys
- On the Shoreline Star/AGI site:
 - Outdoor waterfront dining and seating adjacent to restaurants; open space throughout – a cluster of restaurants here can create a regional dining destination
 - Signature interactive media wall or public art serving as visible beacon connecting site to the Stratford Avenue bridge and Downtown
 - A stop along a waterfront art walk (see above)
 - A micro-brewery or signature restaurant
 - Outdoor summer movies adjacent to restaurants and bars, where patrons can dine and drink while watching (see sidebar on following page)
- Steelpointe Harbor:
 - Recreational boating and moorings, kayak rentals
 - Seasonal outdoor ice skating rink (if not at Seaview Plaza)
 - Open space throughout, public pathway access
 - Benches/seating at best view points

Vision



The Boston Harbor Hotel and Rowes Wharf Sea Grille sponsor outdoor concerts and movie showings on the downtown wharf in the warmer months. Restaurant patrons can watch classic movies projected on a large screen while they eat at outdoor tables, or listen to musicians performing live on a floating barge stage. Passersby on the Boston HarborWalk, which includes Rowes Wharf, can also enjoy the free evening entertainment. Image Source: The Boston Calendar

Next Steps

- Use this section of waterfront activation to model the actions and collaborations of a waterfront coalition for advocacy and programming.
- Involve Downtown Special Services District, all Downtown property owners, Steelpointe Harbor developer, and Cardinal Shehan Center to brainstorm and program this district of the waterfront.
- Involve artists and arts and culture groups, particularly organizers of the Bridgeport Art Trail, in thinking about a waterfront art walk with permanent or temporary installations.
- Set goals for temporary placemaking for sites in transition and permanent efforts.
- Start moving!

Funding + Support Possibilities

1. Think about major corporate donors and regional partners for this effort – it will be the highest profile activation in the near-term
2. Investigate overlap with the DSSD programming efforts...can Sliver by the River be included in DSSD boundaries and programming, with possible new funding sources to complement the efforts?

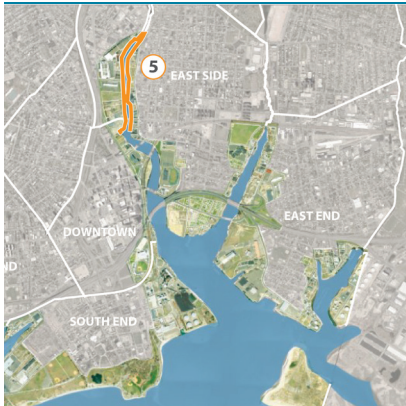
Kenneth Burns Bridge: Worcester, MA



Brilliant lighting on Worcester's Kenneth Burns Bridge.

The Kenneth F. Burns Memorial Bridge in Worcester, Massachusetts, recently underwent major upgrades and in November of 2015 officially reopened to carrying travelers on Route 9 over Lake Quinsigamond. MassDOT took direction of the project, aiming to mend the 99-year-old structurally deficient bridge. The \$105 million project finished four months ahead of schedule (and under budget) and now features an additional travel lane as well as a newly implemented bike lane for cyclists. LED under-lighting was installed on the bridge, illuminating its structure at night and making it an intriguing icon for central Massachusetts.

District 5: Upper Pequonnock



The upper Pequonnock River offers the opportunity to explore creative, offbeat placemaking opportunities. The former industrial spaces of the Bridgeport Brass Co site and the old brick warehouse buildings dotted along Knowlton Street could see new life as event spaces, art studios, or indoor recreation centers. Though this area is too far north for sailboats to reach, since the East Washington Avenue bridge cannot open to allow boat masts through, Knowlton Park already has a dock and a waterfront boardwalk. It could host a kayak rental location or serve as the starting point for regional rowing races (like the Head of the Charles in Boston). Also, the park is already an ideal venue for weekend neighborhood events like salsa nights or concerts, and will easily connect to the public pathway; it's ripe for activation now.

The Bridgeport Brass Co is further explored as an Opportunity Site in this plan and is large enough to offer multiple public spaces, to be activated in coordination with the future uses surrounding them (such as Chelsea Piers-style indoor recreation and events). These spaces should embrace the former industrial atmosphere of the location rather than avoiding it, giving the site a unique character and using the large spaces and heights of the buildings to accommodate recreation. The special feel of the industrial spaces can be a marketing draw for users from far and wide, as well as those from just around the corner. In the short-term, mural-painting, authorized street art events, photo shoots, and other temporary creative uses could bring vacant parts of this site to life—and motivate cleanups (see sidebar).

Specific activation strategies for the Brass Co Opportunity Site could include:

- Outdoor recreation geared towards younger people (such as a skate park or seasonal space for fitness classes) and water-based recreation
- Fun recreation elements – big bouncy balls, climbing walls...offerings that aren't provided anywhere else!
- Public art, including sculptures, temporary installations, street art, or murals
- Indoor event space

Bartlett Yard: Boston, MA



Vacant bus depot/brownfield turned innovative art center. Image Source: Bartlett Events/Facebook

Boston's Bartlett Yard, formerly a nine-acre abandoned bus depot, is now undergoing redevelopment in the Roxbury neighborhood. While awaiting approvals and brownfield cleanup funding in the summer of 2013, the site hosted events ranging from art shows, photo shoots, and a mural-painting festival to a block party and an open-air concert.

A trio of Roxbury residents and artists organized these activities in collaboration with the property owner, a local community development corporation; City Councilors also helped in the permitting process for events on the site. Bartlett Yard went from being a blighted, dangerous property to a colorful, energizing cultural hub within the community—even if only for a little while—and its success has helped spur greater investment in public art in Boston.

Vision



In addition to providing neighborhood access to the water, Knowlton Park could host community events such as dance nights, with live music and local instructors giving classes. The park also has its own dock along the Pequonnock, ready for kayak, canoe, or paddleboarding rentals. Across the Pequonnock, an industrial feel lends itself to unusual or creative uses like outdoor sculptures, a skate park, or a climbing wall. The large floor-plates at the Bridgeport Brass Co site would also allow for indoor-outdoor recreation and event spaces. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

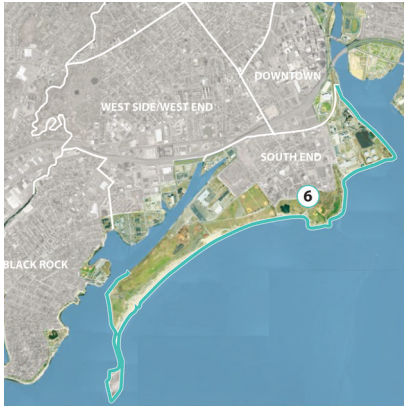
Next Steps

- Ensure streamlined event permitting is in place. Streamlined permitting for events at Knowlton Park, as well as others on the waterfront would facilitate active programming by varied groups and individuals.
- Involve the East Side NRZ and Parks Department and create a clearinghouse for scheduling events at Knowlton Park until a larger waterfront coalition can take this on.
- Contact RowAmerica about possible sites for a rowing race (this step applies to Bridgeport as a whole).
- Bridgeport Brass Co is a long-term activation initiative. Some steps here include:
 - Think about near-term uses of the water's edge, adjacent space and side street areas, and more accessible areas for public strolling and use.
 - Consider long-term safety needs as site is remediated and adapted for reuse.

Funding + Support Possibilities

1. Crowdsourcing for recreational activities at Bridgeport Brass
2. Local rowing-related company, such as RowAmerica, or regional kayak rental operations
3. Regional recreation business – satellite interim outdoor location at Bridgeport Brass (Chelsea Piers in Norwalk, Sports Centers of Connecticut in Shelton, others)
4. Local business sponsorship to fund series of Knowlton Park events--radio stations, restaurants, car dealerships, etc.

District 6: South End/Seaside



Seaside Park belongs to the whole city; residents from every neighborhood consider the park their own. This expanse of shoreline on Long Island Sound offers significant open space, close to residential areas and the University of Bridgeport. The South End is also home to the Webster Bank Arena and the Ballpark at Harbor Yard - home of the Bridgeport Bluefish and the Sound Tiger teams. The Mary and Eliza Freeman Houses, the center of 19th-century "Little Liberia" at the southern end of Main Street, offer an opportunity to connect the planned waterfront pathway with rare historic properties; efforts are underway to restore the buildings and create a museum celebrating this historic part of Bridgeport's black community.

Activation of the South End can help create a "story line" connecting sites of significance along the waterfront. Historical markers, better

pedestrian and bike connections to the ferry terminal and train station Downtown, and additional programming at Seaside Park can support this part of the waterfront as a major destination and recreation spot for the city and region. Additional amenities and programming at Seaside Park would enhance this prime waterfront location and offer opportunities to support nearby businesses through increased year-round use of the park, special events crowds, and greater visibility.

Activation strategies can include:

Seaside Park

- Generally more events/programming here throughout the year
- Performances, music, and other cultural events at the bandshell
- Partner with area non-profits for kids' recreation space
- Concessions stand in greater use, offering:
 - Food/Pop-up cafe
 - Umbrella and chair rentals
- Public art—perhaps temporary sculpture installations or an art walk
- Games area – bocce, giant Jenga, etc.
- Kiosks for small local businesses– crafts, art, food
- Community beach cleanup event(s)

Current Ferry Terminal site

- Visitor kiosk offering information and maps for the entire waterfront
- Daytime/hourly public boat docking
- Summer movie series
- Special events in a new restaurant or event space (when ferry relocates to East End)
- Movable deck chairs along the water
- Tables and seating for the Downtown lunch crowd
- Food trucks
- Bike racks or even seasonal bike rental kiosk

Other parts of the South End

- More engagement of UB students—possibilities for UB students to run Seaside Park concession stand or activities rentals as part of business school
- Bike rental station near UB
- Freeman Houses/Little Liberia interpretive signage, neighborhood recognition as a regional and national landmark

Vision



Seaside Park, with its playing fields and beaches, is already well-known but it could be better connected to the rest of the South End and the waterfront. Signage could connect the park to historic areas like Little Liberia, while more year-round programming, concessions, and public art could attract more locals, out-of-town visitors, and students from the University of Bridgeport and Housatonic Community College. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

Next Steps

- Think about micro-economic development strategies here
 - a. Reissue City RFP for Seaside Park concessions stand, linking City's goals for stand to larger economic development themes (for example, prioritize local vendors, emphasize connection to UB)
 - b. C4C (formerly Community Capital Fund) or local bank with community focus could support these efforts
- Create a walking history tour of the Little Liberia area, use regional tourism office to market the tours, while Freeman Houses are being restored
- Apply for foundation grants to fund interpretive signage and maps for Freeman Houses/Little Liberia
- Link concessions and activation spots to the walking tour
- Think about how to capture gameday and event crowds at the Harbor Yard complex for food and entertainment options –leverage the presence of a “captive” audience to encourage economic development and create a destination that extends beyond game and event time for food, drink, and socializing. This could include outdoor simulcasts of sold-out games/events at the complex.

Funding + Support Possibilities

1. University of Bridgeport
 - a. entrepreneurship and graphic design programs to provide services for branding Freeman Houses and Little Liberia as a cultural destination
 - b. entrepreneurship students to help run concessions and other programming at Seaside Park
 - c. student volunteer groups to assist with beach cleanups
2. Bridgeport Bluefish and Sound Tigers sponsorship of events or sporting leagues at Seaside Park.
3. Local CDFI or bank with community focus could assist with funding and technical support for concessions and programming.

District 7: Cedar Creek



The Cedar Creek area of the waterfront hosts current and former industrial sites, including the closed Sikorsky plant. Residents in this area of Bridgeport have no public waterfront access other than the West Side/West End's connection to Captain's Cove. Activation can center around temporary and pilot uses of underutilized waterfront space here. The expanse of asphalt at the Sikorsky Site, for example could be transformed into a temporary urban skate-park, obstacle/fitness course, or even an urban corn or sunflower maze. Depending on site conditions, raised planting beds can create a community garden spot as a near-term use until redevelopment.

The experimental and temporary nature of these uses provides valuable opportunities to bring teens and young people together to get involved; for example, local students could

plan, advocate for, fundraise, and construct an adventure park for skateboarders, BMX riders, etc. Likewise, a raised-bed community garden could become an urban agriculture hub for residents and other advocates to work together for positive, green change on the waterfront.

In addition, there are ways that Captain's Cove can extend its season profitably, continuing to provide access to a much-loved waterfront site later in the year. A fall/winter pop-up market here on weekends, with improved pedestrian access, could be a regional and local draw long after Labor Day. The addition of a beer garden with mulled wine and outdoor braziers or bonfires could help attract a diverse crowd well into cool weather, with a holiday market from Thanksgiving through New Year's capping off the season. Examples such as Waterfire in Providence or German-style Christmas markets in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Chicago show that cold weather isn't a deterrent if there are novel things to see, hot drinks, and food.

Thoughts for activation along Cedar Creek and at Captain's Cove include:

- Urban adventure park with temporary skateboard, BMX ramps, possibly on multiple connected sites
- Raised-bed community gardens
- Outdoor rock climbing, CrossFit classes, or obstacle fitness course

- Urban corn or sunflower maze on a site where asphalt is gone; these plants can assist with remediation (see sidebar)
- Fall/winter weekend market at Captain's Cove

Urban Corn Maze: Amsterdam



An urban corn maze makes productive use of a temporarily vacant lot. Image Source: Marieke de Jong

In 2010, the worldwide recession had left a cleared building site vacant in the Zuidas section of Amsterdam. Municipal authorities requested temporary proposals for the site, selecting one from a team of art students: an urban corn maze. This was partially built and provided an environmentally-friendly use for the site, reducing erosion, as well as a temporary green respite and source of entertainment for area workers and residents. An added benefit for urban sites is that corn—and sunflowers, also used in mazes—concentrate and absorb certain contaminants from soil, remediating it over time.

Vision



Already a popular place for boaters and residents in warmer weather, Captain's Cove could become a wintertime destination with a weekend market selling food, hot drinks, holiday gifts, and crafts. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

Next Steps

- Bring together the City, Groundwork Bridgeport, Green Village Initiative and property owners to discuss temporary uses for the land
- Discuss with Captain's Cove owner how to support an extended season/pop-up market
- Use easement and land use agreements provided in the Pathway Implementation Kit for help in investigating temporary public use of private land and protecting owner redevelopment rights in the long-term
- Contact other cities (Amsterdam and others) utilizing urban redevelopment land in the short-term for placemaking and discuss pros and cons, lessons learned.
- Recruit an existing corn or sunflower maze business to discuss urban possibilities here along Cedar Creek

Funding + Support Possibilities

1. Groundwork USA (around raised-bed gardening), Green Village Initiative, and other urban agriculture organizations
2. Existing corn maze business seeking expansion opportunities
3. Teen clubs and foundations supporting youth citizenship and engagement to fund skateboard park as a pilot on teen engagement and action.
4. High schools – community service requirements and programs
5. South End Community Center, Burroughs Community Center, and Wakeman Boys & Girls Club
6. University of Bridgeport entrepreneurship programs

District 8: Ash Creek/Black Rock Harbor



After the South End, the Black Rock neighborhood currently has the second most extensive recreational waterfront access in Bridgeport, making it a valuable asset to the city. This Waterfront Bridgeport Plan seeks to protect and enhance the existing beauty of Ash Creek and St Mary's by the Sea while supporting ongoing improvements to pedestrian and bike connectivity in the area. This includes the Ash Creek Pedestrian Bridge project currently underway, connecting Black Rock and the Fairfield Metro Train Station area as well as providing more access to the water.

Temporary activities in this waterfront district should build on existing community assets, notably arts, history, a strong business corridor on Fairfield Avenue, and exceptional water views. At St. Mary's by the Sea, programming

that taps into the history and memories embedded into the waterfront could make good activation strategies. Additionally, the new pedestrian bridge over Ash Creek and ongoing efforts to promote natural restoration along the Ash Creek estuary could provide more opportunities for eco-tourism, bird-watching, photography, non-motorized boating, and fishing in this wetland area, drawing visitors from Fairfield as well.

Activation possibilities include:

- A "story walk" for children along St Mary's by the Sea, exploring a nautically-themed book
- Interactive art/history installation at St Mary's by the Sea in which passersby can chalk their memories of Black Rock on boards
- Kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding along Ash Creek
- Bird-watching tours along Ash Creek and over the pedestrian bridge
- Interpretive signage along Creek and on the pedestrian bridge to inform visitors of the ecological importance of estuaries and the species living there

Next Steps

- Contact the Black Rock NRZ and Bridgeport Public Library to discuss a story walk idea and/or interactive art installation to record memories.
- Involve Ash Creek Conservation Association and Connecticut Audubon Society in coordinating bird-watching tours and adding interpretive eco-tourism signage

Funding + Support Possibilities

1. Crowdsourced fundraising for story walk and/or interactive art installation
2. Burroughs Community Center, Black Rock public library branch

Vision



The pedestrian truss bridge planned for Ash Creek will open up opportunities for this ecologically valuable area, by better connecting both sides of the Creek. Coupled with natural restoration of the Ash Creek estuary and interpretive signage, it could become an eco-tourism site where birdwatchers, canoers, kayakers, and fishing enthusiasts could all enjoy an urban slice of nature. Image Source: City of Bridgeport. *Sample concept - not a proposal.*

Waterfront Activation Throughout the Year

