

Thames River Heritage Park Plan

A report prepared by the
Yale Urban Design Workshop
School of Architecture, Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

MARCH 18, 2015

APPENDIX

01 Letters of Support

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Thames River Heritage Park Plan

01 Letters of Support



STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

April 18, 2014

Ms. Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

I'm happy to provide this letter of support for the Thames River Maritime Heritage Park proposed in Southeastern Connecticut. I have been briefed on the project and believe it would be a tremendous attraction connecting the many well-established venues we have available on both banks of the Thames River.

For its legendary support in the Revolutionary War, President George Washington called Connecticut the *Provisions State*. From the beginning of America's democracy, Connecticut has played a key role in producing the diverse and highest quality human and physical resources for our nation's defense.

In 1794, after the Continental Congress decided to create a United States Navy, an expedition sailed from New London, to retrieve live oak, the hardest wood available, to build America's first warships at several shipyards along the east coast. These ships were not modified merchant vessels. They were designed from the keel up to be warships. One of them, USS CONSTITUTION, remains the oldest commissioned warship in the world.

The naval base in Groton was originally a Naval Yard and Storage Depot established in 1868. It was built on land donated by the people of Connecticut. The State Legislature provided \$15,000 and the City of New London appropriated \$75,000 for the purchase of land on the east bank of the Thames River in the New London harbor. In 1916 the base was designated the nation's first Naval Submarine Base and is home of the Submarine School, Submarine Force Museum and Historic Ship NAUTILUS.

The first land-based campus of the Coast Guard Academy was established at Fort Trumbull in 1910 and then moved to land donated by the City of New London in 1915. The Coast Guard Academy is the single officer accession source of all commissioned officers for the U.S. Coast Guard. The men and women of the Coast Guard serve at stations ashore and aboard cutters deployed throughout the U.S. and in every ocean. And the Barque EAGLE, America's Tall Ship, has become a prestigious iconic fixture on the Thames River at historic Fort Trumbull.

Since the first days of our democracy, Connecticut's defense manufacturing industry has continued without interruption. The ships, submarines, aircraft, jet engines, helicopters, firearms and advanced weapon systems built in Connecticut reflect our state's continuous innovation and highly skilled workforce. Connecticut's massive defense industries, like General Dynamic's Electric Boat on the Thames, produce billions of dollars in economic activity throughout the state, in large and small businesses in virtually every municipality.

These great stories of Connecticut's maritime history, as it relates to our sea services and defense manufacturing, should be preserved and celebrated. I can't image a better way to tell our maritime military story than on the water where that marvelous history was made. And the National Coast Guard Museum, to be built on the waterfront in New London, could serve as a grand centerpiece and gateway to all we have to offer on the shores of the Thames River.

If my office can be of assistance to you as you advance this project, please call on me anytime.

I thank you for your personal leadership and enthusiasm in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Robert T. Ross
Executive Director

Cc:

Mr. Robert Klee, Commissioner, CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection
Mr. James Redeker, Commissioner, CT Dept. of Transportation
Ms. Catherine Smith, Commissioner, CT Dept. of Economic & Community Development
Mr. Kip Bergstrom, Deputy Commissioner, CT Dept. of Economic & Community Development
Rear Admiral Sandra Stosz, Superintendent, U.S. Coast Guard Academy
Captain Carl Lahti, Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Submarine Base New London
Mr. James Butler, Executive Director, Southeastern CT Council of Governments
Ms. Wendy Bury, Executive Director, Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition
Ms. Penny Parsekian, Avery-Copp House



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CONNECTICUT MARITIME COMMISSION
2800 Berlin Turnpike Newington, CT 06131
(860) 594-2550



November 19, 2014

Thames River Heritage Park Steering Committee
c/o Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

As Chairman of the Connecticut Maritime Commission I have been authorized to express the Commission's full support for the creation of the Thames River Heritage Park (TRHP), a concept dating back to 1987. The TRHP is not a mere plan to increase tourism to the southeast region of Connecticut but a framework for regional transportation and economic development that would incorporate cultural, educational and environmental initiatives.

As a network of people, communities, institutions, sites and stories the TRHP would connect the historic waterfront and natural landscape of the Thames River from its headland in Norwich to its mouth at Long Island Sound. Access to the waterfront would be improved through the creation and connection of walking paths, bicycle paths and water taxi services to existing historic sites like the Fort Griswold Monument and future attractions like the National Coast Guard Museum.

What is needed to move the development of the TRHP forward is focused action by the General Assembly and the cognizant state agencies. The Commission encourages the cognizant state agencies to create an implementation plan that would include an aggressive timeline and cost estimate so that funds can be provided by the General Assembly to implement the plan.

Taking over 27 years from inception to now does not bode well. Any and all action necessary to make the concept of the TRHP a reality needs to be taken immediately.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Riccio, Jr.
Chairman

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich, Connecticut 06360

(860) 889-2324/Fax: (860) 889-1222/E-Mail: office@seccog.org

23 April 2014

Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

RE: Letter of Support for Thames River Maritime Heritage Park

Dear Ms. Keeler:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Thames River Heritage Park that would incorporate and link the historic sites of Fort Griswold and the Historic Ship Nautilus and Submarine Force Library Museum in Groton and Fort Trumbull in New London. In addition, the proposed United States Coast Guard Museum in New London would become an important attraction in this heritage park.

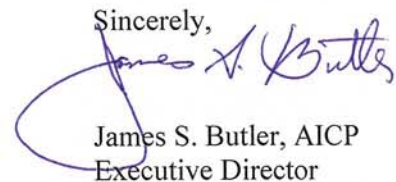
This past fall I attended a presentation given by the Avery-Copp Museum and their consultant the Yale Urban Design Workshop, where this project so long in the making was narratively and visually brought to life. The stakeholders in attendance were enthusiastically supportive of the plans as proposed, and are committed to assisting in seeing this vision become a reality.

The creation of the proposed Thames River Heritage Park is consistent with many of the goals of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Government's (SCCOG) 2007 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development, including the need to protect the region's historic resources and the promotion of cultural tourism. In addition, the development of a Heritage Park is recommended as an action item in the region's 2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), adopted by both the SCCOG and the region's economic development organization, the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer).

I am appreciative of the Avery Copp Museum's leadership in promoting the creation of the Thames River Maritime Heritage Park. Please let me know if the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments or its staff can be of assistance in your efforts to implement this project so important to southeastern Connecticut.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



James S. Butler, AICP
Executive Director



South Eastern Connecticut Enterprise Region

*125 Eugene O'Neill Drive , Suite 309, New London, Connecticut 06320
Telephone: 1-888-6-SECTER (888-673-2837) or 860-437-4659
Facsimile: 860-437-4662 • E-mail: secter@secter.org*

15 April 2014

Ms. Hali Keeler
President
Avery – Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

The Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer) is very pleased that the Avery-Copp House has taken the lead in reviving plans for a Thames River Heritage Park (TRHP) to encompass the cities of New London and Groton, and the Town of Groton. We are in total support of this project, which has long been a goal of the Heritage, Tourism and Economic Development organizations of southeastern CT, including seCTer.

In the 2004 Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), prepared by seCTer and the southeastern CT Council of Governments (SCCOG), the development of the Thames River Maritime Heritage Park was considered a High Priority Project for the region, to include the design and development of signage, self-guided walking and driving tours, docks for tour boats and water taxis, and other infrastructure. The Town of Groton's Economic Development Strategy of 2006 likewise identified the park and its components as a vital project for the Town and City of Groton. This plan also identified the importance developing the infrastructure to successfully integrate and link the historic sites on both sides of the Thames River.

Due to the efforts of the previous planning group for the TRHP, some infrastructure was constructed, including new public rest rooms at Ft. Griswold in Groton, and a dock at the foot of Ft. Street in Groton. In addition, efforts to secure a location for a public docking facility at the Nautilus Museum were well underway. Your recent efforts to build upon this earlier work are very much appreciated and supported. In 2010 seCTer prepared an updated CEDS which again identified the need to "foster more heritage tourism in the region." Among projects identified as important in forwarding this goal were to improve signage for visitors, to develop "heritage trails" attractive to tourists and to foster a sense of place in residents, to invest in Thames River sightseeing and/or ferry service, and to develop new and improved recreational opportunities on the Thames River. Your plans are consistent with the goals of the CEDS relative to Heritage Tourism and Regional Economic Development, particularly as applicable to small businesses.

We are confident that your proposal will foster increased interest in the establishment of the Thames River Heritage Park, and will forward plans for both the accompanying infrastructure and for the shared commitment of the region's historic sites including, but not limited to, the Avery - Copp House, Forts Trumbull and Griswold, the Custom House, Shaw Mansion, Hempstead Houses and Nautilus Museum. An increase in visitation, both by tourists and by New London County AND Connecticut Residents, can only positively impact the economy of our region and increase the pride of place among our residents.

Please let us know if there is any action that seCTer can undertake to assist you in moving this most worthwhile project forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Stephen MacKenzie". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "C" and "S".

C. Stephen MacKenzie
Executive Director -- seCTer

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT CULTURAL COALITION

November 28, 2014

Ms. Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

On behalf of the board of directors of the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition, I am pleased to send this letter of support for the proposed Thames River Maritime Heritage Park. The mission of the Coalition is to foster region-wide economic growth in New London County by optimizing existing and new arts, cultural and heritage activities to assure that cultural sector and creative business assets are central to the vitality of the region. The Heritage Park project will unite and strengthen the current and planned attractions and activities along the Thames River to establish a beckoning destination for residents and visitors.

The historic sites, stores and restaurants on both the Groton and the New London side of the river are independently strong sources of business activity in our region. Centered on a vision of enhanced visitor experience, the Heritage Park would leverage the current assets and create new linkages to serve visitors and produce an economic engine for the region. By connecting these two assets through water transportation, coordinating schedules events and marketing, the Heritage Park has the potential to capitalize on the harbor's assets and become a major economic driver for our region. We support this project because the process, a tremendous model of collaboration, and its outcomes will benefit the entire region. With a National Coast Guard Museum planned for downtown New London, the timing of the Heritage Park could not be more appropriate or important.

Synergy is the creation of a whole that is greater than the simple sum of its parts. The Coalition's goals are to foster synergy, advance our regional identity, and attract and retain businesses, residents, and visitors. We believe the Thames River Maritime Heritage Park will help to do just that.

We look forward to partnering with you in this effort. We commend the steering committee for their tremendous efforts thus far to move this effort forward. We know that there is much to be done to bring this initiative to fruition. The Coalition has formally approved having a representative serve on your steering committee to support this initiative. I will be in touch with Penny Parsekian to discuss further. Many thanks for your leadership on this important project.

Sincerely,



Wendy Bury
Executive Director

CONNECTICUT MARITIME COALITION



December 16, 2013

Priscilla Wells, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06320

Dear Priscilla,

This letter is to inform you that the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Maritime Coalition, Inc. would like to express support for the Thames River Heritage Park proposal presented at our December Board meeting.

As we understand it, the park, featuring water shuttles to connect both sides of the river, would create a heritage based educational and recreational attraction linking existing and planned cultural resources in New London and Groton. The park concept presents an opportunity for the state to capitalize on its investment, boost tourism and stimulate economic development.

As an organization that strives to serve as the linchpin between maritime businesses and policy makers, the CMC has an interest in such proposals. We aim to grow maritime businesses in the state and maintain their competitiveness, but our approach to economic growth is holistic. We are aware that our success lies with the preservation of our coastal environment and quality of life. The park, with its water shuttles and historic and maritime focus, aligns well with our mission.

Thank you for informing us about this important project. Please keep us advised of progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David E. Pohorylo".

David E. Pohorylo
Chairman

Cc: Board of Directors

PERSPECTIVE

Summer successes point to a bright future for tourism

By TONY SHERIDAN

The events of this summer and fall in our region, celebrating our deep and wonderful connections to the sea, should prove to even the largest doubters that the words "maritime" and "heritage" can attract not only tourists to our shores, but also the interest our residents.

It began in early summer with Mystic Seaport's relaunch of the whaling ship Charles W. Morgan, followed in September by the grand opening of the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center's Coogan Farm Nature & Heritage Center, and big crowds at the Connecticut Maritime Festival. The frosting on all those cakes was the testing of a Groton-New London water taxi for two consecutive weekends, the brainchild of the Thames River Heritage Park organizers, and facilitated by Cross Sound Ferry.

The water taxis were packed. According to the Heritage Park steering committee, 4,200 passengers made the trip across the river, just 1,600 shy of the total capacity for all the trips Sept. 6, 7, 13 and 14.

Those crowds mirrored the thou-

sands who lined the Mystic River to watch the Morgan sail for the first time in more than 75 years back in June. After a \$12 million, five-year renovation, thousands more packed the New England ports of Newport, R.I., New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard, Cape Cod, and Boston to greet the ship on its summer tour.

Similar enthusiasm was displayed at the Nature Center's Coogan Farm opening in early September. The center partnered with the Trust for Public Land to raise \$4.1 million to purchase and preserve 34 acres from the Coogan family. Meanwhile, the Coogan family donated another 11 acres to the center. Hundreds attended a ribbon cutting and a community picnic to celebrate.

A week later the Connecticut Maritime Heritage Festival brought gorgeous ships to New London Harbor and wonderful activities to the city's streets. It was a successful start to what we hope will become a new annual tradition. And the summer's Lighthouse Tours staged by the Custom House Museum brought folks up close to our "sentinels of the sea." Many of those trips sold out.

Tony Sheridan is president and chief executive of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut.

All of this adds to the argument that backers of the Thames River Heritage Park have been making since the circa-1989, an idea that was revived last year — the region can and should have an active and engaging maritime heritage park along both sides of the river.

The park would link sites in Groton and New London, including Fort Griswold and Fort Trumbull parks, the Submarine Force Museum, USS Nautilus and the planned National Coast Guard Museum. A steering committee initiated by the Avery-Copp House, which also would be one of the park sites, is leading the effort.

It was great news when Gov. Dannel P. Malloy endorsed the idea after seeing the success of the water taxi experiment.

Such an endeavor will be a valuable asset added to the already rich variety of offerings eastern Connecticut provides to visitors from around the world.

The test weekends of a Thames River water taxi linking New London City Pier, Groton Fort Street landing and Fort Trumbull State Park was a hit. That bodes well for future expansion of that Heritage Park concept.



DANA JENSEN/THE DAY



THE CITY OF GROTON

Mayor Marian Galbraith

295 Meridian Street, Groton, CT 06340

(860) 446-4103 (860) 445-4058 FAX

March 12, 2014

Ms. Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

The City Council of the City of Groton would like to endorse the Thames River Heritage Park project being developed by the Yale Urban Design Workshop under the auspices of the Avery-Copp House.

Yale presented its preliminary concepts for the park in Council Chambers to the Community & Economic Development Committee and other town leaders in December. As we understand it, the park, featuring water shuttles to connect both sides of the river, would create a heritage based educational and recreational attraction linking existing and planned cultural resources in New London and Groton. The state has made a considerable investment in the park in terms of passing enabling legislation, the allocation of funds, and installation of infrastructure. The updated park concept presents an opportunity to capitalize on this investment, boost tourism and stimulate economic development.

The City has long recognized the development potential of the Thames Street area, which borders the Thames River in the City of Groton. There is enormous potential for the development of small businesses and the attraction of local visitors. We are all the more supportive of this project since the City of Groton and Town of Groton are also making a sizable investment in the Thames Street commercial area. These investments include

- A bond authorization of over \$6 million by the Town of Groton to reconstruct the street including safe pedestrian walkways. This project is scheduled to be completed in 2014.
- An investment by the City of approximately \$1.5 million for the purchase of
 - property on Thames Street to provide for a passive recreation area and, eventually, the reconstruction of a pier,
 - an historic home which is recognized as having significant historic importance, and
 - land for a small municipal parking lot.
- A year-long effort by the City to establish a plan for the economic development of two small commercial areas in the City, one of which is the Thames Street area. This report was recently completed and delivered to the City Council.

The park will leverage this investment and help provide the foot traffic needed to revitalize this area. This revitalization will promote the creation of small businesses and the enhanced use of cultural assets on both sides of the river. The park will provide a framework for development compatible with the region's considerable historic assets and pull the region together so that both sides of the river will benefit from the state's investment in the planned US Coast Guard Museum. We would like to see the park project move forward.

The Avery-Copp House is to be commended for its efforts to bring this project back to life. Please keep us advised of progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marian Galbraith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Marian Galbraith



City of New London

Office of the City Council
181 State Street • New London, CT 06320 • Phone (860) 447-5202

October 10, 2014

Heritage Park Steering Committee
c/o President Hali Keeler
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

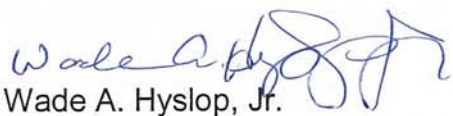
Dear President Keeler:

I am writing on behalf of the New London City Council to express our support for the development of the Thames River Heritage Park. With the expected arrival of the Coast Guard Museum to downtown New London in 2017, and in anticipation of the number of visitors that this will bring to the region, we feel this is an opportune time to develop the park.

The area around the Thames River and surrounding communities is rich in historical sites, from Fort Trumbull State Park to Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park and the Submarine Force Museum, and soon the National Coast Guard Museum. Thames River Heritage Park would connect all of the areas together and provide a central point for visitors and a boom to tourism and economic development for surrounding communities.

We are excited at the prospect of development of the park and look forward to seeing it come to fruition. If we can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,


Wade A. Hyslop, Jr.
President, New London City Council



City of New London
Economic Development Commission

February 12, 2015

Penny Parsekian, Dir. of Development, Communications & Special Projects
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Parsekian,

The City of New London's Economic Development Commission has voted unanimously to approve—and support—the plans for the Thames River Heritage Park.

The Commission applauds the idea of creating a living, working waterfront that builds on the historical connection between Groton and New London. It has been estimated that with the arrival of the U.S. Coast Guard Museum in New London in 2017, as many as 500,000 visitors a year will be traveling to the Thames region. It is the Commission's opinion that the time is right to complete the park project so that it will be in place and fully established when the museum opens.

The Thames River Heritage Park promises to bring both sides of the Thames River together, providing additional opportunities for visitors to enjoy the Thames region's rich nautical history. In addition to visiting the Coast Guard Museum, visitors will have the opportunity to travel—via water taxi—to Fort Trumbull State Park, Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park, and the Submarine Force Museum. (*Note: The commission would hope that the Nautilus Museum would be one of the ports of call for the water taxi as soon as possible, since traffic numbers will be a prime consideration affecting state support.*)

Moving between sites, visitors can experience the Thames River itself as an attraction. The Thames River Heritage Park will also lead to increased traffic at such sites as the Avery-Copp House, the Custom House Maritime Museum, Shaw Mansion, the Hempsted Houses, the Lyman Allyn Art Museum, Nathan Hale Schoolhouse, Bill Memorial Library, and the Ebenezer Avery House.

We applaud the Avery-Copp House and the Yale Urban Design Workshop (YUDW), for their work on this project, and we believe it will aid in the economic development of the region. Going forward, the City of New London's Economic Development Commission will support this effort in any way it can.

Sincerely,

Elaine Stattler, Chair (representing the full membership of the Commission)
Economic Development Commission



LINDA L. MARIANI*
STEPHEN E. RECK**

*also admitted in MA, DC
& Mohegan Tribal Court

**also admitted in Mashantucket
Pequot Tribal Court

TEL (860) 443-5023
FAX (860) 443-8897

EMAIL: info@marianireck.com

March 4, 2014

Ms. Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

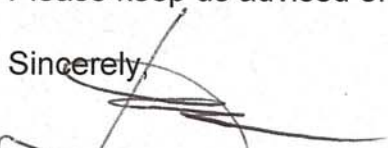
Having had the opportunity to meet with the Yale Urban Design Workshop and review the plans for the Thames River Heritage Park project, I am writing to endorse the project with the full support of the RCDA Board of Directors.

As we understand it, the park, featuring water shuttles to connect both sides of the river, would create a heritage based educational and recreational attraction linking existing and planned cultural resources in New London and Groton. The state has made a considerable investment in the park in terms of passing enabling legislation, the allocation of funds, and installation of infrastructure. The park concept presents an opportunity to capitalize on this investment, boost tourism and stimulate economic development.

As a development association seeking developers for projects to complement and support the ongoing redevelopment and revitalization of the area surrounding Fort Trumbull, as well as the nearby downtown Historic Waterfront District, we believe the Heritage Park will enhance our efforts to attract high quality bids. The park will also provide a framework for development compatible with the region's considerable historic assets and bring attention to our region as a whole. We would like to see the park project move forward.

The Avery-Copp House is to be commended for its efforts to see this project through. Please keep us advised of progress.

Sincerely,


Linda L. Mariani, President
Renaissance City Development Company, Inc.

LLM/mee



TOWN OF GROTON

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

RITA SCHMIDT
MAYOR
RSCHMIDT@GROTON-CT.GOV

45 FORT HILL ROAD, GROTON, CONNECTICUT 06340
TELEPHONE (860) 441-6630 FAX (860) 441-6638
WWW.GROTON-CT.GOV

March 24, 2014

Ms. Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler and Commissioner Rob Klee:

The Groton Town Council voted on March 18, 2014, to endorse the concept of the Thames River Heritage Park Project being developed by the Yale Urban Design Workshop under the auspices of the Avery-Copp House.

Yale presented its preliminary concepts for the park to Mark R. Oefinger, Town Manager, AICP, and Kristin Clarke, Economic Development Specialist, and again at the public meeting in the City of Groton in November. As we understand it, the park, featuring water shuttles to connect both sides of the river, would create a heritage-based educational and recreational attraction linking existing and planned cultural resources in New London and Groton. The state has made a considerable investment in the park in terms of passing enabling legislation, allocating funds, and installing infrastructure. The updated park concept presents an opportunity to capitalize on this investment, boost tourism and stimulate economic development.

Voters passed a \$6.37 million bond referendum in May 2011 to reconstruct Thames Street. The Town is eager to capitalize on its investment in this commercial corridor. The park will leverage this expenditure and help provide the foot traffic needed to revitalize the area. In addition, the park will provide a framework for development compatible with the region's considerable historic assets and pull the region together so that both sides of the river will benefit from the state's investment in the planned United States Coast Guard Museum. We would like to see the park project move forward.

The Avery-Copp House is to be commended for its efforts to bring this project back to life. Please keep us advised of progress.

Sincerely,

Rita Schmidt
Mayor



NATIONAL COAST GUARD MUSEUM ASSOCIATION, INC.

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24th Commandant USCG
(Ret.)

MCPOCG Vincent W. Patton
USCG (Ret.)

239 BANK STREET
NEW LONDON, CT
06320

PHONE: 860-443-4200
FAX: 860-443-0354

December 19, 2014

Thames River Heritage Park Steering Committee
c/o Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

As Treasurer of the National Coast Guard Museum Association, Inc. I write in full support for the creation of the Thames River Heritage Park. As we are all fully aware, this is an initiative that dates back almost four decades. It seems that there are now enough entities and fully restored sites on both sides of the Thames River that the existence of a Heritage Park concept can now become a reality.

And with the "coming soon" of the National Coast Guard Museum, it is now an appropriate time to ratchet up the efforts of all concerned to support an in water taxi or ferry service to connect up all the attractions and historic sites that exist on both sides of the river. I would also express the opinion that such a ferry system would link Groton and New London in so many ways, which hereto for have not really existed.

The Museum Board encourages State agencies and the Legislature to create an implementation plan that would include an aggressive timeline and cost estimated so that funds can be provided by the General Assembly to implement such a plan.

On a final note, it is hoped that a second effort will be made to have some sort of water taxi service in place for the summer of 2015 that has been designated as COAST GUARD SUMMER 2015 by Governor Malloy. Having such a system in place albeit a temporary one would do much to help tourism efforts in SECT for this very significant summer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.S. Johnson", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

John S. Johnson
TREASURER

The National Coast Guard Association is a private non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the United States Coast Guard history and tradition.



Ms. Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

June 4, 2014

Re: Thames River Heritage Park

Dear Ms. Keeler,

The Groton Business Association (GBA) is pleased to send this letter of endorsement of the proposed Thames River Heritage Park.

As the GBA's mission is to enrich the overall economic vitality of Groton, we believe the Thames River Heritage Park will serve to aggregate the current and planned major attractions along the Thames River to form a more compelling center for tourism. Clearly, by integrating the various cultural and heritage locations and positioning the area as a destination to explore, shop and dine, we can attract a significant number of outside visitors travelling within and from out of state. The influx of new visitors adds to the strong and growing tourism base in Connecticut. Last year the CT Tourism Advisory Council reported that \$11.5 billion in Connecticut economy activity was derived from travel and tourism activities and that 6.5% of total state jobs are tourism based.

Although the final completed form of the Thames River Heritage Park is still being developed, after careful analysis, we feel that the concept has economic potential and believe that it should be pursued to the next phases.

Groton has a proud heritage of commerce and history especially along the Thames Street area. It has several American historical sites and scenic parks not fully realized by outside tourists. We feel that the connective nature of the Thames River Heritage Park will allow these assets to synergize with other nearby tourist assets for the good of the *entire region*.

Groton is already in the process of placing a positive cornerstone for an economic revitalization. It comes in the way of a \$6.4 million reconstruction of Thames Street. Our belief is this will help spur building improvements and shoreline upgrades by current private owners. This will be an excellent precursor to the Thames River Heritage Park.

A second impetus will be the completion of the Coast Guard Museum. Normally, the building of such in

New London would have little effect on Groton Bank since there is a body of water separating the two. However, the concept of a Heritage Park connecting the historical assets in the area by water taxi has enormous potential both as a service to tourists and as an economic stimulus in Groton and the entire region.

With a landing dock already in place at the foot of Fort Street, we can foresee a multitude of visitors arriving by boat, taking the short walk up to Fort Griswold and then strolling down Thames St. to patronize shops, restaurants and museums. Increased visitors to the area will, over time, spur additional retail development which will attract more visitors and create a virtuous cycle of economic growth.

Although we do not know what the final report of the Yale Urban Design Workshop will incorporate, we suspect it will recommend forms of logistical and cosmetic upgrades and shoreline cleanup, to make visitation to our side far more compelling.

In conclusion, we feel the Thames River Heritage Park will be a catalyst for cultural and educational initiatives, attract incremental visitors to the area, spark retail development and help initiate a renaissance of the Groton river front.

Very truly yours,

The Groton Business Association

Al Valente

Susan Bailey

Bill Smith





Linking Long Island and New England for over 35 Years

April 18, 2014

Ms. Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

Having had the opportunity to meet and review the plans for the Thames River Heritage Park project with Senator Andrew Maynard, I am writing to endorse the project.

We understand that the plans for the park will feature water shuttles connecting both sides of the Thames creating a heritage based educational and recreational attraction linking existing and planned cultural resources in New London and Groton. The park concept presents an opportunity for the State to capitalize on its investment, boost tourism and stimulate economic development, all of which aligns well with our business goals.

As a business that strives to provide the highest level of service to our passengers traveling between Long Island and New England, Cross Sound Ferry welcomes the opportunity to expose our service to more potential passengers. We believe the park is especially important in light of the opening of the planned National Coast Guard Museum as it would provide a regional framework for such amenities as visitor parking.

Although our aim is to grow our businesses, we are well aware that our success lies with the preservation of our coastal environment and a good quality of life. The park, with its water shuttles and historic and maritime focus, is a needed enhancement to our region.

The Avery-Copp House is to be commended for its efforts to see this project through. Please keep us advised of progress.

Sincerely,

John Wronowski
President

Cc: Hon. Andrew Maynard
Hon. Elissa Wright

2 Ferry Street, New London, CT 06320
Phone (860) 443-7394
Fax (860) 440-3492
www.longislandferry.com

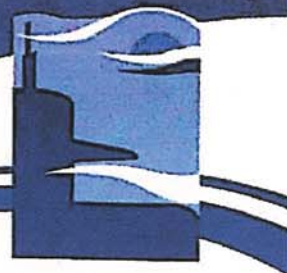
Submarine Force Library & Museum Association

Crystal Lake Road • PO Box 928

Groton, Connecticut 06340

T: 860.448.0893 • F: 860.405.0568

association@sflma.org



October 2, 2014

Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Hali,

This letter is to inform you that the Board of Directors of the Submarine Force Museum and Library Association is in support of the Thames River Heritage Park.

As we understand it, the park would create a heritage based educational and recreational attraction, linking existing and planned cultural resources in New London and Groton and using water shuttles to connect both sides of the river. The state has already made a considerable investment in the park in terms of passing enabling legislation, the allocation of funds, and installation of infrastructure.

The Heritage Park will improve our ability to attract both residents and tourists and thus support our mission to educate naval personnel and the public in the heritage and traditions of the US Submarine Force. The creation of the park might bring us closer to achieving our vision of becoming one of the nation's top destinations. We also see the potential benefit in joining forces with area nonprofits to take advantage of joint marketing, programming, grant fundraising and other opportunities that create efficiencies.

With the many heritage attractions along the Thames River and the new Coast Guard museum being planned, we believe the whole has the potential to be a greater attraction than the sum of its individual parts.

Thank you for inviting us to join you in pursuing this important project. Please keep us advised of progress.

Sincerely,


Gretchen Marion
Executive Director

Stephen C. White
President

December 22, 2014

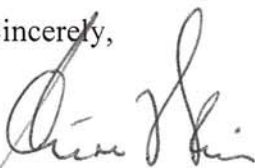
Thames River Heritage Park Steering Committee
c/o Avery Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

It is my pleasure to offer this letter of support and enthusiasm for the Thames River Heritage Park (TRHP). Maritime heritage is a concept important to so many of us, and particularly a maritime museum like Mystic Seaport. One of the challenges we face is how to provide access to our maritime assets and to show the public these assets are relevant. Our nation's maritime heritage is connected by waterways like the Thames River, and the vision for TRHP celebrates our local heritage.

The concept of connection is also important as this community rallies around the concept of TRHP. What could be better than to have the Thames River as a focal point and as a primary connector to various sites along the river that define a large portion of New London County? Mystic Seaport, while not exactly within the TRHP, sees the development of same as crucial to the general understanding of our maritime roots in southeastern Connecticut.

We strongly support the creation of TRHP, and we join others in offering support for the plan and encouraging those with the power to make decisions to support it as well. The experiment last September with the water taxi was a great success, and it demonstrates that the community is hungry to learn more about its own heritage if we can make it enjoyable, meaningful, and safe.

Sincerely,



Steve White

SCW:mh

NEW LONDON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



16 April 2014

Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

Thank you for taking the initiative of inviting the Yale Urban Design Workshop to help re-envision a regional approach to sharing the rich history of the Thames River harbor. The extensive research and community interviews they conducted have been used to fashion a new look at an idea whose time has perhaps finally come. Revitalizing the Thames Maritime Heritage Park concept is a brilliant means to move forward.

Now that the United States Coast Guard Museum is becoming a reality in New London we have an anchor that can truly make all that we have a destination. The Thames Maritime Heritage Park, with water transportation connecting the various heritage nodes, will enable a sharing of all of our treasures and will create a framework for visiting a wide spectrum of offerings. Instead of a two-hour visit to the Coast Guard Museum we can now offer a two-day experience linking the colonial, Revolutionary War, whaling, navy, shipbuilding (... and on and on) past with the present.

The excellent harbor provided by the Thames River has always been the primary driver for our regional economy; allowing people to experience our history by being on the water is key. Of course it will take a considerable amount of logistical support to make smooth and easy transitions between land and water transport, but the public-private partnership outlined in the YUDW plans can make it happen.

We hope for success for your request for support from the State for this effort. The initial Thames Heritage Park funds, already expended, have helped to create the Parade Plaza as a heritage and community focal point for the city of New London. The regional aspect of the plan hit too many roadblocks ten years ago, but now is an ideal time to move forward.

We look forward to partnering with you in this effort. As the oldest historical organization in eastern Connecticut we have some wonderful resources – both to bring to the table with our partners, as well as to share with the public. We would benefit from presenting our treasures as part of a more integrated interpretive story. Please call upon us to help, and keep us informed of the progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Edward D. Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Edward D. Baker
Executive Director



February 5, 2014

Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

We are writing in support of the Thames River Heritage Park proposal. Having reviewed the preliminary materials, we understand that the park would create a heritage-based educational and recreational attraction, linking existing and planned cultural resources in New London and Groton and using water shuttles to connect both sides of the river.

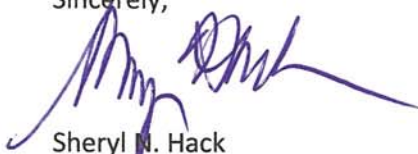
The state has made a considerable investment in the park in terms of passing enabling legislation, the allocation of funds, and installation of infrastructure. Connecticut Landmarks' property in New London, the Hempsted Houses, stands to benefit from the creation of a destination that will help to attract both residents and tourists. We would like to see the park project move forward.

The mission of Connecticut Landmarks is to inspire interest and encourage learning about the American past by preserving historic properties, collections and stories and presenting programs that meaningfully engage the public and our communities. As a community and regional educational resource, we are particularly interested in proposals that underscore the educational potential of the area's rich history.

We are well aware of the benefits of collaborating with other nonprofits to achieve greater impact in programming, marketing and fundraising. The park will provide a framework for development compatible with the region's considerable historic assets, helping to make each individual historic site more vibrant as part of a regional whole.

Thank you for inviting us to join you in this exciting endeavor and please keep us informed of progress.

Sincerely,


Sheryl N. Hack
Executive Director
Connecticut Landmarks


Barbara A. Nagy
Site Administrator
The Hempsted Houses

255 Main Street
4th floor
Hartford, CT 06106

p: 860-247-8996
f: 860-249-4907
ctlandmarks.org

AMASA DAY HOUSE
On the Green
Moodus, CT 06469
860-247-8996

BELLAMY-FERRIDAY
HOUSE & GARDEN
9 Main Street North
Bethlehem, CT 06751
203-266-7596

BUTLER-McCOOK
HOUSE & GARDEN
& MAIN STREET
HISTORY CENTER
396 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103
860-522-1806

BUTTOLPH-WILLIAMS
HOUSE
249 Broad Street
Wethersfield, CT 06109
860-529-0460

ISHAM-TERRY HOUSE
211 High Street
Hartford, CT 06103
860-247-8996

NATHAN HALE
HOMESTEAD
2299 South Street
Coventry, CT 06238
860-742-6917

PHELPS-HATHEWAY
HOUSE & GARDEN
55 South Main Street
Suffield, CT 06078
860-668-0055

HEMPSTED HOUSES
11 Hempsted Street
New London, CT 06320
860-443-7949

Project Oceanology

1084 Shennecossett Road • Groton, CT 06340
(860) 445-9007 • oceanology.org

Feb. 16, 2015

Ms. Penny Parsekian, Chair
Heritage Park Steering Committee
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Parsekian:

Please know that Project Oceanology endorses the proposed Thames River Heritage Park.

The proposed linking of historic, cultural and marine sites from New London with Fort Trumbull and the National Coast Guard Museum to Groton with its Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park and Submarine Force Museum makes total sense in showcasing Southeastern Connecticut's gems and stimulating its economic health.

That the proposal is entering its next stages is particularly important in light of the recent progress in bringing the U.S. Coast Guard Museum to fruition. Connecting these anchor sites with myriad area attractions will help bring global travelers to sites they otherwise might miss.

Project O, under the auspices of the Coast Guard and on the campus of the University of Connecticut, would be a welcoming water-shuttle stop within the park, with its more than 40 years of offering extraordinary experiences in marine science education and recreation aboard our floating laboratories traveling to the Thames River, Long Island Sound and Fishers Island Sound.

The proposal should continue with implementing its next phases and securing funding. We commend the Avery-Copp House for reviving this 1987 plan and for arranging for the Yale Urban Design Workshop to conduct its comprehensive study, the results of which offer a steady course of detailed stages required to make the Thames River Heritage Park become a reality.

Sincerely,



Thaxter Tewksbury
Director



April 28, 2014

Penny Parsekian
Development, Communications & Special Projects
Avery Copp Museum
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Parsekian:

I write to express the strong support of Mitchell College for the Heritage Park in the Thames Estuary.

As a regional citizen of southeastern Connecticut, Mitchell College applauds the efforts of the many stakeholders in the Park project as a way to improve access to the area's many attractions and historical treasure. We also see for the College

- Increased likelihood of alliances with our colleagues at the University of Connecticut at Avery Point because of easier transportation between Groton and New London;
- New venues for our hospitality students;
- Greater attractiveness of Mitchell with an expanded 'playground' for our students.

Strategically, we appear to be the southernmost point in this plan on the west side of the Thames River. As the River plays a role in the life and culture of the College, we plan to do what we can to advance the Heritage Park.

Cordially,

Mary Ellen Jukoski, Ed.D.
President



A non-profit corporation to promote the preservation and development of the entire urban environment of New London, Connecticut, including significant individual structures, streetscapes, neighborhoods and open spaces.

49 Washington Street, P.O. Box 1134, New London, CT 06320 • 860.442.0003 • www.newlondonlandmarks.org

April 14, 2014

Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Hali,

New London Landmarks, a historic preservation organization, is pleased to send this letter of support for the proposed project of the Thames River Heritage Park.

As we understand, the plans for this project would link existing historical and cultural resources in New London and Groton from both sides of the river. We also understand that the state has already made an investment in the park in passing enabling legislation, the allocation of funds, and installation of infrastructure. New London Landmarks would like to see this project move forward.

As an organization that strives to preserve our architectural resources, this project would attract visitors and residents to the region. The partnership of the cities will create a strong, unified, local stewardship of the areas cherished historical landmarks.

New London Landmarks endorses this project and encourages you to support the Thames River Heritage Park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Constance Kristofik".

Constance Kristofik
Executive Director

January 24, 2014

Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

This letter is to inform you that the Board of Trustees of the Lyman Allyn Art Museum voted to support the Thames River Heritage Park proposal presented at our January Board meeting.

As we understand it, the park would create a heritage based educational and recreational attraction, linking existing and planned cultural resources in New London and Groton and using water shuttles to connect both sides of the river. The state has already made a considerable investment in the park in terms of passing enabling legislation, the allocation of funds, and installation of infrastructure. We would like to see the park project move forward.

The Lyman Allyn stands to benefit from the creation of a destination that will attract both residents and tourists to our area. As a community and regional educational resource, we are particularly interested in proposals that promote educational programs. We also see the potential benefit in joining forces with area nonprofits to take advantage of joint marketing, programming, grant fundraising and other opportunities that create efficiencies.

Thank you for informing us about this important project. Please keep us advised of progress.

Sincerely,

Polly Merrill, President
Board of Trustees



Groton Historical Society

*"Helping to preserve the history of
Groton, Connecticut"*

March 14, 2014

Hali Keeler
President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

On behalf of the Groton Historical Society, I write this letter to strongly support the proposed Thames River Heritage Park. For years the State of Connecticut has considered and put forth efforts to have this project come to fruition. Interest in this project has grown considerably over the past few years and funding to complete this park can be considered nothing less than an investment in Connecticut's "past, present and future" historical assets.

The Town of Groton and the City of New London are extremely rich in history. The Revolutionary forts, maritime museums and historical houses located on both sides of the River are of great historical significance to not only the local communities but also to the State of Connecticut. The proposed Thames River Heritage Park project will provide easy access to these historical sites by the thousands of tourists who visit southeastern Connecticut every year.

Our Society encourages the State of Connecticut to approve the necessary legislative actions to enable the investments to ensure that this project is completed.

The Groton Historical Society will continue to work in collaboration with the Avery-Copp House and other local and state historical organizations in their efforts to see this project completed.

Sincerely,


James L. Streeter
President

Groton Historical Society, c/o 64 Pleasant Street, Groton, CT 06340

Avery-Copp House

One family, an American story



April 18, 2014

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hali Keeler, President

Janet Downs,
Vice President

Brent Eugenides,
Treasurer

Charlotte Barnum,
Secretary

Bruce Avery

Ellen Brown

Andrew Halsey

Susan Jerome

Senator Andrew Maynard

Dennis Popp

James Streeter

Priscilla Wells

Christopher Vernott

STAFF

Leslie Evans,
Museum Director

Kathy Leuze,
Museum Assistant

Penny Parsekian
Development, Communications,
Special project

Governor Dannel Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy,

As you know, we are engaged in an effort to complete the Thames River Heritage Park to link Fort Trumbull, Fort Griswold, the Nautilus and the new Coast Guard museum by water shuttle and walk ways. The park would provide an economic boost to the region and a framework for development needed to accommodate the new museum.

We have contracted with the Yale Urban Design Workshop to explore the feasibility of the project, provide conceptual designs, implementation and management plans. Yale's final report will be available this spring. Thirty stakeholders have endorsed the project – please find the first wave of support letters enclosed. According to the sub base commander and the Lt. Commander in charge of the Nautilus, the park would improve the quality of life for the base community, providing better access to the region's many historic assets.

With Fort Trumbull and New London's Waterfront Park now open and the National Coast Guard Museum slated to open in 2017, we will have reached the critical mass of attractions that was a sticking point in the past. Additionally, Cross Sound Ferry has independently offered to do a cost and operational analysis for the water shuttles. Market demand for the shuttle service is enhanced by the needs of both Electric Boat and UConn Avery Point to connect offices that straddle the river and for access to dorm space at Mitchell College. Please see the enclosed project overview outlining the current park project status.

We ask for your support for this project and for support from the DEEP, DECD, specifically Tourism, and the DOT to move the project forward in order to celebrate the rich heritage of the region, stimulate tourism and commerce and create jobs.

We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hali Keeler, President

encl: Thames River Heritage Park handout
Letters of support from:

City of Groton
Connecticut Maritime Coalition
New London County Hist. Soc.
Groton Historical Society

Lyman Allyn Art Museum
Renaissance City Devel. Corp
New London Landmarks
Office of Military Affairs

Town of Groton
Connecticut Landmarks.
seCTer

cc: DEEP Commissioner Rob Klee Senator Andrew Maynard DECD Commissioner Catherine Smith
DOT Commissioner James Redeker Representative Betsy Ritter Representative Elissa Wright
Representative Ted Moukawsher Representative Ernest Hewitt Senator Andrea Stillman



Sept. 22, 2014

Penny Parsekian, Chair
Thames River Heritage Park Steering Committee
c/o Avery Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Penny:

I am writing as the Chair of OpSail Connecticut to express our strong support for the water taxi. As you know, our organization has staged four waterfront festivals on the Thames River since 2000, most recently the Connecticut Maritime Heritage Festival on September 11-13 of this year.

During the festival, we witnessed firsthand the popularity of the water taxi, which ran between City Pier, Fort Trumbull and Groton's Fort Street. Every time I walked by the dock, the taxi seemed to be at capacity level, and the comments from those who cruised aboard were tremendously positive.

There is an overwhelming value in the continuation of the water taxi service that links the three locations on the Thames River. By operating the water taxi, you are not only providing people with an opportunity to learn about our significant maritime history and to see the beauty of Southeastern Connecticut's waterway, but you are giving people another reason to visit both New London and Groton, and have fun in the process.

We look forward to seeing it in operation next year.

With Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. S. Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John S. Johnson, Chairman

OpSail Connecticut, Inc.

Avery Copp House

From: John Eginton <mysticwhaler@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Sunday, September 14, 2014 8:25 PM
To: averycoppouse@sbcglobal.net
Subject: Water Taxi

We are delighted by the great success of the water taxi! From our berth at City Pier we have observed as thousands of passengers make a trip that has never been available in their lives. The water taxi clearly engenders appreciation of our valuable local historic sites, while enhancing the value of Groton/New London as an attraction. The thousands who visited these sites could not have visited by car for lack of adequate parking. But the water taxi is more than a convenient means of transportation; the boat ride itself is the "hook" that entices locals to visit for the first time sites that are, in many cases, just a few miles from their homes. The benefits of this service have become manifest in just two weekends. Let's keep it going!
John Eginton



This email is free from viruses and malware because [avast! Antivirus](#) protection is active.



AVERY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 724
Groton, CT 06340-7245

August 25, 2014

Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

We support the Thames River Heritage Park, using a "water taxi" to shuttle visitors from New London to Groton and back.

We need to bring more visitors to the City of Groton. We have conducted surveys and many people don't even know where the Ebenezer Avery House Museum (which is operated by the Avery Memorial Association) is located.

Having this connection from New London to Groton (and especially signage) will help visitors become more aware of what the City of Groton has to offer visitors.

When a water taxi docks at Thames Street, visitors will be able to see Fort Street very close by and, we hope, it will bring more visitors to the Ebenezer Avery House Museum on Fort Street. Currently, many of our visitors only find us by accident, because the Museum is located at the bottom of the hill on Fort Griswold State Park property. Most people think it is only a red residential house because it blends in with other houses on Fort Street. We want to be a destination and not a hidden gem found by accident!

We look forward to hearing the progress of this project. Please let us know if we can be of any help.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Lantiere
President Avery Memorial Association
which operates the Ebenezer Avery House Museum

June 23, 2014

Ms. Penny Parsekian
Development, Communications & Special Projects
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340

RE: Letter of Support for Heritage Park Initiative

Dear Penny,

I write to endorse and show support for the Heritage Park initiative in the Thames River estuary.

The faculty, staff, and students at the University of Connecticut Avery Point in Groton could take advantage of the links the initiative would create. Though we are a commuter campus, some of our students live together in off-site apartments in Groton and at Mitchell College. These students could take advantage of the attractions that would be linked and advertised, thus expanding their participation in local maritime, historic, and social events and venues.

As UConn's marine and maritime campus, our faculty would also appreciate the increased access and connectivity to marine and maritime historic and research sites and opportunities.

We appreciate the efforts of the Avery-Copp House and members of the Thames River Heritage Park Steering Committee to link points of interest along the Thames River. We give our support to the Committee as it goes forward.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Alfultis
Campus Director
860-405-9010
michael.alfultis@uconn.edu



BILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY

240 Monument Street

Groton CT 06340

860.445.0392

Fax 860.449.8971

www.billmemorial.org

April 25, 2014

Hali Keeler, President
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames St.
Groton, CT 06340

Dear Ms. Keeler,

This letter is to inform you that the Board of Trustees of the Bill Memorial Library voted to support the Thames River Heritage Park proposal presented at our April Board meeting.

As we understand it, the park would create a heritage based educational and recreational attraction, linking existing and planned cultural resources in New London and Groton and using water shuttles to connect both sides of the river. The state has already made a considerable investment in the park in terms of passing enabling legislation, the allocation of funds, and installation of infrastructure. We would like to see the park project move forward.

The Bill Memorial Library stands to benefit from the creation of a destination that will attract both residents and tourists to our area. As a community and regional educational resource, we are particularly interested in proposals that promote educational programs. We also see the potential benefit in joining forces with area nonprofits to take advantage of joint marketing, programming, grant fundraising and other opportunities that create efficiencies.

Thank you for informing us about this important project. Please keep us advised of progress.

Sincerely,

Dennis Popp, President
Board of Trustees

02 Water Taxi Demonstration Project Report

by Penny Parsekian, Avery-Copp House

Water Taxi Demonstration Project

for the proposed Thames River Heritage Park

When: Saturday & Sunday, September 6, 7, 13, 14, from 11 AM to 9 PM
Where: Connecting Groton Bank, New London Historic Waterfront District & Fort Trumbull State Park
Vessel: *Liberty*, 42 passenger, 2 crew open boat on loan from Mystic Seaport Museum
Operator: Cross Sound Ferry Services
Report: Submitted by Penny Parsekian, Chair, Heritage Park Steering Committee, December, 2014

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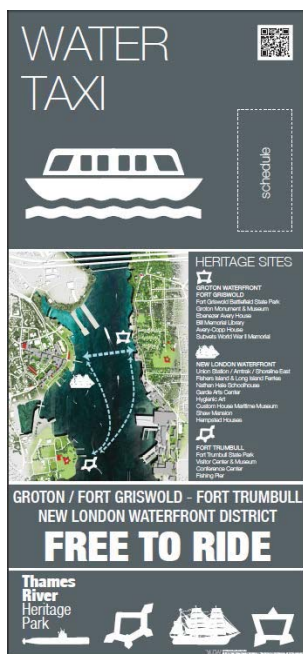
Ridership Report provided by Cross Sound Ferry 3

Passenger Survey Results 5

Media & Promotion 8

Operating Budget 9

Temporary Landing Sign
 Actual size 22 X 48 Coroplast vinyl





Summary

During the first two weekends of September, 2014, the Thames River Heritage Park Steering Committee, an *ad hoc* committee of the Avery-Copp House Board of Directors, coordinated a water taxi demonstration project to test the viability of establishing a ferry service across the Thames River estuary as a key component of a future heritage park. The committee raised funds, worked with the SE CT Council of Governments to create a service agreement with Cross Sound Ferry, who offered to run the service, placed advertisements, coordinated signage, secured permission from the required agencies, secured a viable vessel from Mystic Seaport and filled 60 shifts of volunteers.

The demonstration and subsequent survey of passengers established a number of positive impacts from the service:

- Residents visited sites that they had never visited before.
- Visitors were drawn from outside the area to ride the water taxi and explore the area.
- Businesses on both sides of the river experienced sales increases. Residents of Groton crossed the river to New London to try new restaurants, and New London residents crossed the river to patronize Paul's Pasta and Ralph's Coffee Shop.
- The Avery-Copp House had the highest attendance in its history, 400 people, at an event it held during the second weekend of water taxi service. On the other hand, paid admission to Fort Trumbull was 98 the first weekend and 106 the second, not a noticeable increase from the prior few weekends, according to Park Supervisor Jon Lincoln, but the number of visitors to the grounds appeared to be higher than usual.
- People who do not own a boat were able to get out on the water and gain a new perspective of the region – its history and geography.
- An on-line survey following the demonstration project indicated that many passengers would use the service to get to Union Station, commute to work, shop, dine or attend classes.

The demonstration indicates that such a shuttle service should be considered for permanent status to stimulate economic development and activity and support existing heritage tourism in the region.

Liberty Water Taxi
Saturday, September 6, 2014

Departure	City Pier		Total	Fort Griswold		Total	Fort Trumbull		Total
	Pax stay	New pax		Pax stay	New pax		Pax stay	New pax	
1100	0	24	24	1115	?	33	1130	?	29
1145	?	?	24	1200	?	23	1215	?	32
1230	?	?	12	1245	?	18	1300	?	2
1315	?	?	8	1330	?	11	1345	?	12
1400	?	?	42	1415	15	27	1430	16	19
1445	3	18	21	1500	11	32	1515	23	36
1530	15	11	26	1545	13	42	1600	30	38
1615	9	21	30	1630	7	26	1645	12	21
1700	5	11	16	1730*	5	15	1715*	26	42
1745	4	15	19	1800	19	24	1815	19	25
1830	9	0	9	1845	3	17	1900	11	11
1915	3	10	13	1930	5	15	1945	10	22
2000	16	2	18	2015	4	19	2030	1	1
2045	1	5	6	2100	0	0			
Total			268	Total		302	Total		290

* reversed direction one trip for Ft. Griswold event

TOTAL FOR DAY 860

Liberty Water Taxi
Sunday, September 7, 2014

Departure	City Pier		Total	Fort Griswold		Total	Fort Trumbull		Total
	Pax stay	New pax		Pax stay	New pax		Pax stay	New pax	
1100	0	6	6	1115	4	14	1130	11	27
1145	20	5	25	1200	19	35	1215	21	30
1230		out of service		1245	out of service		1300	out of service	
1315		out of service		1330	out of service		1345	out of service	
1345	0	19	19	1400	12	42	1415	36	41
1430	15	26	41	1445	20	42	1500	29	42
1515	25	16	41	1530	23	32	1545	22	42
1600	23	19	42	1615	16	42	1630	29	41
1645	30	12	42	1700	20	42	1715	30	40
1730	20	22	42	1745	23	36	1800	30	34
1815	4	16	20	1830	15	24	1845	8	18
1900	3	27	30	1915	2	20	1930	20	26
1945	13	15	28	2000	12	15	2015	4	11
2030	0	9	9	2045	0	0	2100	0	0
Total			345	Total		344	Total		352

TOTAL FOR DAY 1041

**Liberty Water Taxi
Saturday, September 13, 2014**

Departure	City Pier		Total	Fort Griswold		Total	Fort Trumbull		Total
	Pax stay	New pax		Pax stay	New pax		Pax stay	New pax	
1100	0	16	16	10	19	29	21	5	26
1145	12	19	31	12	29	41	30	8	38
1230	3	29	32	28	14	42	39	3	42
1315	3	39	42	26	16	42	29	4	33
1400	3	39	42	33	9	42	30	12	42
1445	3	39	42	24	18	42	30	12	42
1530	0	42	42	24	18	42	31	11	42
1615	7	35	42	33	9	42	38	4	42
1700	4	27	31	14	0	14	1730	cancelled Rain	
1745		cancelled Rain		1800	cancelled Rain		1815	cancelled Rain	
1830		cancelled Rain		1845	cancelled Rain		1900	cancelled Rain	
1915		cancelled Rain		1930	cancelled Rain		1945	cancelled Rain	
2000		cancelled Rain		2015	cancelled Rain		2030	cancelled Rain	
2045		cancelled Rain		2100	cancelled Rain				
Total			320	Total		336	Total		307

TOTAL FOR DAY 963

**Liberty Water Taxi
Sunday, September 14, 2014**

Departure	City Pier		Total	Fort Griswold		Total	Fort Trumbull		Total
	Pax stay	New pax		Pax stay	New pax		Pax stay	New pax	
1100	9	9	9	8	18	26	16	12	28
1145	8	16	24	11	21	32	22	8	30
1230	6	33	39	6	34	40	35	7	42
1315	25	17	42	10	31	41	27	15	42
1355	6	36	42	0	3	3			
1410	0	42	42	16	26	42	36	6	42
1445	15	27	42	14	28	42	30	12	42
1530	14	28	42	15	27	42	32	10	42
1615	12	30	42	15	27	42	34	8	42
1700	18	18	36	8	34	42	30	12	42
1745	10	32	42	20	22	42	30	4	34
1830	4	16	20	15	9	24	1815	30	18
1915	3	27	30	2	18	20	1900	8	10
2000	13	15	28	12	3	15	1945	20	26
2045	0	9	9	0	0	0	2030	4	11
Total			489	Total		453	Total		441

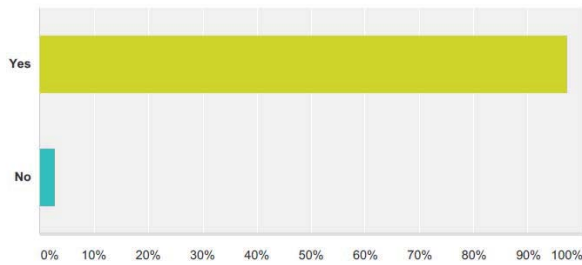
TOTAL FOR DAY 1383

Water Taxi Demonstration Project

On-line Survey Results

Q2 Did you enjoy the water taxi?

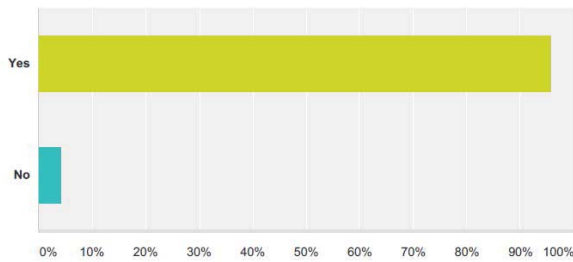
Answered: 221 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	97.29%	215
No	2.71%	6
Total		221

Q3 Would you do it again to visit area attractions?

Answered: 221 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	95.93%	212
No	4.07%	9
Total		221

OVERALL

While 224 passengers responded to the survey, not all answered every question. The number of respondents can be seen under each question on the charts. The overall response rate to the survey was over 20 percent, assuming the total number of passengers was approximately 1000.

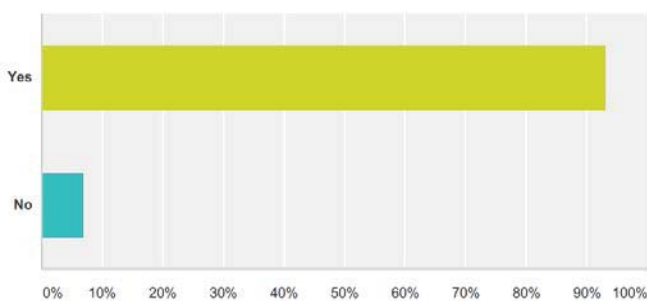
Estimating passenger counts is difficult due to the number of people embarking and disembarking at the three stops. The taxi was, on average, 73 percent full, with a carrying capacity of 42 passengers and two crew.

The survey was available on the Avery-Copp House website from September 6 to 21, 2014.

Responses were overwhelmingly positive and provided useful information for future service.

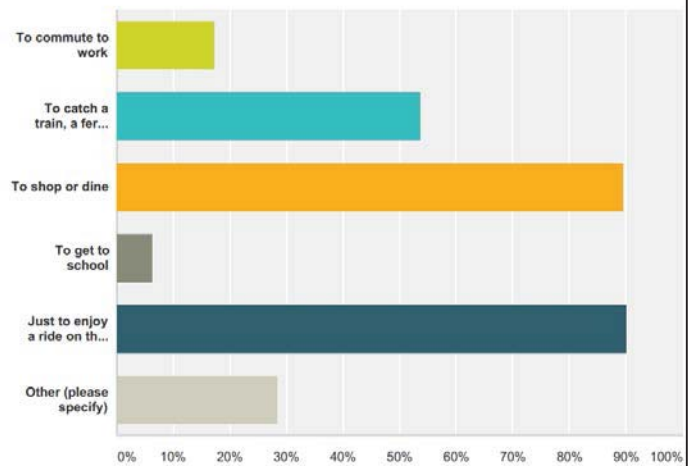
Q4 If running times were convenient, would you use it to cross the river for other activities?

Answered: 221 Skipped: 3



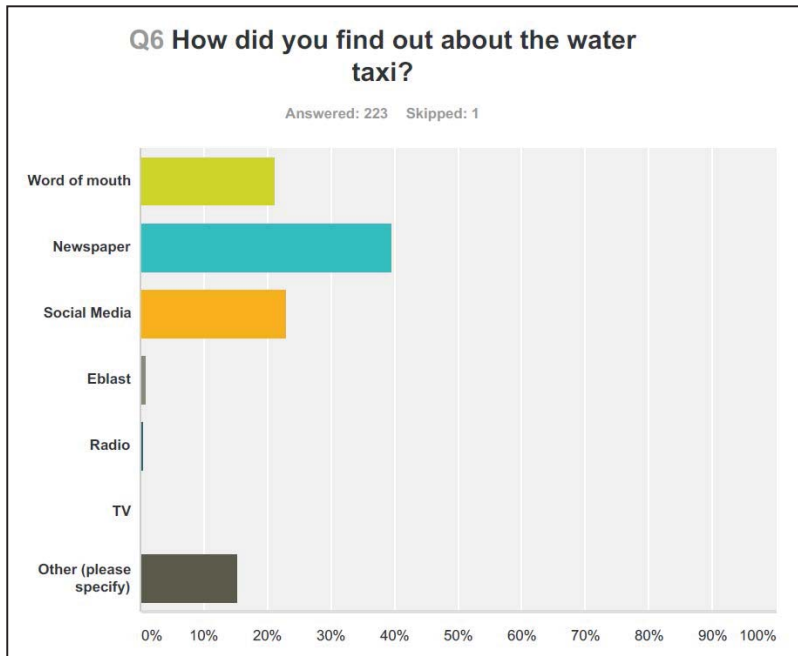
Q5 What other activities might you use the water taxi to attend? Check all that apply.

Answered: 173 Skipped: 2



Water Tax Demonstration Project

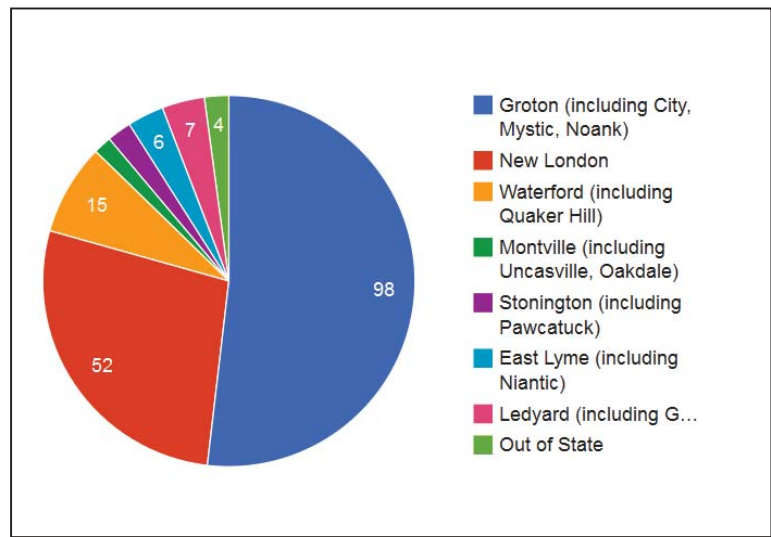
On-line Survey Results



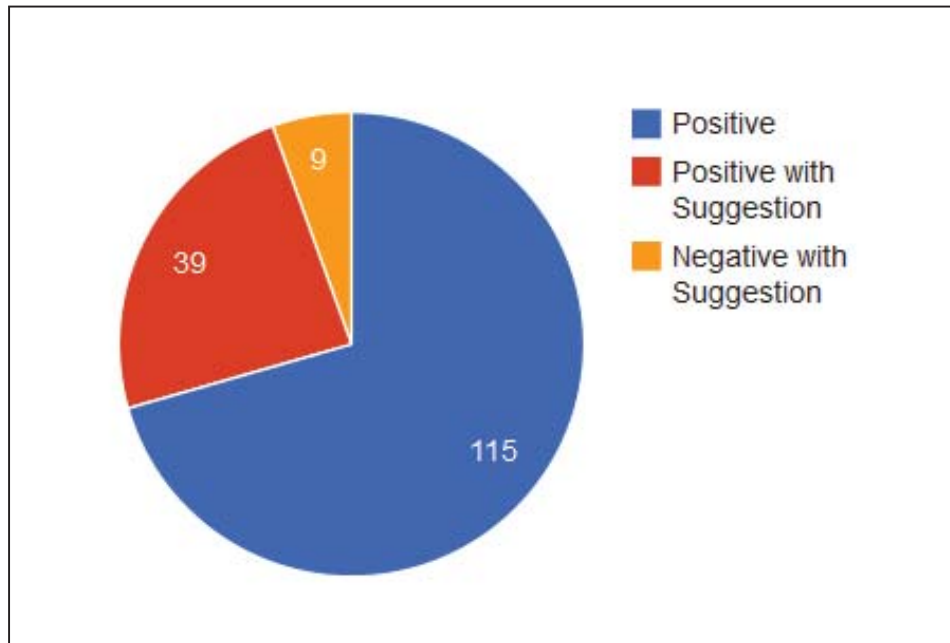
Regarding the 34 'Other' responses in the chart to the left, 21 of them belonged in one of the categories above, 7 were on committees associated with either the water taxi or an event happening that day, 4 discovered the water taxi by chance, and 2 discovered the water taxi by seeing the signs directing people to the taxi.

Answer Choices	Responses
Word of mouth	21.08% 47
Newspaper	39.46% 88
Social Media	22.87% 51
Eblast	0.90% 2
Radio	0.45% 1
TV	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	15.25% 34
Total	223

Where did the passengers come from?



Q7 Open ended comments



Summary of opened-ended comments

The **positive comments** had five key common denominators:

1. Praise for the operators and the volunteers/organizers
2. Recognition of the water taxi as a tourism/economic development asset
3. Mention as a good alternative to driving and finding parking etc.
4. Mention of doing things they had never or would not have otherwise done, such as visiting sites
5. General, unspecified support for the idea

The **negative comments** were mostly about wanting more than what was offered: more transportation to get up the hill in Groton, larger boat to avoid waiting in long lines, more promotion, more signage.

Email addresses provided

106 respondents provided email addresses indicating they wanted to be kept informed of progress on the Thames River Heritage Park. This represents 47 percent of respondents.

Thank you to Gerry Keeler for help with the open-ended questions.

Media & Promotion

Three-column, 10 inch ads ran in *The Day* immediately prior to the two weekends of service.



TWO WEEKENDS ONLY!
SATURDAY & SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 6-7 & 13-14
11:00 AM TO 9:00 PM
CATCH THE THAMES RIVER
WATER TAXI
FREE TO RIDE 

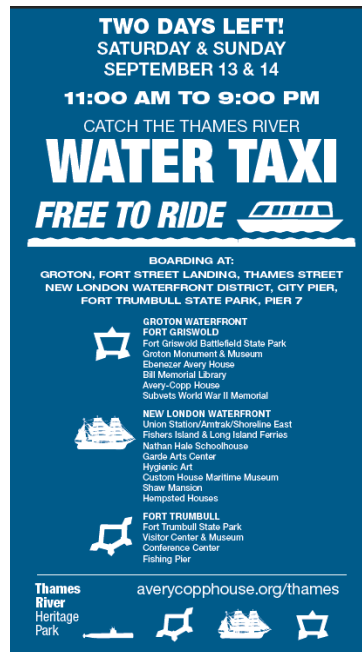
BOARDING AT:
FORT STREET LANDING, THAMES ST., GROTON
CITY PIER, NEW LONDON WATERFRONT DISTRICT
PIER 7, FORT TRUMBULL STATE PARK


GROTON WATERFRONT
FORT GRISWOLD
Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park
Groton Monument & Museum
Ebenezer Avery House
Bill Memorial Library
Avery-Copp House
Subvets World War II Memorial

NEW LONDON WATERFRONT
Union Station/Amtrak/Shoreline East
Fishers Island & Long Island Ferries
Nathan Hale Schoolhouse
Garde Arts Center
Hygienic Art
Custom House Maritime Museum
Shaw Mansion
Hempsted Houses

FORT TRUMBULL
Fort Trumbull State Park
Visitor Center & Museum
Conference Center
Fishing Pier

Thames River Heritage Park averycoppthouse.org/thames



TWO DAYS LEFT!
SATURDAY & SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 13 & 14
11:00 AM TO 9:00 PM
CATCH THE THAMES RIVER
WATER TAXI
FREE TO RIDE 

BOARDING AT:
GROTON, FORT STREET LANDING, THAMES STREET
NEW LONDON WATERFRONT DISTRICT, CITY PIER,
FORT TRUMBULL STATE PARK, PIER 7

GROTON WATERFRONT
FORT GRISWOLD
Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park
Groton Monument & Museum
Ebenezer Avery House
Bill Memorial Library
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Subvets World War II Memorial

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Shaw Mansion
Hempsted Houses

FORT TRUMBULL
Fort Trumbull State Park
Visitor Center & Museum
Conference Center
Fishing Pier

Thames River Heritage Park averycoppthouse.org/thames

A network of supporters used their social media and media contacts to spread the word. The network included:

- The Garde Arts Center
- City of New London
- CT Office of Tourism
- CT OpSail
- Eastern CT Chamber
- Fishers Island Ferry
- New London Main Street
- Eastern CT Tourism District

Meeting with the Editorial Board

A small group of key individuals met with The Day editorial board on Sept. 2, 2014 to discuss the Heritage Park and water taxi and were encouraged by the response. *The Day* continues to closely follow park progress, including sending a reporter to Heritage Park Steering Committee meetings.

Headlines and links to stories (published in *The Day*, Aug. 22, 2014 through Nov. 12, 2014)

- 1 [Four more groups join push for Thames River Heritage Park](#)
- 2 [Parsekian to speak on Heritage Park](#)
- 3 [Water taxi surveys tally up support](#)
- 4 [Gov. Malloy jumps on board with water taxi](#)
- 5 [Water taxi survey available through midnight Sunday](#)
- 6 [Committee takes next steps toward making Thames River Heritage Park a reality](#)
- 7 [Regional heritage park plan backers hope success translates to support](#)
- 8 [Water taxi makes a splash in New London, Groton](#)
- 9 [Dry run for water taxi planned this weekend on Thames River](#)
- 10 [Voila: A new state park](#)
- 11 [Community comes together to revive water taxi idea](#)
- 12 [New London-Groton water taxi to run on trial basis next month](#)

Thames River Heritage Park Water Shuttle Demonstration Project Budget

OPERATING BUDGET

One-time Costs

LEASE	\$ -
TRANSIT TO/FROM NEW LONDON/MYSTIC	
BOARDING PLATFORMS 3@1500 each	\$ 4,500
INSURANCE	\$ 2,300
TOTAL ONE-TIME COST	\$ 6,800

Daily Costs

LABOR	\$ 1,820
FUEL AND CONSUMABLES	\$ 365

TOTAL DAILY COST	\$ 2,185
COST FOR FOUR DAYS	\$ 8,740

TOTAL OPERATING \$ 15,540

NOTES: All figures except labor are rough estimates. Labor is based on a 12 hour day, which equates to approximately 10 hours of operation.

MARKETING BUDGET

Signage at Ferry Stops and directional signs

3 signs @ \$300 each , waterproof	\$	900.00
3 plexiglas holders for schedules @ 20 each	\$	60.00
6 coreplast at \$27 each	\$	162.00
Assembly	\$	280.00
Shipping signage	\$	50.00

Handouts

Flyer on heritage park, 4/4 full bleed, 100# gloss text		
1600 (See copy attached)	\$	290.00
Ferry Schedule Card with operating details		
1000	\$	60.00

Advertising

Print and on-line campaign with The Day	\$	800.00
TOTAL MARKETING COSTS	\$	2,602.00
GRAND TOTAL OPERATING & MARKETING	\$	18,142.00

SOURCES OF FUNDS

	\$	10,000.00	Anonymous donor
	\$	2,500.00	DECD marketing
	\$	500.00	Schooner Festival
	\$	3,000.00	City of Groton
	\$	2,000.00	City of New London
TOTAL	\$	18,000.00	