

**CHAPTER 6**  
**TRANSPORTATION**  
**STRATEGY**

## Chapter Review

In this chapter we focus on the development of a land- and water-based system of transportation and access for the Heritage park. The objective of this aspect of our work will be to establish the parameters for a comprehensive, convenient, and multi-modal visitor transportation system. This strategy will address specific aspects of the routing, scheduling, intermodal connections, and management considerations for a transportation support strategy.

## Current Transportation Environment

New London's downtown waterfront is the region's transportation hub, with the following modes of transportation available at or near the proposed Visitor Center site (adjacent to the Water Street Garage):

- Parking deck
- AMTRAK Station
- Cross Sound Ferry
- Fisher Island Ferry
- Inter-city buses
- Public Bus System
- Demand-responsive transit system
- Boat trips in summer

The distance from the proposed Visitor Center site to the currently most-attended attraction (Nautilus Memorial) is not walkable. With the exception of the downtown New London and Groton attractions, none of the Heritage park attractions are walkable. Nor is there any easy public transportation to most of the sites from downtown New London. In essence, the private automobile is currently a faster and more convenient mode of travel than public transportation. Thus, the area's attractions are currently auto-oriented. There is no organized visitor transportation system in New London/Groton at this time.

**Current Transportation Environment (continued)**

**The highest current visitor "density" points are:**

- **Heritage Park Visitor Center (180,000 + annual projected visitation at proposed Visitor Center when completed)**
- **Nautilus Memorial (275,000 + annual visitation)**
- **Fort Griswold (40,000 + annual visitation)**
- **Ocean Beach Park (200,000 + annual visitation)**
- **Coast Guard Academy (40,000 + annual visitation)**

## Components of the Visitor Transportation System

The components of the transportation strategy are comprised of a series of strategies aimed at auto, pedestrian, and mass transit.

**Auto, Self-Guided.** This strategy relies on the finding that in the early years of the Heritage Park, the primary mode of transportation will be the automobile. In order to respond to this, we will need to develop the following transportation aids.

**Signage** - A series of auto directional, auto route and support signs will be necessary to adequately direct visitors in their cars. These signs would include a Heritage Park logo, as well as the specific information required to negotiate an auto tour route. (See Figure 6-1.)

**Directional and Interpretive Map** - An interpretive map will need to be developed in conjunction with the auto tour route. Many examples of these types of maps exist, and their purpose would be to provide enough information and direction for visitors to easily find their way to the sites and through the region. An audio program could accompany the map.

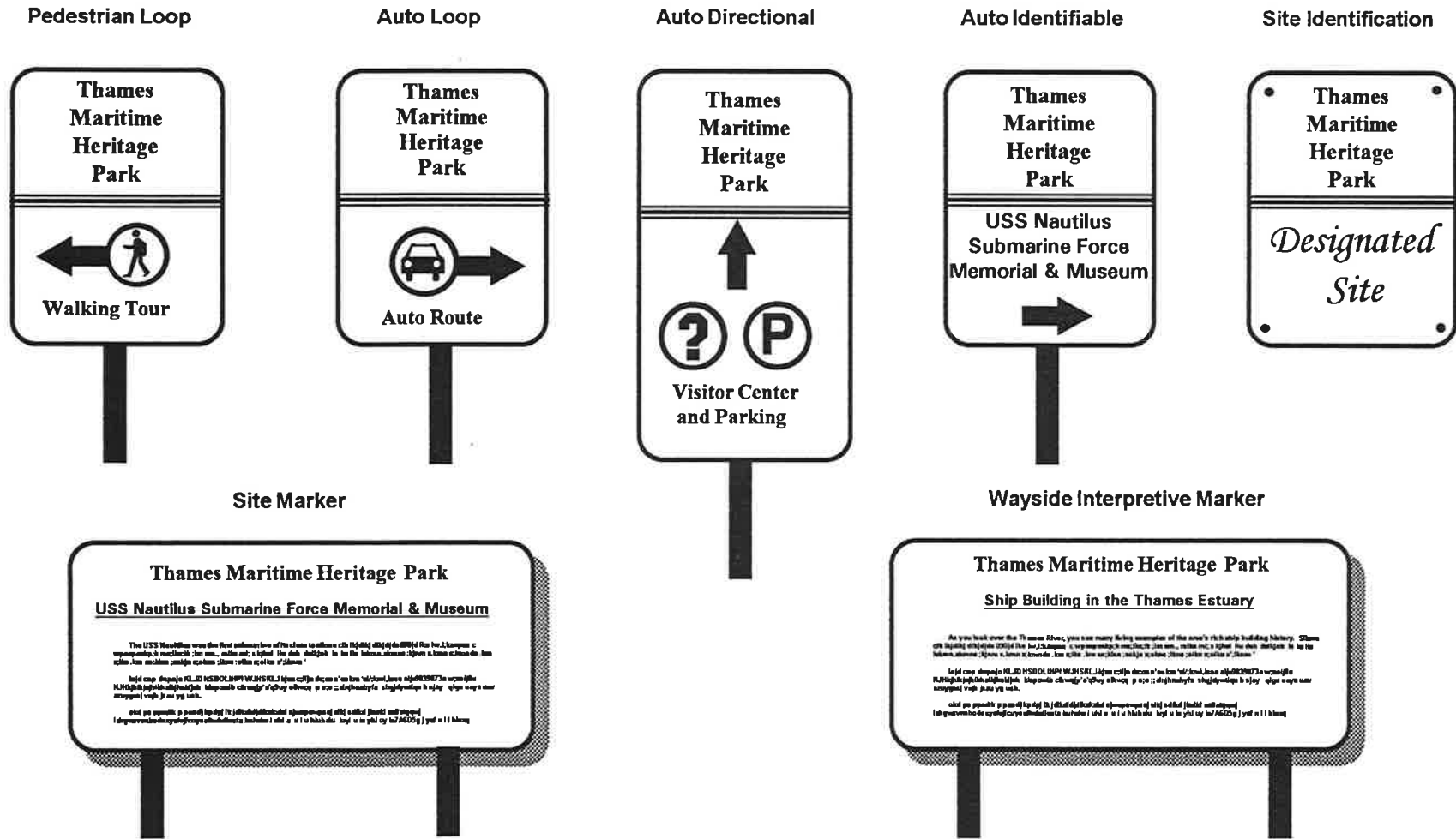
**Auto Route Designation** - A potential designation for such an auto route is shown in Figure 6-2. This provides for loops that could easily be expanded if additional sites are included in the Park.

**Auto Intercept Points** - The major current attractions of the Heritage Park should be used to feed people into the other attractions of the Park. These current intercept points are: Visitor Center, downtown New London; USS Nautilus Memorial; Fort Griswold; Coast Guard Academy; and Ocean Beach Park.

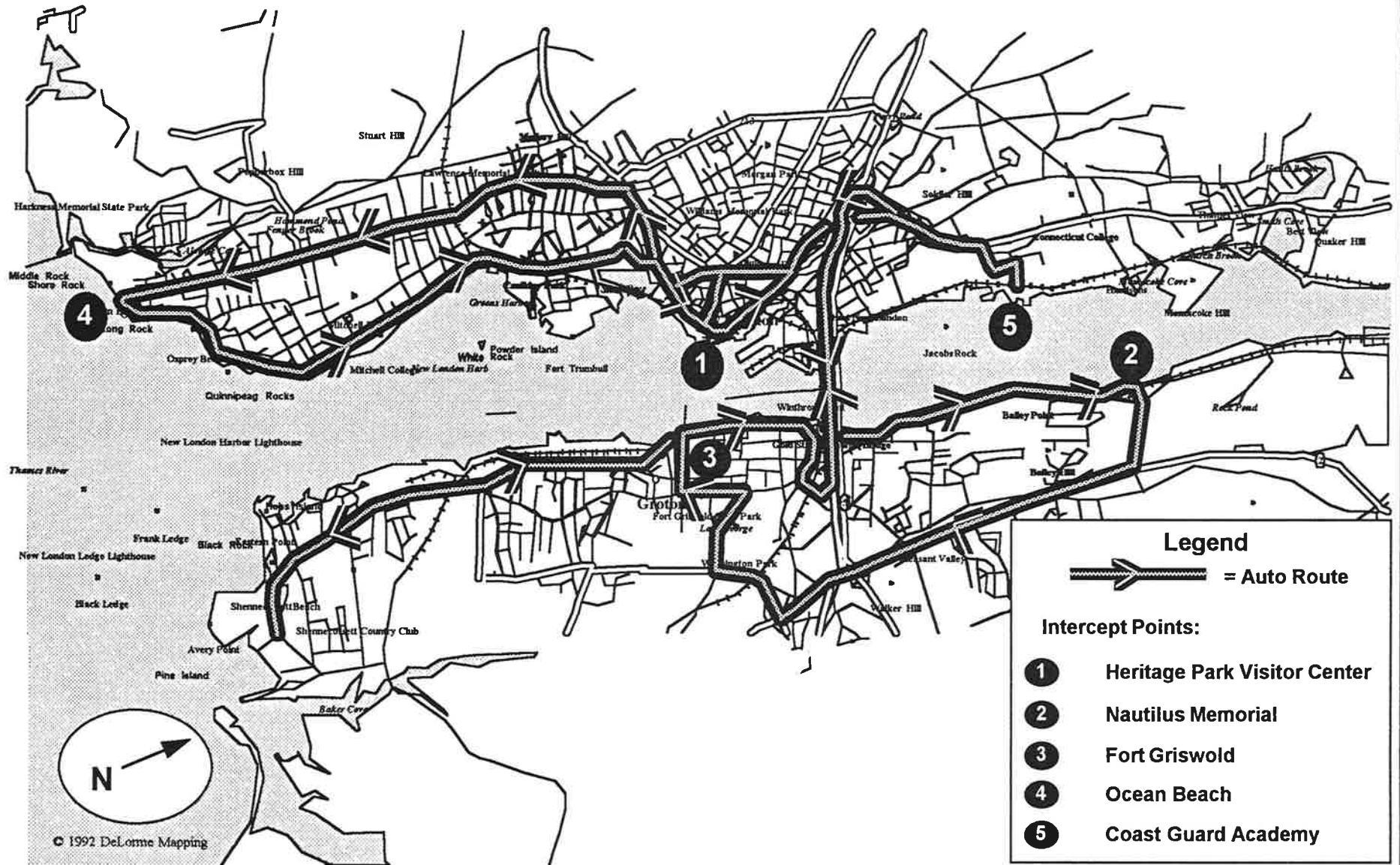
**Parking Along the Route** - Many sites, such as the Nautilus and the Visitor Center, already have parking in place. Other sites, such as Fort Griswold and the Coast Guard Academy, may have parking constraints that will need to be addressed during the implementation of the plan.

## Figure 6-1 Typical Signage Types


The following are the typical types of signs that should comprise the vehicular and pedestrian transportation system. The actual heritage park logo, signage, and placement will be determined by a design firm, working in concert with the Heritage Park leadership.



### Figure 6-2 Proposed Self-Guided Auto Route



**Legend**

 = Auto Route

**Intercept Points:**

- 1** Heritage Park Visitor Center
- 2** Nautilus Memorial
- 3** Fort Griswold
- 4** Ocean Beach
- 5** Coast Guard Academy

### Components of the Visitor Transportation System (continued)

**Pedestrian Trails.** These should be developed in conjunction with the implementation of the Visitor Center, and in conjunction with Heritage Park sites. A New London Loop and a Groton Loop should be developed. During summer months, a water shuttle should link the two areas. A possible New London Loop is shown in Figure 6-3. This would cover many of the heritage sites in New London: Shaw Mansion, Custom House, Bank Street, Railroad Station, Court House, Whale Oil Row, and other sites. Extensions could be made along Broad Street to Williams Memorial Park, down Franklin to the Hempstead Houses, and back to Bank Street, although there are currently dilapidated properties along some of this route. Figure 6-4 shows a potential pedestrian walk on the Groton shore, to include Fort Griswold State Park and Ebenezer Avery House, Thames Street, and the Copp Mansion.

**Signage** - A series of pedestrian signs, both route markers and site identification signs, will be necessary. Also, wayside signage pointing out significant sites, buildings, and events would be developed to give the visitor a full sense of the local heritage.

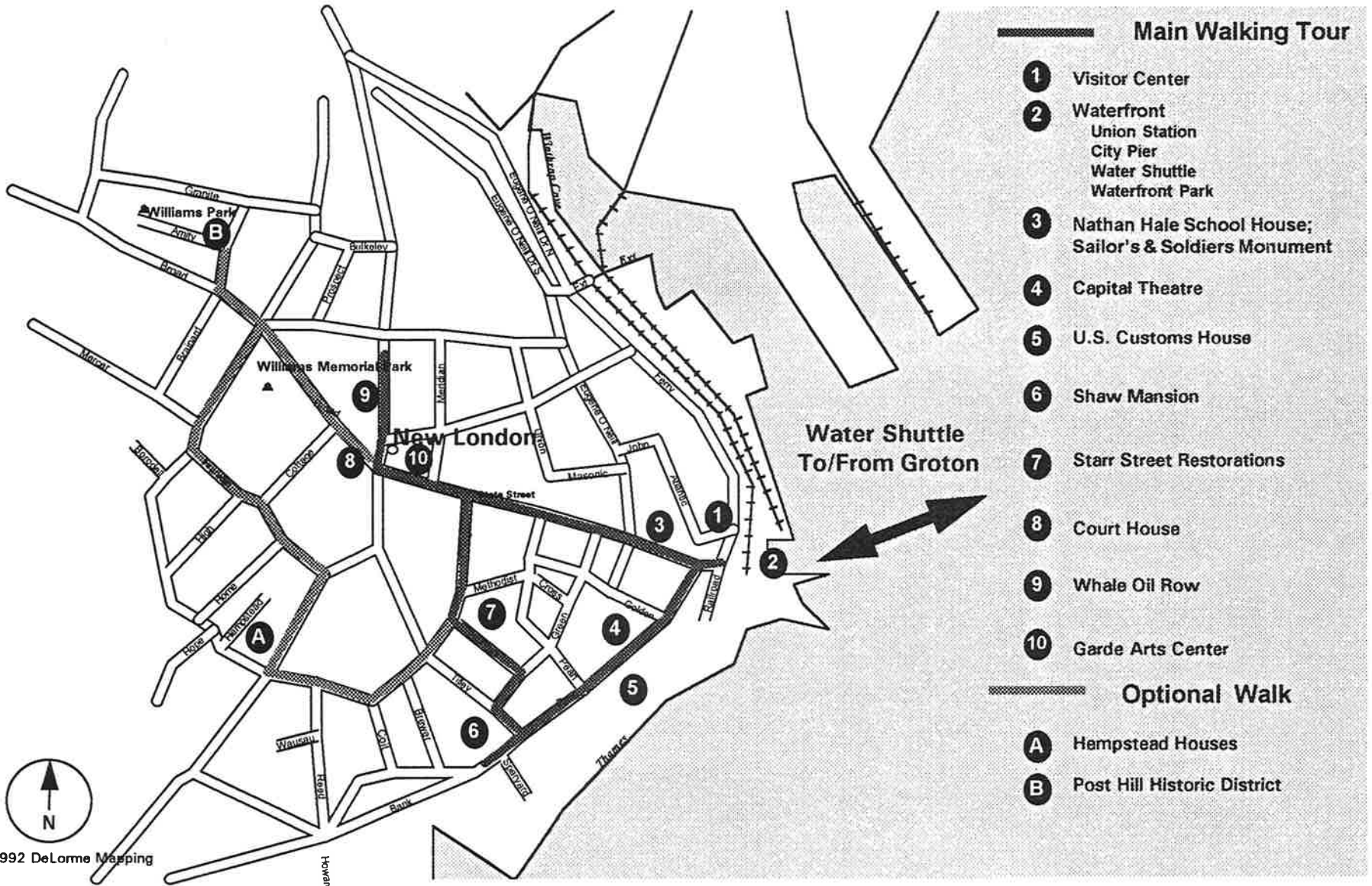
**Interpretive Map** - A interpretive map (in conjunction with the auto map) would be developed to guide the visitor to the appropriate sites (see Figure E for an example of such a map from Salem, Massachusetts).

**Mass Transit (Surface).** The site of the Visitor Center in New London is currently the site where the mass transit systems of the region converge, including the AMTRAK Station, Cross-Town Ferry, inter- and intra-city buses. This provides a unique opportunity for linking into these systems. The original plan called for a surface bus shuttle between sites, and this is still the long-term objective of the plan.

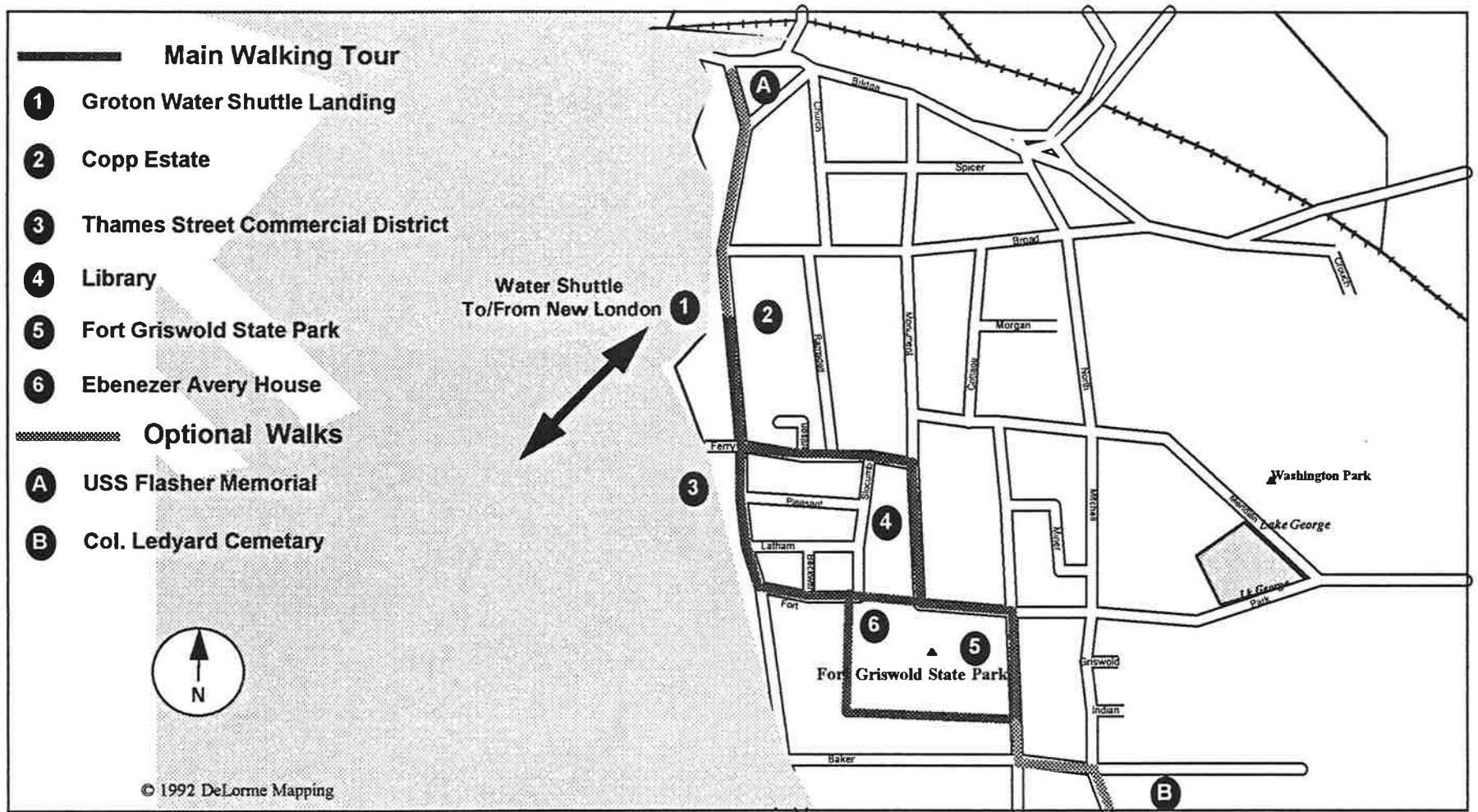
**Mass Transit (Water).** The original plan called for a water shuttle between sites on the river, and this is still a long-term objective of the plan.



**Figure 6-3  
New London Pedestrian Loop**



**Figure 6-4  
Groton Pedestrian Loop**



### Components of the Visitor Transportation System (continued)

**Other Transportation Considerations.** A number of other considerations will need to be a part of the transportation strategy for the Heritage Park. This includes the potential to integrate bikeways into the system, the ultimate management and operating structure for the transportation components, and the ownership and fee structure for the transportation components. The transportation strategy outlined in the following pages is presented in two stages. Stage 1 would represent the first years of Heritage Park development; and Stage 2 would represent a full build-out of the Heritage Park. An important role of the proposed Commission would be to deal with implementing the Transportation Strategy.

## Stage 1 Transportation Strategy

The key strategies recommended for the Stage 1 Transportation Strategy (Years 1-5) are as follows:

Walking Trails (limited Park sites). Develop the walking trails in both New London and Groton, and link them directly to the Visitor Center. Leaving the Visitor Center, you start the walking tour at the Parade, and proceed down Bank Street or to City Pier to board a shuttle boat to Groton.

Add a boat dock to the Groton side of the Park.

Cross-River Water Taxi (seasonal and events). The shuttle would be run by a private operator only in the tourist season and during special events during the off-season. The water shuttle would be an attraction unto itself, and a fee would be charged for the service.

Walking/Water Tours.

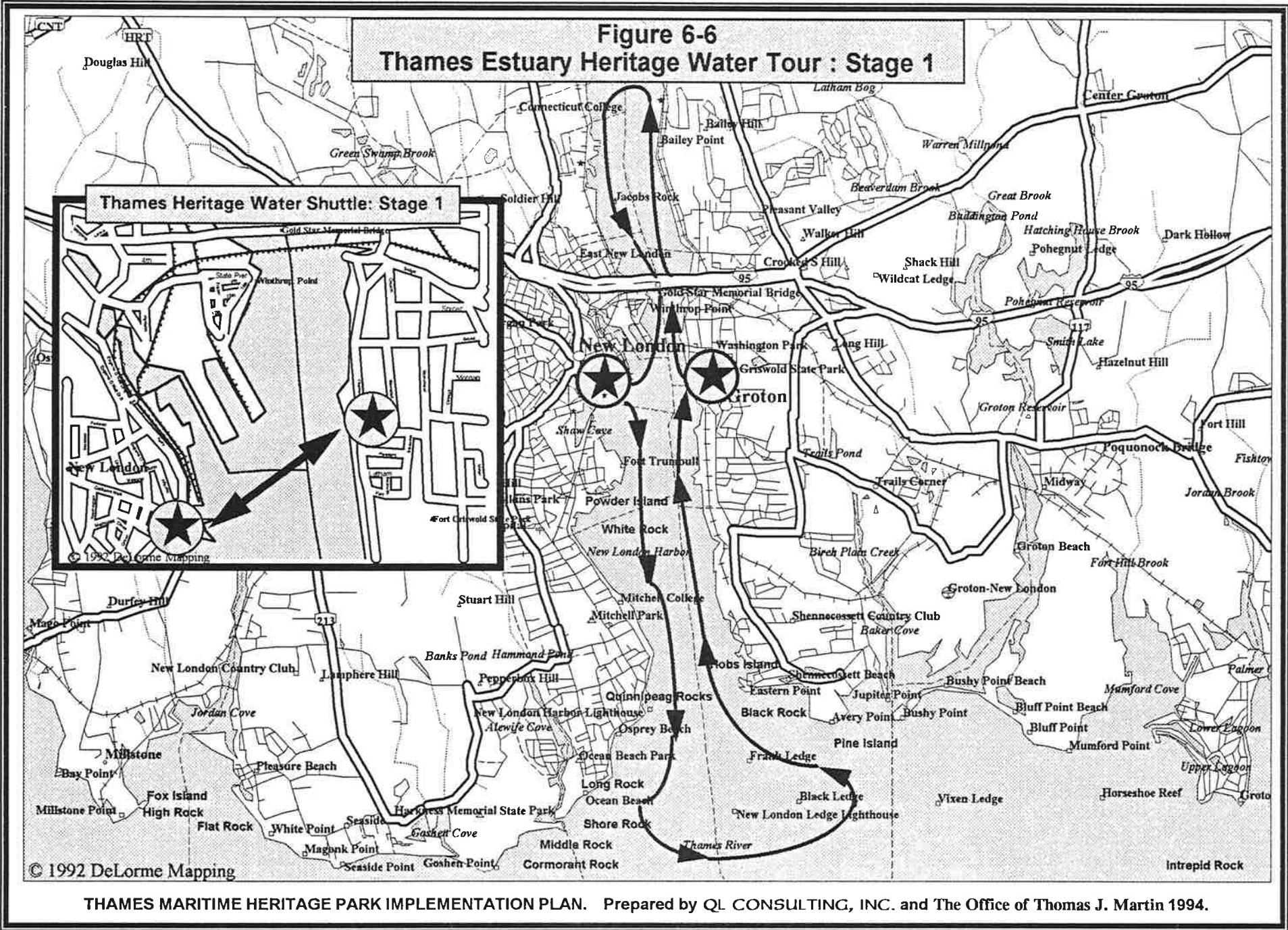
Private Tour Boats (seasonal and events). The plan encourages the continuation of private operators from City Pier in New London and from the proposed boat dock in Groton.

Marked Auto Route. Encompasses full project area of the Park -

Utilize Existing Major Intercept Points. Nautilus, Fort Griswold, Visitor Center, Ocean Beach.

No Scheduled Visitor Bus Transportation. In the early phases of the plan, no scheduled visitor bus transportation would be provided. As demand grows, this would be re-evaluated.

Private Bus Tours. On demand pre-arranged. The tour bus market should be encouraged as this is a growing segment of travel.





## Stage 2 Transportation Strategy

The additional key strategies recommended for the Stage 2 Transportation Strategy (Years 5-10) are:

**Scheduled Visitor Bus Transportation in Summer Months as Volume Grows.** When the attendance of the Park reaches a critical mass of visitors (through enhanced programming, attractions development, completion of the visitor center, etc.) then scheduled bus service would be initiated. This service could be run by a number of potential vendors who would be invited to submit proposals to provide such service.

**Additional Landings for Water Transportation System.** As with the bus service, the water shuttle would be expanded as the critical mass of visitors is achieved. Some of these landings (such as the Coast Guard Academy) would require significant advance planning and negotiation to implement. Thus, this issue should be on the early agenda for the heritage park, with anticipation of long term implementation.

**Expanded Intercept Points.** As the park matures, and smaller attractions become better able to host a larger number of visitors, the intercept points for the park would be expanded to include those additional sites. This would be an ongoing planning and evaluation process for the heritage park management.

