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Proposal to Amke to Norwich
(East Green Valley)

NEW LONDON/NORWICH/GROTON - HERITAGE PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

I. PROJECT SPONSORS AND CONTACT PERSONS

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II. LOCATION OF PROJECT AND NARRATIVE

The cities of New London, Norwich, Groton and the Town of Groton have embarked on tourism development efforts that focus on the rich heritage of southeastern Connecticut. In 1988, the Connecticut State Legislature created a state-wide Heritage Park System. The Thames River Maritime Heritage Park was established as the model study site and \$2.6 million in bonding funds for the development of the park was approved in October 1990. The Thames River Maritime Heritage Park (the Park), similar to Boston's Freedom Trail, is comprised of historic sites in the City of New London, City of Groton and Town of Groton. A visitors center in downtown New London will be the focal point of the Park, attracting tourists and residents year-round.

Legislation creating a National Heritage Corridor in the Quinebaug and Shetucket River Valleys, approved by the House of Representatives in 1992, is now pending final approval by the Senate. The proposed Corridor would extend from the City of Norwich, north to the Massachusetts State line, and include historic resources from Indian archeological remains through the industrial revolution. The linear heritage park system along the Yantic River is currently being constructed in Norwich as part of this Heritage Corridor. Funded with \$507,000 in Federal ISTEA monies, approximately \$50,000 in state funds and over \$50,000 in local funds, to date, the Norwich Heritage Corridor will be a unique, recreational, and educational tourist attraction for this region.

Linking this region's rich Maritime Heritage with its Indian and Industrial Heritage will not only provide a comprehensive glimpse at our past, but offers a unique tourist attraction which complements others in the region. The Arthur D. Little study recommends establishing new tourist attractions and "establishing regional programming facilities to link tourism and recreational assets, for example, through the Thames River Maritime Heritage Park." The funds already committed to the construction of the Park are insufficient to establish a "major tourist attraction". The Arthur D. Little study also recommends building upon the current plans for the Park in an effort to establish an additional major attraction to round out the appeal of the region for family vacationing. Perhaps most significantly, the Arthur D. Little study recommends "establishment of the Thames River Maritime Heritage Park system starting in New London and extending up through the Thames River Valley (building upon existing ideas and plans)."

The strategic thrust of this proposal for funds through the Economic Development Act is to transform the region into a year-round destination resort, expand the overall level of services and enhance the quality of travel and leisure business. "By

combining the Thames River Maritime Heritage Park and the Norwich Heritage Corridor, consumers will be provided, in one general area, with a sufficient number and variety of high quality leisure and recreational offerings for the whole family." Southeastern Connecticut is well positioned to attract short break visitors from the nation's largest market - the roughly 27 million residents living in the metropolitan New York/Boston corridor.

The May/June 1993 issue of "History News", a publication of the American Association of State and Local History, indicates that heritage and cultural tourism is emerging as the fastest growing segment of the travel and tourism industry. If southeastern Connecticut is to be part of this growing market, we will need to strengthen the linkages between all of the existing and planned facilities.

According to Economic Research Associates, the Park is scheduled to draw between 180,000 and 230,000 people per year. This number will grow with the addition of the Norwich Heritage Corridor component.

As has been stated before, funds available for the construction and development of the Thames River Maritime Heritage Park and the development of the Norwich Heritage Corridor are not sufficient to create a "major tourist attraction". An additional \$5,655,000 is needed to fund the completion of the central visitors center in New London, construction of waterfront improvements in New London, Groton and Norwich, provision of a coordinated sign system in all 3 communities and visitor centers equipped with bathrooms and information and ticket sales facilities in Norwich and Groton. These funds would be matched by existing \$2.6 million bonding appropriation to be used for physical improvements in the Park, \$507,000 in ISTEPA funding and \$100,000 in State and Local dollars. The linkage between the Park and Norwich would be established by the development of a tour boat that would link both sites. Funds would be used to establish proper docking facilities in all communities and to underwrite the purchase of an appropriate vessel.

By linking the Norwich and Thames River Heritage Park projects, a critical mass will be established that will draw significantly more visitors into the system. The project will promote the diversification of the southeastern Connecticut economy, which is overdependent on the defense and related industries. In addition, it will promote community conservation, development and improvement of the quality of life for urban residents of the state.

The expected economic impact of this project is as follows: creation of 260-300 permanent jobs, and direct visitor spending of \$8.5 to \$10 million. Using a multiplier of 2.2 (based on U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis figures) the dollar value of expenditures would increase to \$18.7 to \$22 million and support a payroll in the neighborhood of \$5 million. The objective of this project to increase visitation to the total park system in New London, Groton and Norwich, so that each of the component parks see an increase in visitors, as well as encourages visitors to stay overnight. This substantially multiplies the impact throughout the region, and helps to support other attractions. For instance, by increasing the critical mass of the attractions in the region, we encourage an additional over night stay of 100,000 of the current pass-through or day trip visitors to the region, another \$7 million in visitor spending would result. This is the unique role that this project plays in helping to diversify the regional economy and strengthen the ability of the region to attract tourists.

THAMES RIVER HERITAGE PARK (NEW LONDON COMPONENT TOTAL COST \$2.3 MILLION)

A. ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VISITORS CENTER AND EXHIBITS - \$1,800,000

Richard Sharpe Associates of Norwich has prepared preliminary design of the Visitors Center, which is being financed as part of \$2.6 million State bond package. In addition, a consultant has been hired to make recommendations concerning the programming and exhibit space requirements. Based on the preliminary architectural designs and the recommendations from the programming consultant, there is a \$1.8 million shortfall for the construction of the Visitors Center building and the provision of appropriate exhibits.

B. WATERFRONT IMPROVEMENTS - \$500,000

The City of New London currently owns land north of City Pier and is negotiating for the purchase of land from Amtrak south of City Pier. Currently the property is in general state of disrepair and used for parking. Funds will be used to provide landscaping, lighting, walkways and amenities to turn this property into a park like setting. This area is important to the function of the Heritage Park as it serves as the water side link to the Visitors Center and the operation center for the tour boat.

HERITAGE PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (GROTON COMPONENT TOTAL COST \$1,800,000)

Narrative Description of Project

A. IMPROVEMENTS TO FORT GRISWOLD STATE PARK (Total: \$500,000)

Fort Griswold will be the Heritage Park's principal attraction in the City of Groton. Currently, annual attendance at this site is approximately 40,000 people, with an additional 30,000 - 40,000 people at the Fort site for an annual fireworks display. Improvements are needed to repair, protect and enhance this attraction.

Exterior Exhibits

Repair of earthworks, stone work and walkways, creation of a self-guided visitor tour using interpretive markers - \$150,000

Interior Exhibits

Upgrade and renovate the interior of the Monument House Museum to include enhanced interpretive exhibits - \$350,000

B. PURCHASE OF THE ANNA WARNER BAILEY HOUSE (Total: \$500,000)

This large Georgian colonial style home, located at the corner of Thames Street and Broad Street, was owned by "Mother Bailey," a National heroine from the War of 1812. The house was also used as a tavern, a post office and was visited by Monroe, Jackson, Van Buren and Lafayette. The house is within walking distance of the Avery/Copp House and the proposed site of the Groton pier/shuttle launch. It's use as a working tavern and/or museum would be an added attraction to Thames Street and the Heritage Park.

Purchase

Purchase of house and lot (including a large area suitable for parking - \$150,000

Endowment

Endowment for possible conveyance to the Antiquarian & Landmarks Society for repair, maintenance, renovation and/or administration - \$350,000 *improvements, park, AOA*

C. THAMES STREET • STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (Total: \$200,000)

The City of Groton has conducted two planning related studies concerning Thames Street over the last 10+ years. (Thames Street Study, October 1982 by Lane, Frenchmen & Associates and Thames Street Beautification Program, April

1990 by BSC Group.) Both of these studies recommend significant streetscape improvements to Thames Street including creation and improvements of waterfront public access points, roadway improvements, landscaping, etc. Since the 1990 study, the City has been successful in securing a number of Transportation Enhancement Fund grant awards to undertake intersection improvements at Thames Street with School Street, Pleasant Street and Latham Street.

The purpose of this request is to provide funds for "in-fill" improvements, and for improvements at both the northern and southern "gateways" to Thames Street. Specifically funds will be used for landscaping and other streetscape amenities in the vicinity of the Flasher Memorial; the former State Police Barracks; the former Spicer Oil Tank Farm and office building; in the vicinity of the former Hewes-Sweet Office Building; along the frontage of the Lorelei Restaurant site and Avery/Copp Estate; installation of landscaping, pathway and seating on the State owned Fort Street Parklet; landscape screening adjacent to the City of Groton Waste Water Treatment Facility; and landscaping and pedestrian access improvements along the frontage of Waste Water Treatment Facility and the former Bootlegger Restaurant site (Scheetz property.)

D. WATERFRONT LAND ACQUISITION AND IMPROVEMENTS
(Total: \$350,000)

Acquisition of two properties directly across the street from the Avery Copp Estate and just north of the Lorelei Restaurant site. These two properties contain approximately .40 acres of land and have 150 linear feet of water frontage along the Thames River.

Acquisition

These properties are owned by Belden Copp, who is one of the owners of the Avery Copp Estate prior to its being obtained by the Antiquarian and Landmarks Trust. The properties had been purchased by Mr. Copp, in August of 1982 in an effort to preserve the vistas from the Avery Copp Estate. It is anticipated that these properties would be purchased with easements and restrictions concerning the placement of structures, so as to ensure the visual integrity of the estate. Acquisition cost - \$200,000

Improvements

Originally three structures were located on these two properties. Recently two of the structures, due to their condition were removed. Improvements to the property includes securing and/or removing the third house; the installation of landscaping, pathways and a small parking

area that would be integrated with the Lorelei site; along with improvements to the waterfront. It is anticipated that the Groton dock, which will link Groton and the City of New London will be located either along the Lorelei frontage and/or the Copp property frontage. Additional improvements to the waterfront including the dock will be paid for out of the original Heritage Park funding allocation. - \$150,000

E. COPP ESTATE/VISITORS CENTER (Total: \$250,000)

Recently, the Avery Copp Estate was acquired by the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society. In addition to the main structure, a 2,200 square foot carriage house is located at street level at the southern end of the site. It is envisioned that this structure will be Groton Visitor's Center to Heritage Park. Renovation cost, exhibitry cost, and ADA access improvements. Total cost - \$250,000

NEW LONDON/NORWICH/GROTON • HERITAGE PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
Project Summary

New London

• Visitors Center/Additional Appropriating	\$1,800,000
• Waterfront Improvements	500,000
Subtotal:	<u>\$2,300,000</u>

Norwich

• Tourist Booth/Bathrooms	\$ 400,000
• Fencing (600 linear feet)	45,000
• Dock Improvements	200,000 (est)
• Engineering	100,000
• Gates x 2 (easterly end of park)	30,000
• Signage	75,000
• Parking Improvements	200,000
• ADA Improvements	150,000
Subtotal:	<u>\$1,200,000</u>

Groton

• Improvements to Fort Griswold State Park	\$ 500,000
• Anna Warner Bailey House	500,000
• Thames Street Streetscape Improvements	200,000
• Waterfront Land Acquisition & Improvements	350,000
• Avery Copp Estate/Visitors Center	250,000
Subtotal:	<u>\$1,800,000</u>

Miscellaneous

• Project Signage	\$ 100,000
• New London Ledge Lighthouse Improvements	125,000
• Purchase of Passenger Launch/Boat	130,000
Subtotal:	<u>\$ 355,000</u>

TOTAL:

\$5,655,000