



Harborside Trail

Overview

Vision

The Harborside Trail will connect the mouth of the West River to Lighthouse Point following closely the shoreline of New Haven Harbor. The trail will be an off-road paved path wherever existing conditions permit. The trail will enhance public access to the shoreline of New Haven Harbor. It will contribute, along with other ongoing projects, to reconnect the public to the City's waterfront. The trail will connect the harbor's varied and diverse water-dependant commercial and industrial facilities, cultural destinations, and natural environments.

Key Points

- **Enhance public access to the waterfront of New Haven Harbor. Link disparate and disjointed portions of the shoreline and reconnect the harbor with the rest of the City.**
- **Create a unifying identity for the Harbor.**

Existing Conditions

HT -1 : West Haven Town Line – Long Wharf Park

The area east of the Kimberly Avenue Bridge over the West River is dominated by a space-intensive highway ramp. South of the highway ramps, there is a wide ribbon of undeveloped land with harbor frontage, which is informally used as a trail. Going east, City Point, the neighborhood around Sea Street, Howard Avenue and Water Street is predominantly residential (single family structures) with some marine-themed commercial uses along the shoreline side of Water Street. The neighborhood is one of the City's Local Historic Districts. At the eastern end of City Point, the new Sound School facility is complete. The site features harbor-orientated amenities (a pier and boardwalk) that promote a visual connection to the surrounding water. West of the Sound School is Bayview Park, which is sliced by I-95. North of the Sound School, an access road leads to a WPCA pumping station. A paved pedestrian path leads from the pumping station to the New Haven Land Trust's 'Long Wharf Nature Preserve'. The Preserve has many small meandering dirt paths as well as interpretive signage.



(left) Small public beach along south side of Water Street, City Point Neighborhood.
 (right) Pier and boardwalk at new Sound School Facility, City Point Neighborhood.

Land Ownership

Public:

- State: -(I-95/Ella T. Grasso Blvd ramps and surrounding area)
- City: -Sound School
 - Bayview Park
 - Public access to the harbor at a postage-stamp size beach along Water Street.

Private:

- New Haven Land Trust's 'Long Wharf Nature Preserve'

-The properties along Sea Street and Water Street, with the exception of those mentioned above, are privately held.

Connections

- Bayview Park
- Sound School – Safe routes to school
- West Haven

Opportunities

- ConnDOT project #92-522: Interstate 95 Bridge over West River

HT – 2: Long Wharf Park – Canal Dock

Northeast of the Long Wharf Nature Preserve is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Long Wharf) Park. The park is located on the long, thin ribbon of land between Long Wharf Drive and the shoreline of the harbor. The park features a veterans memorial at its southern end, park furniture at various locations, an uninterrupted view of the harbor, and a narrow trail for walking and biking. There is also an information booth, viewable from I-95, that is indefinitely closed and a roadside parking area used by itinerant vendors, mostly food service. North of the park is the historic Pier at Long Wharf, home to New Haven's destination schooners: the Amistad and the Quinnipiack. North of the Pier at Long Wharf is the site of the proposed Canal Dock Boathouse and festival spaces. At the intersection of Canal Dock Road and Long Wharf Drive is the southern terminus of the Vision Trail to downtown.



(left) Looking south near the Pier at Long Wharf.

(right) The historic Pier at Long Wharf, home to the schooners Amistad and Quinnipiack.

Land Ownership

Public

- City: -Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Long Wharf) Park.
- Pier at Long Wharf
- Parcel "H" (proposed site of Canal Dock Boathouse)

Connections

- Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Long Wharf) Park
- Vision Trail

Opportunities

- Canal Dock Development
- ConnDOT's New Haven Harbor Access Study

HT – 3: Canal Dock – Tomlinson Bridge

Going north from the Canal Dock, Belle Dock, the land south and east of Long Wharf Drive, contains a restaurant, large office complex, and a petroleum terminal with an associated deep slip. Beginning at the restaurant going east towards the office complex, there is public access to the shoreline along a well-developed waterfront trail. The trail ends at the southeastern edge of the office complex's property. The petroleum terminal consists of a slip for ocean going ships and a large tank farm, which dominates the property. North and west of Long Wharf Drive are an



(left) Looking north from Parcel "H" towards the existing well-developed trail section around the Rusty Scupper Restaurant
(right) Existing well-developed trail section along the waterfront through the Long Wharf Maritime Center

SBC facility and the 'Sports Haven' complex used for off-track betting and as a terminal for CT Limousine. There is a large surface parking lot associated with Sports Haven. North of Forbes Avenue is a State-owned property on which the new "Q" will be constructed. Forbes Avenue leads to the Tomlinson Bridge over the Quinnipiac River.

Land Ownership

Public

State: -Property east of railroad tracks, north of Forbes Avenue

City: -Retained public access rights along shoreline of Rusty Scupper Restaurant, Long Wharf Maritime Center

-Parcel along shoreline in between maritime center, petroleum terminal

Private

-All other properties in this area are privately held.

Connections

-Existing, well-developed public access at Rusty Scupper Restaurant, Long Wharf Maritime Center.

Opportunities

-Proposed reuse of the Williams tank farm

HT – 4: Tomlinson Bridge – East Shore Park

This area contains the bulk of New Haven's port facilities as well as an energy generating plant. The area is predominantly industrial and commercial in character and is subject to heavy truck movements. The largest commodities handled at the port are petroleum products followed by a variety of break-bulk category products and some merchandise. The most apparent feature of the port is its many petroleum storage tanks. In 2003, the City established a Port Authority to facilitate a partnership between the City and port operators on a variety of port enhancement efforts. As part of ConnDOT's planned improvements to I-95 in the area, several land takings will reduce the amount of storage space available to the port operator. I-95's Stiles Street Interchange will also be modified.

East Shore Parkway, which is distinguished by its terminal vista (looking north) of the East Rock Monument, leads south to the park. East Shore Parkway is currently licensed to certain port operators and used for storage. The Port Authority has been tasked with determining a trail route from Forbes Avenue to East Shore Park. East Shore Park includes pedestrian trails, maintained lawns, playing fields and access to the shore. Views of the harbor are somewhat constrained by overgrowth and the beach is not particularly inviting due to erosion and lack of maintenance. Just south of the park is a US Coast Guard facility. The eastern portion of Woodward Avenue between Fort Hale Road and Pope Street is privately held with the exception of a parcel of City-owned land near the intersection of Woodward and Fort Hale.



Looking north along East Shore Parkway from East Shore Park

Land Ownership

Public

- City: -East Shore Parkway (currently leased to the port operator)
- East Shore Park
- Federal: - US Coast Guard Facility

Private

-The properties in this area are, in general, privately held.

Opportunities

-Upcoming port land use study.

HT – 5: East Shore Park – Morris Cove Sea Wall

South of the US Coast Guard Facility is the Nathan Hale Park, which is generally divided into two sections. In the northern portion of the park are the remnants of Black Rock Fort and Fort Nathan Hale. Also in this section of park are installations describing the history of the fortifications and the harbor’s oyster fishery as well as several veterans memorials. South of the forts is a small, active US Naval Reserve base. Access to the shoreline is available along a beach and fishing pier to the west of the Naval Reserve base. A pedestrian trail begins here and follows the shoreline up and over a bluff to a Morris Cove Sea Wall. The trail uses stairs to get up and down the hill, precluding wheeled vehicles (bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers) from access. South of the Naval Reserve base is the other section of Nathan Hale Park. Fort Hale Park Road cuts through the park on the north and east sides and gives access to the parking lots located within the park. The Morris Cove Sea Wall, also known as the Pardee Sea Wall Parkway, is a narrow park with a pedestrian/bicycle trail, unobstructed views of the harbor and Morris Cove, and park furniture.



(left) Looking north along a section of informal trail in the vicinity of the Naval Reserve Base (fence at right)
 (right) Looking south along the Morris Cove Sea Wall towards Morris Cove

Land Ownership:

Public

- City: -Nathan Hale Park
- Morris Cove Sea Wall

Connections

- Nathan Hale Park
- Morris Cove Sea Wall
- Nathan Hale School – Safe routes to school.

Opportunities

- City Engineer plans improvements to the Morris Cove Sea Wall and erosion control in East Shore Park.

HT – 6: Morris Cove Sea Wall - Lighthouse Point

Between the Morris Cove Sea Wall and Lighthouse Point Park, access to the shoreline is almost entirely privately held. South and east of the Sea Wall is a residential area composed generally of single-family houses along with a handful of commercial establishments. Streets in the area tend to be narrow but include sidewalks. Around the intersection of Cove Street and Lighthouse Street are two small City parks: Jerry Juliano playground and Cove Street right-of-way near the shoreline. Going south, Lighthouse Point Park, located at the southern tip of New Haven's East Shore, features an assortment of recreational activities including sea swimming, picnicking, boating, as well as an historic lighthouse, carousel, and broad views of the harbor. The park is quite popular for recreation.



(left) Looking north along Lighthouse Road. This streetscape is typical of the East Shore.
(right) Looking south towards the Carousel and beach at Lighthouse Point Park

Land Ownership:

Public

- City: -Lighthouse Point Park
- Cove Street Right-of-Way
- Jerry Juliano Playground

Private

-With the exception of the above mentioned parks, property in this area, including access to the shoreline, is privately held

Connections

- Lighthouse Point Park
- Cove Street Right-of-Way
- Jerry Juliano Playground.

Opportunities

-Parks Department plans improvements to Lighthouse Point Park

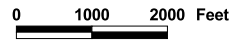


New Haven Greenways & Trails Harborside

City of New Haven John DeStefano Jr., Mayor

Prepared by the New Haven City Plan Department, August 2003

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Alignment & Major Issues

HT – 1: West Haven Town Line – Long Wharf Park

Alignment

Beginning at the Kimberly Avenue Bridge, an off road paved path will proceed east, to the south of the I-95/Ella T. Grasso Boulevard ramps. At the intersection of the Boulevard and Harbour Close, the trail will become an on-road shared path until the Sea Street-Howard Avenue intersection. At the intersection, the trail will split. The primary through trail will proceed east along Sea Street as a shared on-road path. The secondary trail will proceed south along Howard Avenue and then northeast along Water Street as a shared on road path. The split trail sections will meet again at the new Sound School facility. Share-the-Streets solutions for the trail are applicable here and consistent with the City's efforts to improve its streets. At the Sound School, the trail will proceed north through the parking lot, along a service road used to access the WPCA Pumping Station to a small existing off-road paved path and into the Long Wharf Nature Preserve. The trail will then turn towards the northeast and proceed through the Long Wharf Nature Preserve as an off road paved path closely paralleling the I-95 right-of-way so as to minimize the impacts upon the nature preserve. The trail will emerge from the Nature Preserve near the location of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Major Issues

-Kimberly Avenue Bridge over the West River. Any design for a new West River crossing must include adequate provision to carry the greenway as an off-road trail, not as a sidewalk. The bridge is a vital link for the larger, multi-town Harbor Greenway proposed by SCRCOG. SCRCOG's Harborside Trail Plan calls the current bridge "the antithesis of pedestrian friendly" and rightly so.



From the northeast, looking onto the Kimberly Avenue Bridge over the West River.

-Safety improvements in the vicinity of I-95 and its interchanges with Kimberly Avenue and the Boulevard. Including the paving of this short section of trail in the much larger I-95 improvements in the area is a priority. Bollards at trail heads and improved guardrails or fencing would enhance safety of trail and enforce the separation of potential trail users and autos.

-Sea Street-Howard Avenue Intersection. Appropriate bicycle/pedestrian treatment will be needed, especially if a proposed traffic circle is built.

HT – 2: Long Wharf Park – Canal Dock

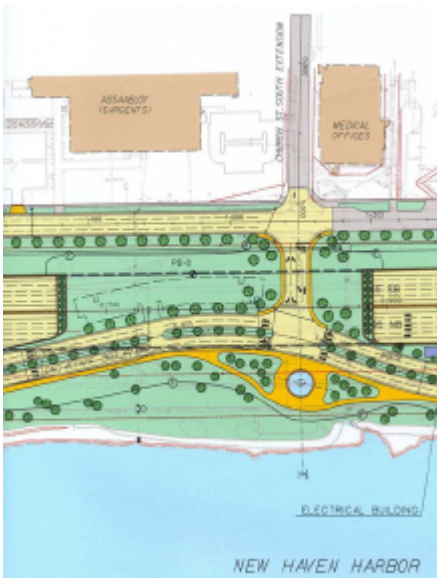
Alignment

The trail will follow the existing alignment through Long Wharf Park with minor changes, where needed. Special attention should be paid to the locations such as the Visitors Center and the Pier at Long Wharf where the trail becomes marginalized for car parking. Provision for the trail should be included as part of the Canal Dock project.

Major Issues

-Connection to Vision Trail. The juncture of the Vision Trail/Farmington Canal Greenway and the Harborside Trail is an important node in the City's Greenway system. A better aesthetic connection at this juncture is desirable. The City has persuaded ConnDOT to apply special design standards to side elevations of I-95's bridge over Canal Dock Road. Safety for trail users crossing Long Wharf Drive is also important. These concerns could be addressed with a better bicycle/pedestrian treatment at the intersection possibly including a raised crosswalk, a pedestrian cycle at the traffic signal, and improved signage.

-Trail Condition. The existing trail is narrow in sections and should be widened to better accommodate the diverse users along the trails (strollers, joggers, bikers). This could be elegantly accomplished by placing crushed stone or shells as a shoulder to the existing trail. Minor alignment changes to make the path less circuitous at points would also be helpful. Improvements to Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Long Wharf) Park are included in ConnDOT's Harbor Access Study.



(left) Plan view of ConnDOT Harbor Access Study proposed improvements to Long Wharf Park in the vicinity of Church Street South and Sargent Drive.

(right) From the Canal Dock site, looking across Long Wharf Drive at the southern terminus of the Vision Trail to Downtown

HT – 3: Canal Dock – Tomlinson Bridge

Alignment

North of the Canal Dock project site, the alignment becomes somewhat complicated and is dependent on other, unrelated on-going and proposed projects. Unfortunately, the pedestrian and bicycle routes must be split to safely accommodate each. Pedestrians will use the existing trail around the Rusty Scupper Restaurant and Long Wharf Maritime Center, which is more than adequate for walking and provides dramatic views of the harbor. Unfortunately, the trail is narrow in places, contains sharp curves without much visibility, uses a stairway to make an elevation change, and is clogged by park furniture in places. Bicyclists will have to use an alternate route as a result. A shared on-road path along Long Wharf Drive is one option. An alternative would be for one of the sidewalks along Long Wharf Drive to be widened and signed for exclusive bicycle use. Another alternative might be to obtain a public access easement through a portion of underutilized land at the SBC or Sports Haven sites. Further analysis is required.

Major Issues

-Existing public access is inadequate for bicycles. Although the trail around the Rusty Scupper Restaurant and Long Wharf Maritime Center is an excellent example of a developed trail section in a non-park setting, it is inadequately designed to accommodate bicycles. The trail is narrow, contains various street furniture, and uses a series of steps to make an elevation change. Bicycle users will have to use an alternate route or else dismount and walk their bicycles.

-Accommodating bicycles from Canal Dock to the Tomlinson Bridge. There are no good alternatives to allow bicycles safe passage between these two locations. The existing trail is inadequate and Long Wharf Drive is not bicycle friendly. An off-street solution would be highly desirable. Further, more in depth study is needed. Any efforts to provide for the trail in this area is only made more difficult by the upcoming replacement of the Q-bridge and rebuilding of the I-95/I-91/CT 34 interchange.



Stairs, narrow passages, and street furniture constrict safe bicycle access at Rusty Scupper Restaurant (left) and Long Wharf Maritime Center (right).



Looking northeast along Long Wharf Drive in the vicinity of the Maritime Center. Finding a good route for bicycles through this area is key.

HT – 4: Tomlinson Bridge – East Shore Park

Alignment

Because of the nature of the commercial and industrial activities at the Port of New Haven, routing the trail through this area may be more difficult. The upcoming port land use study provides the best opportunity to promote a more efficient use of the scarce available land and provide for a safe route on a dedicated right-of-way for the trail. The SCRCOG Harborside Trail Plan proposes a lightweight pedestrian bridge to carry the trail over Alabama Street, which would enhance the port operator's storage abilities and the safety of potential trail users as well as allowing potential trail users a vantage point from which to observe the operations of the port.

Major Issues

- **Advocate for share-the-streets or trail signage on Route 1.** Route 1 (Forbes Avenue) is a state road. This route is shown on the statewide bicycle plan and should be marked accordingly.

-**Make provision for trail in upcoming port land use study.** Existing pedestrian and bicycle access in this area is difficult, owing to the nature of activities that occur at the port. Although routing the trail along existing East Shore Parkway would be optimal, a new route incorporating some of the design elements of East Shore Parkway may be the best solution for both the port operator and potential trail users. Accommodating the trail through this difficult stretch must not be forgotten in the face of competing interests for the scarce available land in the area.

-**Security concerns around the port.** In light of recent national and international events, port security is an issue, which must be addressed. Working with the newly created Port Authority provides the best opportunity to anticipate and address any potential security concerns.

-**Improving the waterfront trail and accompanying vistas.** Improvements to mitigate flooding and drainage concerns, forestall erosion, and provide a better visual connection to the harbor are all important issues for the pedestrian portion of the trail through the park

HT – 5: East Shore Park – Morris Cove Sea Wall

Alignment

Through East Shore Park, the bicycle portion of the trail will follow the existing Park Service Road to Fort Hale Road. Though lightly traveled, an appropriate share-the-streets solution is applicable to the Park Service Road and consistent with the City's efforts to improve its streets. An enhanced waterside path will accommodate the pedestrian portion of the trail south along the perimeter of the park. After crossing Fort Hale Road, the trail will proceed through a small City-owned parcel east of Woodward Avenue, then skirt the eastern portion of the Coast Guard Station across vacant areas remote from the active station. In light of national security concerns, an alternative route would be a shared on-road route along Woodward Avenue to Nathan Hale Park.

Once in the park, the trail can follow existing pedestrian trails south or alternatively proceed directly east to the waterfront and then south along the shore along a new section. The SCRCOG Harborside Trail Plan goes into great detail about alternatives available through the northern section of Nathan Hale Park. Passing the Naval Reserve Base at the shoreline along existing public access, the wheeled and pedestrian portions of the trail will have to divide. The existing trail along the bluffs makes steep elevation changes with stairs and is not accessible to wheeled vehicles. Wheeled vehicles could follow Woodward Avenue south to Townsend Avenue and meet the pedestrian section of the trail again at the northern end of the Morris Cove Sea Wall. An appropriate share-the-streets solution is applicable to this section of trail and consistent with the City's efforts to improve its streets.

Major Issues

-Security concerns in the vicinity of the Federal installations. The trail will potentially pass in close proximity to both the Coast Guard Station and the Naval Reserve Base. Working with the administration of these facilities provides the best opportunity to find a solution for trail routing and to anticipate and address any potential security concerns.

-Accommodating bicycles atop bluffs at Nathan Hale Park. Though dramatic, the trail conditions atop the bluffs (steep elevation changes, stairs) make this section of trail inaccessible

to trail users on wheels. A series of ramps would allow wheels to mount the bluffs but would degrade the natural setting, which makes the bluffs an asset in the first place. On-road alternatives may be tenuous because of the limited width of the roadways.

-Stairs at the Morris Cove Sea Wall. Stairs to access the water make the existing trail circuitous and more difficult to navigate for bicycles. Minor improvements (moving park furniture, limited new pavement) would improve bicycle accessibility.



(left) Stairs up the bluff at Nathan Hale Park

(right) Stairs down to the waterfront at the Morris Cove Sea Wall make the bicycle route more circuitous.

HT – 6: Morris Cove Sea Wall – Lighthouse Point Park

Alignment

The trail will follow the existing walkway atop the Morris Cove Sea Wall. Continuing south, the trail will migrate onto Townsend Avenue and then Lighthouse Road as an on-road shared path. A share-the-streets solution is applicable to this section of trail and consistent with the City's effort to improve its streets. At the southern end of Lighthouse Road is Lighthouse Point Park, which contains service roads and trails, which are accessible to potential trail users.

Major Issues

-Trail barriers at Lighthouse Point. The current haphazard placement of large boulders and a chain restrict bicycle and pedestrian access to the main vehicle roadway. Replacing the current barrier with bollards would permit easy bicycle and pedestrian access and restrict auto access.



A chain and boulders restrict vehicle access and make pedestrian and bicycle access unnecessarily difficult.

Directions and Priorities

Work with ConnDOT towards project designs that incorporate and enhance the Harborside Trail.

-The reconstruction of Kimberly Avenue Bridge must include a dedicated roadway section for the trail that is separated from vehicular traffic. Simply adding sidewalks will be an inadequate solution and a major barrier at a key location to the Harborside Trail.

-The reconstruction of the Ella T Grasso Blvd/Kimberly Ave ramps to I-95, ConnDOT project #92-522, allows for an opportunity to complete a short section of trail between Kimberly Avenue and City Point. Provision must also be made to connect the West River Greenway and the Harborside Trail in the area of the ramps. While ConnDOT's design for the interchange is a vast improvement in terms of safety and accessibility from the current design, more enhancements are needed.

-Plans to widen I-95 in the area of Long Wharf must improve the conditions at Long Wharf Park including reducing the traffic on Long Wharf Drive (or closing the street completely), improving access to the park over the highway from the rest of New Haven, and providing more land for the park.

Include trail sections in any new development projects along the shoreline of the harbor.

Projects such as Canal Dock and the proposed reuse of the Williams Energy Site must include the Harborside Trail in their site plan. These particular sites deserve special attention because they are important node locations in the City's greenway system.

Include provision for the trail in the upcoming port land use study.

Accommodating the trail along existing East Shore Parkway would be optimal. If a new alignment is to be found, incorporating the design features of East Shore Parkway (dedicated right-of-way, terminal vista of the East Rock Park monument) and the enforcement of separation and safety from port activities should be guiding principals.