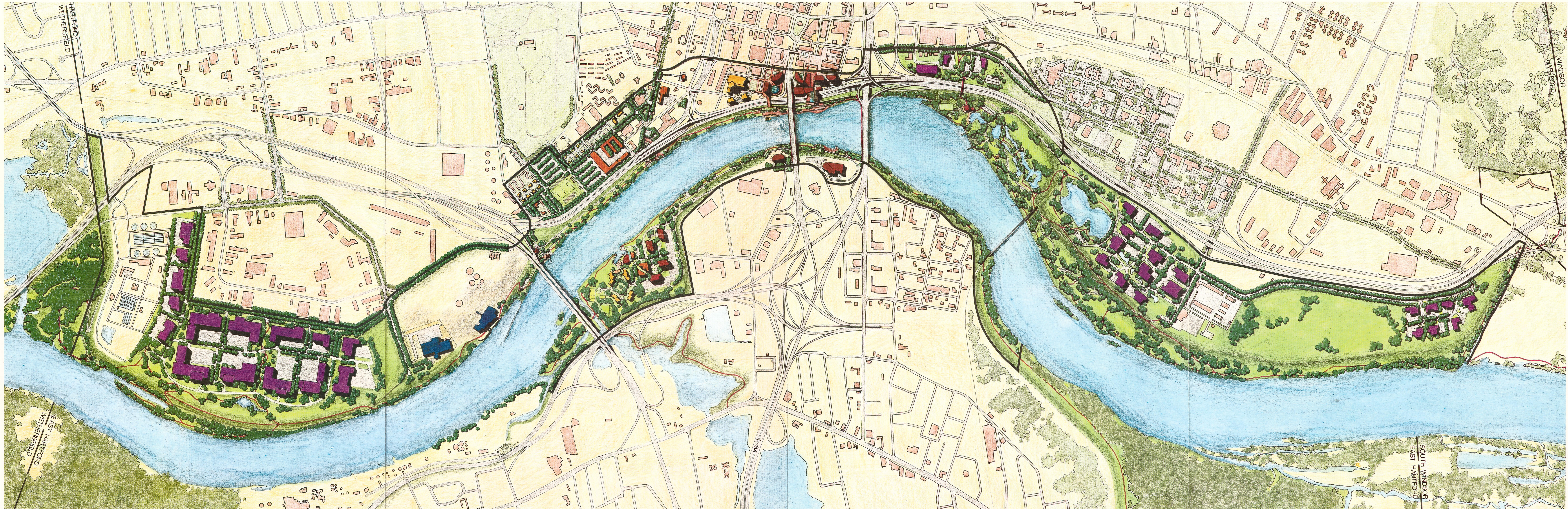
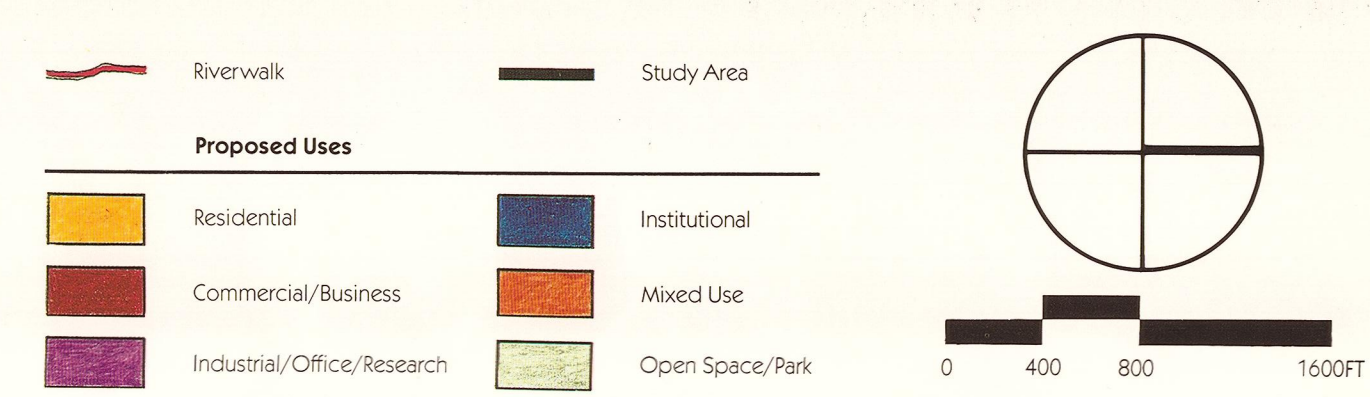


# RIVERFRONT RECAPTURE ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



## RIVERFRONT PLAN SUMMARY

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A joint venture  
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### Introduction: Riverfront Recapture

Recapturing the Connecticut riverfront in the Greater Hartford area can:

- Improve the quality of life in the region by providing attractive, easily accessible places to play and relax;
- Increase the area's economic base by creating new sites for industrial and commercial development;
- Contribute to the improvement of nearby neighborhoods, encouraging investment in new and renovated housing.

This Summary highlights the findings of a two-volume comprehensive plan of the Hartford region's waterfront. The plan was developed by Riverfront Recapture, Inc. (RRI), a private non-profit corporation formed in

1981 to carry out the Hartford City Council's mandate to initiate planning for revitalization of the riverfront. The study area was later enlarged to include East Hartford's waterfront.

The planning process involved a two-stage effort leading to the publication of the Riverfront Guide and the Recapture Plan. The Guide established that access to the river could be significantly improved and that other physical constraints could be overcome. It summarized many opportunities for new development. This work served as the basis for an extensive public communications effort throughout the spring and summer of 1982, leading to the development and publication of the Recapture Plan.

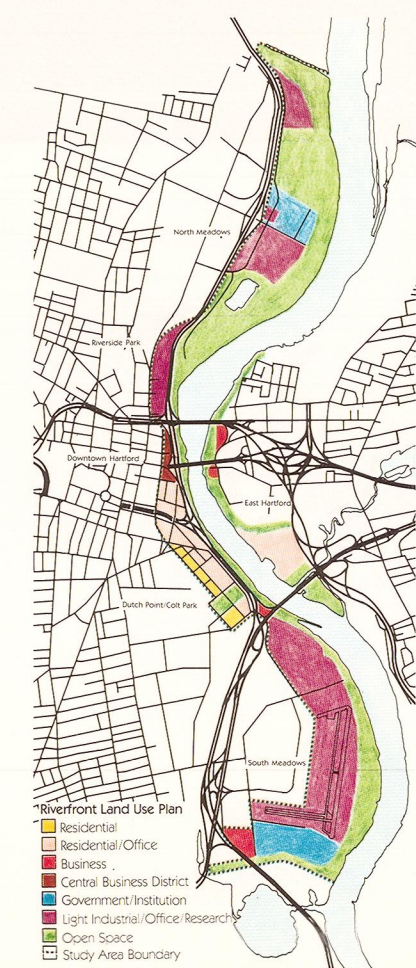
### The Plan: A Vision for the Region

Four themes are central to the Recapture Plan:

- Recreation: the riverfront can become Connecticut's first urban regional park, serving all of Hartford's neighborhoods and its surrounding towns.
- Jobs: the area adjacent to the floodplain has great employment potential. As many as 8-11,000 jobs could be created to help meet the needs of Hartford area residents.
- Housing: the potential for new housing can be improved in neighborhoods adjacent to the river, particularly in Clay-Arsenal and Dutch Point. Some 1,500 mixed-income housing units are possible.
- Events: the riverfront can provide a unique place for regional, city-wide, and neighborhood events. The July 4th festival is one such example. The plan concludes that the riverfront is worth recapturing because:

- It is a regional resource too valuable to ignore.
- It offers special and unique opportunities for recreation.
- It contains development sites for new residential and employment growth.
- It offers great natural beauty within minutes of city streets.
- As a resource for educational programs, events and festivals, the riverfront will be fun.

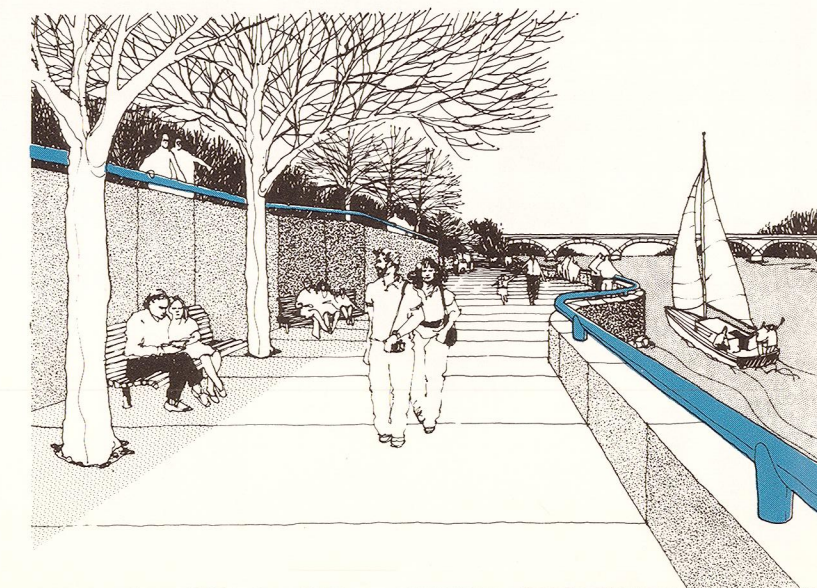
This land use map summarizes the proposed uses along the Riverfront. These land uses received the formal support of the Hartford Commission on the City Plan in an unanimous vote on November 9, 1982. The Illustrative Plan provides a vision for what new developments might look like in years to come.



### The Riverwalk: A Regional Park

The centerpiece of the riverfront plan is a regional park and "Riverwalk" extending from Windsor to Wethersfield on the west bank of the Connecticut River with connections via the existing bridge system to East Hartford's waterfront. The riverfront represents an important opportunity for Connecticut to expand the urban aspect of its state parks program. Several of Connecticut's neighbors have instituted creative state-wide urban parks programs that could be used as a model. As a regional park, the Greater Hartford riverfront could become an important element in the State-wide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

The plan proposes that by 1986, Hartford's 350th Anniversary, Riverside Park and the Charter Oak Bridge be linked by the first stage of the Riverwalk, a continuous paved pathway along the water's edge. At key access points



to the Riverwalk major facilities will overlook the riverfront; these will include new Riverside Park recreation improvements, an amphitheater adjacent to downtown, and a boat landing and riverfront restaurant near the Charter Oak Bridge.

**Other Development:** Especially important to the Recapture Plan will be the increased opportunity for the new jobs and housing sites identified on the city side of the dike:

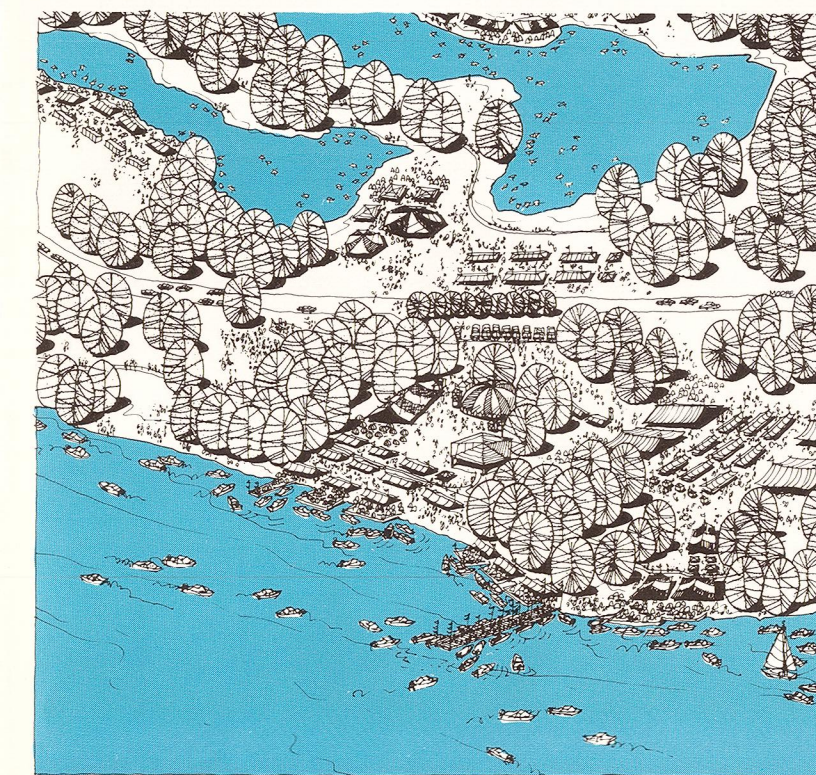
- New office/residential development in Hartford's North Meadows;
- The potential for new downtown office/commercial development on the land created by future highway realignment;
- New housing in downtown and in the Colt Park area;
- The potential for the long-range development of Hartford's Brainerd Field as a 900-acre industrial/office park.

### Activities: Life on the River

Between now and 1986 an expanding series of events, festivals and educational programs are planned to bring the people back to the river. The Fourth of July and other recent celebrations have set a precedent for waterfront activity. New events planned range from neighborhood, ethnic, and arts festivals to broadened educational, environmental and sporting programs which will help make the riverfront a part of everyday life.

Specific events proposed for the riverfront include:

1. **Fourth of July Festival (1983):** This could be an expanded festival of riverfront activities based upon the successful 1982 event which drew more than 50,000 people.



2. **River Lore Festival (1984):** A new festival focusing on a fall weekend of boating and recreational activities involving educational displays and arts activities.
3. **Riversports Festival and Triathlon (1985):** A weekend sports event, to include running, boating and cycling, would focus on the river as a sports and recreational amenity.
4. **Hartford's 350th Anniversary (1986):** The riverfront should play an important role in celebrating Hartford's 350th Anniversary by providing grounds for fairs and the arts. Hartford's heritage as a port city could provide a theme for the year-long celebration.

### Phasing: The Next Four Years

The riverfront plan will take over twenty years to fully implement. However, the first steps toward implementation will be the most critical. The 350th Anniversary of 1986 has been selected as the target for initial riverfront improvements. These improvements will establish the framework for the later, more extensive development on both sides of the dike shown in the Illustrative Plan. Short-term projects are summarized below:

#### Step 1

- Projects**
- Improving the area of the Charter Oak Bridge for boat docks and parking
  - Initial clearing of a pathway from the Charter Oak to the Founders Bridge
  - Clearance of an East Hartford pathway from the Bulkeley Bridge to the boat launching site
- Activities**
- Expanded July 4th Festival

#### Step 3

- Projects**
- Construction of an elevated walkway under the Bulkeley Bridge
  - Completion of the Riverwalk from the Charter Oak Bridge to Riverside Park
- Activities**
- Riversports Festival and Triathlon

#### Step 2

- Projects**
- Improvement of Riverside Park
  - Creation of a new park and riverfront connection north of the Colt Building
  - Clearance of an East Hartford pathway from the Bulkeley Bridge to the boat launching site
- Activities**
- River Lore Festival

#### Step 4: 1986

- Projects**
- Downtown Riverwalk Connection
  - Riverboat landing and visitors center at the Charter Oak Bridge
  - Amphitheater
- Activities**
- 350th Anniversary celebration

Total Cost Steps 1-4: \$5.5-6.5 million.

### Implementation: Achieving the Plan

Public and private sectors are collaborating on projects big and small throughout the nation through a variety of formal joint-development institutions, aptly called partnerships.

During the first two years, RRI should help to create the mechanisms needed to carry out the plan. A Friends of the River Foundation and a Riverfront Development Corporation are two options for funding recapture efforts.

**Friends of the River**  
Substantial citizen and business contributions to the recapture effort are vitally important in the first two years. Private financial commitments to the project are needed to send a clear signal to state and local officials that Hartford region with connections to the city via Keney, Riverside and Colt Parks. The possibility of obtaining federal funds will be greatly improved if there is clear evidence of a state and local commitment.



**Riverfront Development Corporation**  
If Hartford area residents and government invest in the riverfront they should get a return on their investment. To channel returns from development back to the riverfront, however, an entrepreneurial riverfront management and development entity will probably be needed. With the approval of local municipalities the Riverfront Development Corporation, a non-profit entity, could undertake development projects.

**Public Support and Financing**  
A focus for planning efforts in 1983 could be to gain recognition of the riverfront as a state park. The park would serve the entire Hartford region with connections to the city via Keney, Riverside and Colt Parks. The possibility of obtaining federal funds will be greatly improved if there is clear evidence of a state and local commitment.

### Benefits: Positive Impacts

If projects in the riverfront study area are developed within allowed zoning, nearly 4.5 million square feet of industrial and office space can be developed. Between seven and eleven million dollars of tax revenue could be gained, and between 6,000 and 11,000 jobs could be created (the upper range of these figures depends on the development of Brainerd Field).

In neighborhoods adjacent to the riverfront, some 1,200 to 1,500 housing units could also be developed. This housing could significantly reinforce the strength and character of existing neighborhoods such as Clay/Arsenal and Dutch Point and could create new residential areas in downtown and East Hartford.

In addition to direct tax and job benefits, there are secondary economic benefits from river-related activities. The proposed downtown "River Center" with its adjacent amphitheater and boat docks, could be a magnet for local residents as well as conventioners or other tourists visiting Hartford.

Riverfront Area	Potential Development	Potential Taxes	Potential Jobs
North Meadows	840,000 s.f.	\$ 1,700,000	9,000
Downtown	1,500,000 s.f.	\$ 4,775,000	6,000
Dutch Point/Colt Park	350,000 s.f.	\$ 650,000	600
South Meadows/Brainerd Field	9,000,000 s.f.	\$ 3,900,000	9,800
<b>Total Potential</b>	<b>4,490,000 s.f.</b>	<b>\$11,025,000</b>	<b>11,400</b>