Thames River Innovation Partners (TRIP) Projects

Following is a summary of projects approved for funding:

**Ignite**
Ignite addresses a gap in the ecosystem for connecting people, generating new ideas, and building business development skills by creating structure and support to “ignite” increased entrepreneurship and business success. This encompasses TRIP’s programming that convenes and connects people to spark new ideas and embrace innovation. There are 3 parts: 1) education 2) events and other related programming 3) business development support. The output will be an inspired and enabled community that produces in the first year of funding three start-ups, at least two in tech, and for example, one in food/sustainability or marine science.

**Community Concierge**
Community Concierge is a comprehensive program to assist employers in the recruitment, relocation and retention of employees by making meaningful connections to our local arts, culture, history, shopping, restaurants, schools, services and community involvement opportunities. While the Community Concierge is open to any business or relocating individual, the concept was developed with special consideration of the large scale hiring by General Dynamics at Electric Boat.

**Connecticut Naval Undersea Supply Chain Consortium**
The proposed Consortium will capitalize on the growing naval undersea business opportunities and benefit from close geographical proximity to EB; engage and strengthen the large Connecticut based naval supplier network; and leverage strengths and resources at UConn to promote innovation and workforce development. The Consortium will create significant economic development benefits across Connecticut with a strong concentration of these activities in the Groton/New London region. The Consortium is a critical component to the National Institute for Undersea Vehicle Technology which will promote innovation and sustain long-term economic growth in the region.

**Placemaking Redevelopment Initiatives & Plans**
Critical to the success of the work of attracting and retaining a talented base of residents in our region is the need for effective, intensified, and reinforced placemaking that meets current needs and demands. Infrastructure, within the three communities has lacked significant investment, and the resulting deferred maintenance, both public and private, has become a dis-incentive for new private investment in certain neighborhoods. Yet the multiple districts, downtowns, and village “nodes” of Groton and New London all possess an economically viable and diverse mix of residential, commercial, multi-family and industrial uses all within walking distance. Activating these diversified nodes as underdeveloped assets through the creation of a Redevelopment Plan for the Thames St/ Bridge St area in the City of Groton and the Hodges Square area in the City of New London and strengthening the connection between them by enhancing either end of the non-vehicular multi-use path over the Gold Star Bridge, is a critical placemaking project for the TRIP initiative.

**Cultivator Kitchen**
The Cultivator Kitchen helps aspiring entrepreneurs in the restaurant and food space test their ideas and develop critical business skills by participating in a unique business incubator program to start and run a business as students with mentorship, classes, and on-the-job training. The commercial kitchen at Spark Makerspace in New London, CT is being redeveloped to serve as a home base for the Cultivator Kitchen activities, including cooking challenge events and pop-up restaurant nights. The goal is to cultivate viable entrepreneurs and fill vacant storefronts with successful new restaurants in southeastern CT. The Cultivator Kitchen is a private/non-profit partnership produced by Spark Coop, a sister organization to the Spark Makerspace with the purpose of helping people make money doing what they love.

CTNext FY18 Grant Award: $785,758
TRIP Cash Leverage: $1,170,030
TRIP In-Kind Contributions: $315,000
Summary

Based on the above diagnostic of your existing economic, physical and social capabilities, write a detailed two- to three-page proposal that demonstrates how you will enhance your local innovation ecosystem, exploiting the opportunities in immediate and emergent conditions that you have discovered through your strategic planning process.

The Thames River region as a whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts; most evident by the enduring symbiotic relationship between Groton and New London since America’s founding. Whether you traverse the Gold Star Memorial Bridge on your daily commute, attend an interdistrict magnet school, or enjoy a water taxi ride across the Thames on a midsummer night, immersing yourself in this unique region provides great insight on how Groton and New London long ago developed a revolutionary paradigm.

Much like the tidal flow of the Thames River, Southeastern Connecticut ebbs and flows along the natural landscape—taking you from centuries-old urban districts to quaint seaside villages, and from the shores to sheltered pre-columbian woodlands and colonial farmsteads. Well endowed with a wealth of assets in terms of multi-modal transportation assets such as a deepwater port, AMTRAK connections to and from the Boston and New York markets as well as a short distance commuter rail connection to New Haven, and a mix of higher educational institutions and major employers, The TRIP region offers an incredible experience, due to historic and user-friendly nature of its amenities. Tremendous power comes from the density of so much in one place—as evident by the countless visitors traversing the ferry terminal or union station in New London, who will stop to grab a quick bite to eat at one of New London’s cafes and perseverate about their deep love for area. The size and scalability of the region presents advantages—encouraging direct participation of residents in all manner of efforts at unusually high levels because the impact of actions is readily apparent and the ability to connect with the right person is attainable.

Unlike the rest of the Connecticut, the Thames River region is geologically fragmented, ecologically diverse, and socially differentiated. We studied how prehistoric continental movements and glacial activity created a distinctive landscape of densely layered ecosystems compressed into an unusually small area. This compression of the natural landscape is echoed in the humanscape as well.

Southeastern Connecticut consists of a range of ethnic and socioeconomic residents— influenced by the clusters of economic activity spread across multiple small towns and cities. Defined in large part by the convoluted landform, The Thames River Region serves as the economic center for the region. New London is both highly urbanized and dense, while Groton takes a more suburban form—with a few dense pockets of settlement. Upriver, Norwich was the milling community whose economy linked to the active ports at the mouth of the Thames.
Revisioning the State Pier’s role in catalyzing both commercial and industrial activity in the TRIP region depends on better integrating the port with the Hodges Square neighborhood, and most principally cultivating greater interconnectivity between distribution destinations and various transportation linkages. Freight access to Montreal, direct highway access along the busiest interstate in America, and the Atlantic Ocean remains dependent on continued coordination with regional stakeholders and the newly-established Connecticut Port Authority.

Manufacturing activity in the region is expanding due to the unprecedented buildup at General Dynamics-Electric Boat and the TRIP region stands ready to maximize the port’s expansive reach potential by virtue of serving niche markets as well as leveraging its world-class location relative to its scale. Advancing new technologies in logistics, trade, and shipping (as evident by the exponential growth of Quonset Point Rhode Island’s Industrial Park, home to Electric Boat’s Rhode Island manufacturing facility) will give rise to new business ventures in and around not just the port area, but will activate the transformation of the TRIP into an innovation economy.

This core dynamic of division and differentiation can work for us or against us depending on how skillfully we engage it. The small size of our communities means that no one thing (place, organization, or person) can effectively capitalize by working independently. Built into this place, therefore, is an underlying requirement. To be successful we must harness the value of our differentiated parts, networking them to achieve synergy and mutual success. Collaboration is key.

An overarching aim of this work is to become incredibly nimble through investments that build out the ecosystem to support human capital development and connectivity of people, with a particular focus on pursuing unlikely partnerships to unlock synergistic dynamics. By investing in building capability (people) and capacity (infrastructure that brings more people into the work) we will phenomenally improve our abilities to utilize core assets to exploit the opportunities in immediate and emergent conditions.

Core to the strategy is to deeply consider how to be and become innovative. Conventional thinking fixates on innovation at the product level. We aim to “move upstream” by focusing on innovation in the processes that produce goods and services, and then further up still to the thinking that directs and informs all of this work. Innovating thinking is akin to working to shift the culture to open up minds to think in new ways. We understand innovating at the process level to mean creating infrastructural contexts that make collaboration easy and opens up opportunities for all residents. Working at these additional levels will result in innovative products and services as a natural byproduct of the workings of the whole system. Moving the other way downstream from product into the market opens up consideration for opportunities in creating whole new ways of interacting in the marketplace.

Please upload the Strategic Plan developed through the Innovation Places planning process. The plan should detail: the key immediate and emergent conditions that have shaped the applicant’s Innovation Places program, the strategic opportunities and risks (SORs) for your proposed Innovation Place in those conditions; the value you intend to
create from those SORs through your plan; how your existing economic, physical and social capabilities are currently aligned to produce that value; and how your proposed projects will serve as catalysts to better align existing, and create new, capabilities to produce this value. Based on this foundation of strategy, the plan should then provide detail on each proposed project, including scope of work, timing, cost, responsibility and sources of funding.

Thames River Innovation Place Strategic Plan

New London and Groton contain a potent mix of assets and capabilities ready to be woven into the creation of a strong economy and a thriving community. Despite this place having abundant resources the economy has been stagnant for decades. The Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP) process is ending that stagnation and sparking a transformative future.

In order to successfully activate the potential of this community and economy at the mouth of
the Thames River we have utilized the Innovation Places planning process to analyze current and emerging conditions that inform our strategic opportunities and risks (SORs). We engaged this work through employing a discovery process with the Regenesis Group called Story of Place to identify underlying patterns about what has historically been successful here and what has been holding us back. Please see attached appendix item entitled Story of Thames River for a more in depth write up of the specific Story of Place learnings.

Inherent to the logic of Story of Place is that economic development strategies should specifically build upon essential assets and talents of a place. The mouth of the Thames River is unique in the world. Who we are together, inclusive of geographic and historical makeup, stands to differentiate New London and Groton if we can get smart about aligning development efforts to leverage what makes us a place like no other. Said another way, the primary SOR is that we risk remaining stagnate if we stay fragmented. The opportunity is to collaborate, networking our differentiated parts to leverage our assets for the benefits of all parties. This approach will generate an unflappable base and more competitive economy that develops, attracts, and retains top talent to create value for our own consumer base as well as connects to regional markets like Boston and international markets through the deep water harbor and rail transit.

Through Story of Place we have generated greater clarity about the power of strategically networking our rich diversity to create critical mass. New London and Groton are too small and our fortunes too closely wedded to not be actively engaged partners. Despite this, operating separately has been the dynamic for decades. The go-it-alone mentality is strong even in our distinct places, meaning there is a relatively weak culture of collaboration. We believe that proactively working together is the missing ingredient that has kept the region from realizing its potential. All the necessary components are here for success. Therefore fundamental to the strategy is to work at the cultural level to inspire and design for increased levels of collaboration to leverage our assets and differentiated parts to unlock synergistic dynamics.

The importance of collaboration given the history of not working together much is a primary reason why TRIP has chosen to establish a larger geographic boundary for the Innovation Place designation. Downtown New London is a perfect fit for the density that allows for the casual interactions which lead to new value creation. Designating this smaller segment alone would be a missed opportunity by implicitly reiterating a separation. Coming together as one innovation place helps to drive the type of collaboration that we believe is a necessary ingredient to the success of the region.

**Learnings from the Planning Process**

The summation of the learnings from Story of Place is that there is a recurring pattern of “punching above our weight” in the Thames River. There is an ongoing process of continuous differentiation that recognizes differences, part of the Yankee spirit perhaps. Critical to our success and hence the the strategy of collaboration is creating just enough structure to achieve critical mass so that our differentiated parts can be activated in synergistic ways. The results of
this work become phenomenal when all actors can be supported to unite around shared goals that make a positive impact beyond the scope of our place (such as building submarines for national defense) to make an outsized impact.

Performing the Story of Place was an exploration to reveal this pattern and self-knowledge. We have been reminded that southeastern CT possess a rich history of innovation. John Winthrop Jr., the colony’s original founder, had the audacity to name it “New London” as he set out to create a New World center for the practice of alchemy. The audacity to do big things in this small place has continued to resonate. At one time or another, New London and its neighboring communities served as a provisioner for the West Indies, a global center for whaling, Pfizer’s primary penicillin production facility, and is currently one of the world’s most important centers for submarine construction. Big things consistently happen in this small place.

Connecticut, with its “still revolutionary” slogan and greatest number of patents, is in and of itself a site of innovation. Yet this place has a deep entrenched history which sometimes results in resistance to change. The Thames River is an international crossroads because of its history of economic activity that sends and receives people from all over the world, from whaling to subs. This means not only that we have great diversity but that this dynamic has introduced new people with a greater appetite for risk relative to the rest of the state.

New London and Groton are relatively small, meaning that it is relatively easy to get to know all the players and make things move compared to other places that are orders of magnitude bigger like New Haven or Hartford. Given these dynamics and the demonstrated history of doing big things means that we are embracing an identity that positions our place as an ideal site to try things out. Being a testing ground for new ideas and social arrangements is part of the character of our place.

Guiding Principles

Unlocking collaboration and innovation often happens by accident. We spent a good deal of time during the planning phase studying how to do it on purpose. This work generated the following set of principles to ensure our efforts stay true to the aims of making phenomenal things happen:

1. **Aim high and grow into it by design**

   Setting sights on making a big impact while starting small and manageable with plans to grow into potential and a process for rapid feedback is essential.

2. **Hold true to who we are and what we have the potential to be**

   We want all development efforts to leverage who we are and core assets that we possess to generate value that is non-displaceable because it simply cannot come from anywhere else. This will help us compete through a game of differentiation rather than a race to the bottom.
3. Create unlikely partners to produce outsized impacts

Not only is partnership a key ingredient for collaboration but looking for unlikely partners is the best way to unlock synergistic dynamics. This is the stuff of doing more-with-less.

4. Grow individual success by growing the success of the whole system and vice versa

By designing for reciprocity and helping all efforts to focus on the value creation they generate outside of themselves we will build a strong ecosystem in which all actors contribute unique value.

5. Leverage existing efforts and resources

We do not need to start new. We need to look anew at how we are doing things currently to discover new ways to unlock value in current efforts.

6. Foster enlightened agency

People are by far the greatest asset yet far too few people are really activated as actors self-directing their actions in the community and economy. By designing for ways to inspire increased levels of agency and responsibility of current and future residents to be opportunistic and strategic we can anticipate unparalleled value creation.

Thames River Assets and Anchors

New London and Groton are rich with economic and cultural features to leverage tremendous economic development and increased quality of life for current and future residents. Please see Appendix D for Thames River Innovation Place Asset Map for a visual presentation of all we have to offer and enjoy. This map was created by a Connecticut College students in the Public Practice course being taught this semester by Prof. Andrea Wollensak in collaboration with Core Team Members.

Anchor Institutions

Electric Boat

The Thames River region will see a tremendous a surge of employees at Electric Boat as a result of the newly awarded and anticipated defense contracts for the design and construction of the Columbia-class submarines; as well as the continued construction of Virginia-class attack subs, and design work for the Virginia Payload Module (VPM) incorporated in the next block of
submarines. The *Columbia* will be nearly two and a half times the size of the *Virginia*-class attack submarines currently built in Groton.

In 2010 Electric Boat purchased the Pfizer R&D campus in New London for engineering, design, and research and development operations. Last year, Electric Boat continued to expand its footprint in Southeastern CT by purchasing Pfizer’s Kings Highway warehouse facility. Electric Boat is currently finalizing the facility master plan in Groton which will include a new assembly site and waterfront upgrades in preparation for the construction of the *Columbia*-class submarines.

**U.S. Naval Submarine Base–NLON**

100 years ago, the United States established the Navy’s first permanent submarine base in Groton, CT. Nestled in the highlands of the uppermost northwestern corner of Groton, the Subase is homeport to 15 attack submarines, 70 tenant commands, 6,500 active-duty and reserve Sailors, 2,300 civilian employees, contractors, and their families. The base houses the 12-week submarine officer basic course, and trains tens of thousands of enlisted sailors each year on how to operate nuclear powered submarines. In order for a sailor to earn their *dolphins*, every submariner must set foot in Groton.

**Pfizer**

Pfizer was founded in 1849 by cousins Charles Pfizer and Charles Erhart as a manufacturer of fine chemicals. Today, as one of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies, they apply science and their global resources to bring therapies to people that extend and significantly improve their lives. Pfizer sets the standard for quality, safety and value in the discovery, development and manufacture of healthcare products. Their global portfolio includes medicines and vaccines as well as many of the world’s best-known consumer healthcare products. Every day, Pfizer colleagues work across developed and emerging markets to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time.

Pfizer’s Groton Laboratories (greater than 3,000 colleagues) began in 1959 and remains their largest research and development site. Nearly every medicine invented by Pfizer is developed in part by colleagues located at the Groton site.

**Lawrence + Memorial Hospital**

Established in New London in 1912, Lawrence + Memorial (L+M) Hospital is a leader in the Connecticut healthcare system and a major employer in New London and Groton. The L+M team represents the very best doctors, healthcare professionals, and administrators. L+M employs technologically-advanced systems and requires the best-educated and skilled employees.

**Educational Institutions**
The region boast four core higher educational institutions that contribute to a range of educational, scientific, technological advancements locally and internationally. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy founded in (1876), is one of the five armed service academies in offering a Bachelor of Science degree in one of eight majors extensive sea based training. Connecticut College founded in 1909, provides a deep and innovative liberal arts undergraduate experience. The College’s Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy supports entrepreneurial initiatives and its Ammerman Center explores the dynamic multi-disciplinary relationship between arts and technology. Mitchell College, blends traditional mentoring with an expertise in teaching an array of learning styles to create a highly individualized model that benefits all students. Additionally, the Naval Submarine School is the largest unit on the Subase with nearly 40,000 Sailors graduating annually from nearly 200 different courses and houses state-of-the-art training and equipment that simulate realistic individual and team training for the submarine fleet.

High Schools in Groton and New London play a significant part cultivating the next generation of innovators in the community. Building on the success of the Regional Multicultural Magnet School, Southeastern Connecticut has supported the growth of racially integrated, interdistrict magnet schools such as the award winning Marine Science Magnet High School in Groton and Science and Technology High School in New London. Grasso Technical & Vocational School High School in Groton, houses a newly established $1.7 million state-of-the-art welding shop used to teach advanced manufacturing skills as part of a workforce development program led by the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) in conjunction with Three Rivers Community College.

Research and Development

The U.S. Coast Guard Academy is one of the five service academies in the United States armed forces attracts aspiring Coast Guard officers. The academic program grants a Bachelor of Science degree in one of eight majors, and requires extensive sea based training before graduating at the rank of ensign. The Academy has outlined a plan to better leverage the Center for Advanced Studies, formalize partnerships with non-governmental resources, and satisfy the Service mandate of 90 engineering majors, and 130 STEM majors as the Coast Guard faces new challenges driven by climate change and cybersecurity. The Coast Guard Academy provides the Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security key resources for oceanic research, maritime security development, and significant technology innovation. Last year, the CGA hosted the Cyber Defense Exercise sponsored by the National Security Agency, an annual competition between all other U.S. service academies including the Royal Military College of Canada to solve simulated computer systems vulnerability. The Academy hopes to send more cadets to the Coast Guard Cyber Command and USCYBERCOM in the coming years.

The Research and Development Center located at Fort Trumbull is the Coast Guard’s sole facility performing R&D in support of the Coast Guard’s major missions including maritime mobility, security, defense, and safety, as well as protection of natural resources by applying
new scientific technologies for the maritime theatre. The facility also houses the Science & Technology Innovation Center, a new partnership between the the Coast Guard and the DHS focused on integrating new technologies into their existing and future capabilities such as quadcopter drones deployable from cutters and maritime objecting tracking technology to track objects throw from fleeing vessels. Most recently, they conducted tests on a “Flame Refluxer”, proving that the prototype can significantly accelerate the combustion of crude oil floating on water; which could rapidly remediate areas affected by an oil-spill.

The Undersea Warfighting Development Center is responsible for training the submarine force in advanced tactics and techniques in anti-submarine warfare. The command became operational in the fall of 2015, showing the Navy’s increasing consideration to the strategic importance of the Subase in Groton. The Naval Undersea Medical Institute (NUMI) is responsible for providing training and technical support in undersea medicine, radiation health provide technical support to the United States naval operating forces and activities around the global. The Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory (NSMRL) is DOD’s Center of Excellence for undersea biomedical research responsible for protecting the health of warfighters and performance enhancement through submarine, diving and surface biomedical research.

Pfizer invests over $7B annually, worldwide and almost all of the discoveries and innovations that drive the Pfizer pipeline are touched by the activities of the 3,000 employees in Groton. Expertise and deep know-how in areas such as regulatory compliance, patient safety during clinical trials, early drug safety assessment, drug metabolism and pharmacokinetics, drug delivery and formulation are a few examples. In addition, Pfizer announced an intent to expand their direct investment in start-up companies, and recently announced $46M of investment in 4 such companies, including NextCure, based on a Yale platform technology in immuno-oncology. The strong relationship between Pfizer and CURE has opened up ideas and possibilities for technology transfer and external development, especially as scientists retire.

Electric Boat employs 14,000 throughout Connecticut and Rhode Island, boasts a workforce of over 11,000 at their shipyard in Groton and engineering building in New London. EB projects that their workforce will grow to 18,000 by 2030 as they develop the next generation of ballistic missile submarines. They will receive over $27B of Federal R&D investment over this period. Our Innovation Places programs, including the Undersea technology development project from UCONN, will help us retain this highly trained talent pool and engage them in start-up activities.

The Connecticut United for Research Excellence (CURE) Innovation Commons houses five companies undertaking research and development in biosciences and one international tech company working to develop their communications business. Founded as a non-profit, The Commons reused a building vacated by Pfizer, and subsequently remodeled the entire 22,000 sq ft space to a commercial grade laboratory, office, and coworking facility. There are a range of startups in company stage, including one public, revenue-positive company from out of state that is growing their R&D investment at The Commons, and tremendous opportunity for additional networking opportunities for entrepreneurs looking to leave their mark.
Connecticut College has world-renowned educators and research faculty. Many have endowed positions, some of whom are specifically recognized and supported by Pfizer. Collectively, the NSF and NIH awards to Connecticut College for the past 10 years approach $6M. Young faculty are currently collaborating with New London community organizations on research, development and programmatic partnerships around food security, edible landscape development, transforming public school food and food education, public design principles, and social justice initiatives. Other faculty are working on innovative research in bioluminescence, motivation, and cancer prevention.

UCONN–Avery Point faculty are particularly expert in marine sciences, a fundamental innovation theme for the community. The marine sciences faculty receive $30M in Federal research & development funding each year. The programming is enhanced by additional Federal funding for the Sea Grant Program and the Northeast Undersea Research Technology Center, both at UCONN Avery Point, with investments totalling $6.6M during 2016. A number of their faculty have worked to start companies and the UCONN Engineering School’s TRIP initiative leverages this marine research history. UCONN Engineering has over $220M in R&D support, and all of the benefits of these resources will be accessed to support their TRIP project.

Conditions Analysis

Cultivate a stronger economy and community starts with a clear understanding of current and emerging conditions for innovation beyond the local environment to what is happening at the state, federal, and global levels.

A critical current condition in southeastern CT is a relatively underdeveloped entrepreneurial ecosystem. The presence of major employers, particularly those with a strong chain-of-command culture, has meant that people are accustomed to being employed and following instead of leading. Our region needs more startups becoming small to medium sized employers with support for them to grow as part of the mix for a thriving economy. The co-leads of the TRIP planning phase, CURE Innovation Commons and Spark Makerspace both opened doors in 2016. Previously there was little formal support for business incubation beyond the standard offerings of SCORE, SBDC, and other providers.

Currently, General Dynamics–Electric Boat is forecasting up to 14,000 new hires in the coming decade. We are excited to incorporate the emerging workforce in our community and capture the retiring intellectual talent that can catalyze growth in the local innovation ecosystem. Innovation Places status represents one of the more significant Strategic Opportunity / risks (SOR). Preparing strategically means improving the ecosystem to support human capital development to do more than just ready our workforce for employment at EB.

Our plan is to create new pathways for small to mid-size business success with Robust resources supporting entrepreneurial development in addition to improved readiness for employment to capture the opportunity of so many new jobs locally.

We acknowledge that the entrepreneurial ecosystem needs to be further developed, yet at the
same time a wide range of people within our community have demonstrated a strong spirit to do things and make things happen. Because of our small size, it is very easy for individuals and groups to see a problem and find motivation to address it. Often this takes the form of starting a nonprofit. There are many nonprofits with a remarkable track record of social innovation. One SOR is to direct this energy in enterprising ways and guide the impact sector into business models that help their work to become increasingly financially self-sustaining while also achieving non-financial objectives that create social and ecological benefits.

Supporting new development, whether private, third sector, or social enterprise, requires investments to ready our physical infrastructure for business. Years of deferred maintenance from a weak economic environment have left many buildings in an unoccupiable state. Many of these buildings are historic with phenomenal character. They have not been chopped up and reconstructed because the previous market hasn’t supported the investment. The emerging market will come faster if we can strategically complete work that supports some of these buildings and corresponding infrastructure to get ready for for fuller occupancy.

Southeastern CT is a great place to live, rich with cultural and outdoor amenities that make up good quality of life. A recent survey of EB employees indicated that many are not fully aware of what they have in their backyard. Part of the work is to improve communications and networks so that all of the region’s assets are better understood and more easily accessed.

New London and Groton are among the most affordable places to buy a home and live along the CT shoreline. The proximity and good transit options to Boston and NY make this an exceptionally attractive location for many people who are priced out of these bigger markets, ready to start families, and can relocate yet still stay connected to major urban areas. We are poised to attract this talent and will strategically prepare for the influx by creating good housing options and supporting an enriched mix of culture, restaurants, and economic opportunities. A layer to this SOR is also being mindful of how this influx will affect current residents in a net positive way. New London and Groton have the greatest concentration of low-income people in the region. We want to initiate a dynamic where all people are able to be active contributors and beneficiaries of redevelopment efforts, and not be pushed out by the success of the revitalization process.

Indeed, part of the opportunity inherent in the invitation to innovate is to recognize that innovation means creative destruction and structural change. A primary SOR is to leverage the momentum created through Innovation Places and the funds that may result in ways that create new pathways for peoples historically marginalized from opportunity creation. Not only do we want to evolve the landscape to become equal opportunity but we also want the full talent of our residents participating.

**Emerging Conditions**

The world is rapidly changing. These shifts are happening at a pace beyond what can fully be
anticipated. A keystone part of our strategy is to build dynamic capability and agility to move quickly to capture opportunities and to weather all storms.

Some of the emergent conditions we can see on the horizon include:

- Impacts stemming from climate change
- An uncertain political environment at the state and particularly federal level which stands to be substantially changed through policy changes resulting from new federal political direction
- A broader cultural shift in the makeup of the workforce as boomers age out and millennials age in that involves a real interest in making meaning through one’s work and a desire for increased autonomy in the workplace
- Electric Boat hiring 14,000 people in the coming decade is a tidal wave, although not all will be located in CT, this is a large variable considering New London’s population is 27,000 and Groton’s is 40,000

Value Creation Strategy

Given that inherent to this place is a process of differentiation that has beget a track record of not working well together, the strategy to collaborate to unlock innovation requires just enough structure and process that this collaboration becomes natural. Given the Story of Place starting point, part of the strategy also centers around economic development efforts that leverage core assets and unique expertise and specializations.

Critical components to this “just enough structure” are CURE Innovation Commons and Spark Makerspace, both of which began in 2016. These shared workspaces anchoring both sides of the river are in development as sites that enable people to connect and access a diversity of resources that supports startup and stage two growth. Supporting their ongoing success and longevity is an essential component of a viable environment for innovation in Southeastern CT.

The Chamber of Commerce and the Southeastern CT Enterprise Region are long-standing anchors of the economic development environment providing important structure that enables connectivity and business support in traditional ways complemented by the SBDC, SCORE, and other economic development support institutions.

Making it easier to do and start businesses has been a focus in the municipal realm. Municipal economic development and planning departments continue to incorporate a LEAN approach to building codes through devising pink zones. Eliminating redundancies and streamlining processes will better support entrepreneurial activity and induce mixed-use development.

CURE Innovation Commons

CURE Innovation Commons is Southeastern CT’s newest incubator for science and technology, dedicated to talent retention, job creation and the build of high value, sustainable businesses.
The incubator was conceived in 2012 in response to clear demands by biopharmaceutical professionals, who love the region, have homes and families here, and sought a place locally to explore ideas for new medicines, rather than after a train ride to Boston. The Common’s design was created, particularly after studying successful incubators in Boston and San Francisco. Such places are buzzing with investors, expertise, tech and pharmaceutical innovators, bioengineers, students, faculty and have big prospects of improving our quality of life with innovation.

CURE’s strong, team-serial entrepreneurs, engineers, scientists, investors, architects and contractors believed in creating a space of lean design, yet practical and energizing. The intersection of commercial laboratories, offices, co-working and a cafe, guarantees a mixed, cross-disciplinary entrepreneurial community. One new Common’s innovator is a scientist who today volunteers to assist others at The Commons as he looks for his next job. Another, a tech entrepreneur is working with his Dad on his idea for the next big app, while another, a stage two company from out of state, is hiring many positions, purchasing capital equipment, setting-up research and development here in Groton. Since opening its doors in the summer of 2016 The Commons is now home to 10 companies and over 30 people. Our first Annual Picnic last June attracted over 300 people from CT, RI, MA and NYC.

The Commons mission also includes education, and we structured the space accordingly. We invested in a small laboratory, equipped for student education. This resource offers programming and networking targeted to teachers, 7th and 8th graders, high school and college students to experience biotech, and training in research and entrepreneurship opens as career paths. Mentors, role models and experts, from biologists, CEOs, to patent attorneys, may join the Inspiration Zone. There have been multiple programs focusing on the high school and college student population, later this spring the CT Women’s Hall of Fame is partnering with The Commons to bring to Southeastern CT, a program connecting middle school girls with successful women scientists.

The Commons sees itself as one instigator of regional churn. As a growing landing spot for extraordinary human capital, we plan to connect adventurously with TRIP, draw in the CT-wide science and technology network, and get the word out along the Northeast Corridor train route. Surprising new ideas shall result as we craft Innovation Boosts, between, for example, a local aquaculture expert, a quality control medical manufacturer, an investor from Boston and a food scientist at Spark.

**Spark Makerspace**

Spark Makerspace is a community-run workshop and learning center that is distinct from most makerspaces. In addition to a broader selection of shared-use workstations, Spark is mission-based, explicitly dedicated to help people grow into innate talents and discover purpose through applied learning opportunities that benefit community & place. Because of the focus on utilizing business development as the context for human development, Spark identifies itself as a Cultivator rather than an Incubator. Instead of just providing access to resources (typical of
shared workspaces like makerspaces and coworking), Spark intentionally designs for collaboration amongst members to encourage new business development and revenue-generation within the nonprofit that drives the development of innate talent.

As a “cultivator”, Spark is designed to optimize human capital and improve business success through connecting individual members with organizational members in ways that unlock latent talent and support smaller organizations to thrive. This is a different approach to address the challenges of Connecticut’s low churn rate.

Spark started as an idea in 2014, found space in 2015, opened doors to individual members in 2016, growing to over 100 Members by the end of the year sharing the work of developing a variety of creative workstations. Spark currently consists of two adjacent locations in the heart of downtown New London, CT with over 10,000 square feet that contain a woodshop, commercial kitchen, 3D & electronics, coworking space, all manner of art stations, meeting & event space, plus a retail storefront called the Spark Emporium for Members to sell items on commission. The Spark spaces feel like an adult playground and attract people from all over southeastern CT. The focus on making and arts builds upon the inherent creative culture and economy in New London as well as the manufacturing base of the wider region.

Spark is a center for entrepreneurship that attracts people who may not think of themselves as entrepreneurs into the world of starting projects, some of which will become businesses. Spark is in the process of formalizing membership for businesses and nonprofits, both existing entities and new ones that are started by Members. This provides structured opportunities for Members to build skills and employability through internship-like positions, as well paid contract work.

Spark is in discussion with the City of New London about formalizing a relationship in which Spark is recognized as an community economic development arm of the City and the City identifies as a Member of Spark. This is being designed in a similar fashion to the City’s relationship with the Renaissance City Development Association. RCDA is contracted to do traditional economic development by bringing in large scale projects. Spark aims to be understood as a parallel arm helping residents become entrepreneurs with businesses that fill vacant storefronts, provide employment, and build the tax base.

The Chamber of Commerce
The Chamber is a regional entity with 1,600 members spread throughout the region, and the vast majority of its member businesses are located in New London and Groton. The Chamber is a collaborative of business and community leaders dedicated to securing and enhancing the economic vitality of eastern Connecticut. The Chamber’s priorities include providing forums for business networking, leadership development and working on issues of concern of our local councils. The Chamber provides opportunities for businesses to showcase their products, services and accomplishments as well as advance the success of small businesses through educational programming. The Chamber continually advocates for business diversity and opportunities for their growth and development and actively works to enhance the region’s
hospitality and support for our military personnel and their families. The core of the Chamber’s mission is to promote the region’s value and virtues as a great place to live, work and play.

**Value Creation Objectives**

Knowing what we want to achieve brings focus to strategy. The general objective areas below are frames for more specific goals listed further down. These have enabled the TRIP team to devise new projects and consider how to work with existing efforts to improve their abilities to serve as catalytic interventions upgrading the system in ways that better people, place, and economy.

**Human Capital Development**

In order to rise to the challenge deploying core assets and capabilities we must grow our ability to be dynamically nimble so that we can be opportunistic even as we become more strategic. This means making investments and creating processes that develop people and create opportunity. This has the twin outcomes of increasing employability and entrepreneurship. All of this is net positive for innovation.

Part of this strategy requires investing in the burgeoning support system for entrepreneurship anchored by the CURE Innovation Commons in Groton and Spark Makerspace in New London. Helping these young institutions flourish is critical to substantiating the requisite infrastructure for people to affordably try out ideas, meet new people, and connect with a host of resources that enable getting to market with a solid plan and backing.

**Placemaking**

Parallel investments must be made to improve the place for quality of life factors that increase “stickiness” and support random interactions. The population dense areas throughout the geographic boundary are ripe for development of cool restaurants, bars, coffee shops, etc. This work is held back by the fact that many buildings require significant investments to be ready for occupancy.

**Deep Innovation**

Conventional approaches tend to focus on innovation at the product or service level. We aim to “move upstream” by focusing not only on products but also on innovation with regard to the processes that produce goods and services, as well as the thinking from which innovation originates. Moving “downstream” into engagement in the marketplace is also fertile ground for innovation. Spark and the Commons are already practicing this through bringing “sharing economy” dynamics into southeastern CT.

**Goals**
Specific goals that realize these objectives include:

- Develop the ecosystem that connects educational and research institutions with the private sector to help support increased commercialization
- Leverage the proximity to Providence and Boston
- Develop the industrial zone surrounding the deep water harbor and rail area
- Further develop the New London / Groton airport
- Address underlying issues that make up the low worker churn rate to invigorate cross network pollination to unlock every person’s “iceberg”
- Add direct value through human contact to enrich community life and more quickly root new residents to aid in long-term retention thereby growing a sustained population and economic base
- Streamline processes for businesses including major employers (one reason why it makes sense for New London and Groton to work together is that some corporate residents, such as EB, are on both sides of the river)
- Collaborate around shared aims to leverage efforts, assets, and resources systematically in ways that support a multiplier or “ripple” effect
- Convert more commuters to the employment base into both workers and residents which will maximize community and economic synergy (for example, approximately 80% of Groton’s workforce commutes into town, but their salaries leave the community)
- Develop new ways for people to cultivate themselves for employment or entrepreneurship, especially the existing retiring talent from local employers and those needing technical assistance
- Support creative placemaking work that activates downtown New London especially as an urban village with multi-modal pathways connecting the differentiated nodes of density throughout the geographic boundary
- Direct a strong civic spirit of responsible personal and collective agency in enterprising ways
- Support the social service sector to prototype programming that catalyzes the opportunities for people to move beyond needing into self-sufficiency and adding value

Project Work

The planning phase initiated a process that is evolving and catalyzing existing and emergent capabilities. Supporting the ongoing development of this process is a key focus of our work. In addition, we are making targeted investments that support our place to become more attractive and viable for people to pursue skill development for employment or entrepreneurship. The resulting project work contains multiple discrete functions operating in concert to create the critical mass needed to elevate and transform the playing field for all.

In the first year TRIP requests $1,206,000 to jumpstart implementation projects. Over the course
of three years the total request equals $2,463,000. Below is a summary description of TRIP projects with scope, timing, cost, responsibility, and sources of funding.

**TRIP Core Team support**

In order to support and sustain the effectiveness of the TRIP work the Core Team will contract two staff positions to anchor the work of the implementation team: a part-time Administrator who plays a coordinating role overseeing meetings, communications, reporting, and project support and a quarter-time Strategist Grant Writer who supports the ongoing development of vision and plan. The Strategist will design and facilitate retreats twice per year for the Core Team to ensure implementation activities are aligned with big picture strategy as well as regional conferences, likely to happen twice per year, bring together all key actors across the community economic development landscape to learn, connect, discover gaps and SORs, and ideate about improvements or new project development.

The Administrator position will be contracted at $44,000 per year for three years. The Strategist Grant Writer will $35,000 in year one, $25,000 in year two, and $15,000 in year three.

**Lean Economic Development Modeling**

University of Connecticut (UConn), the state’s premier research University, is interested in supporting the Thames River Innovation Places initiative to provide project evaluation and assessment services. The purpose of the Department of Extension Programs in Community & Economic Development is to connect research to local issues by creating practical, science-based answers to complex problems. The Extension system is comprised of over 100 statewide educators and experts in areas including community economic development, youth development, food systems, agriculture, and sustainability.

A team of field agents from Extension is ready to bring their demonstrated experience in research-based community program development and the broad range of resources available through UConn to add significant value to the TRIP project.

The UConn team is excited to get involved in both supporting and documenting these efforts in New London and Groton. They understand this as an opportunity to perform a scholarly case study of an innovative effort with a high degree of public engagement to support urban communities. The intention is to document and share the learnings with scholars and community development practitioners around the country.

The involvement of UConn Extension in the TRIP work can happen at various scales of involvement and associated cost.

**Scenario 1**
Laura Brown, UConn Extension Community & Economic Development Educator and Dr. Miriah Russo Kelly Assistant Extension Educator – Evaluation Specialist will support TRIP through the development of project evaluation indicators.

The process for engagement will include related public and stakeholder participation that is consistent with the project’s “lean” framework as well as documentation of the progress of projects through methods which may include photo documentation, focus groups, or interviews. Partners in the TRIP initiative will have the opportunity to participate in evaluation training currently being developed by UConn Extension’s Evaluation Leadership Team to build evaluation capacity among community stakeholders. The research team in partnership with the TRIP stakeholders will also aim to leverage additional UConn resources applicable to the project as it develops.

Laura Brown will serve as the primary project contact and participant on behalf of UConn. The in-kind time commitment is estimated at about 0% FTE, approximately 200 hours per year for at least one year. Costs would include about $2,000/ year for travel and associated project supplies.

**Scenario 2**

The scope of work above will be substantially expanded by additional time from Dr. Miriah Kelly to enable a comprehensive assessment development that includes building a dashboard for all TRIP projects for shared reporting and visibility as well as formulating broader strategies for communicating evaluation efforts. Additionally, Dr. John Bovay, an Economist from UConn, would assist with oversight of basic data analysis.

Time commitment is estimated at about 10% FTE, for Laura Brown and up to about 5% FTE for Miriah Kelly and John Bovay for a total of about 400 hours per year. Estimated costs may be about $38,000 for Miriah and John’s participation to develop the dashboard and related real-time assessment technologies. Additional costs would include about $2,000-$2,500/ year for travel and associated project supplies bringing the annual total to $40,000.

**Scenario 3**

The above scenarios would be enriched by UConn project supervisors involving a graduate student for one year to assist with data collection, cleaning, analysis, communication, and scholarship. This option could involve working with data from multiple communities involved in the Innovation Places proposal and would interface with the state’s plan for comprehensive metric tracking. The student would be supervised by the UConn research team.

Hiring graduate student assistance would support the research team to collect and analyze data in a more timely way to allow “real time” feedback to community partners. Given the team’s
“lean” approach, this turnaround is a critical component of high-level evaluation work. A graduate student could also significantly contribute to the envisioned research agenda by developing scholarly writing, presentations, and literature searches (for instance of best practices from other communities) as the project progresses. The approximate cost would be $32,000 year not including supplies and travel.

Budget Summary

Net total ask for support if fully funded over three years is $72,000 per year and $216,000 total.

UConn Team Bios

Laura Brown is an Associate Professor, Community & Economic Development Specialist with the University of Connecticut Department of Extension and Certified Economic Developer (CEcD). She has over 17 years of professional experience in urban and rural communities and previously served as an Associate Professor with Tenure, Community Development Educator and State Specialist with the University of Wisconsin-Extension. She conducts applied research and educational programs that address asset based community and economic development, food systems development, regionalism, placemaking and economic development readiness. She holds a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Communications from Clark University, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Laura approaches her work from a community based perspective. She aims to build community capacity and help communities make more informed decisions through partnership building and research based educational programs.

Dr. Miriah Russo Kelly is an Assistant Extension Educator – Evaluation Specialist with UConn Extension in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources. She is a mixed methods researcher, and an expert in communication and collaboration. She works on the evaluation components of numerous projects throughout the Extension network. Miriah holds a M.S. in Organizational Communication from Central Connecticut State University and a Ph.D. in Environmental Science from Oregon State University.

John Bovay is an Assistant Professor and Extension Economist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Connecticut. Bovay has done extensive work on the economics of food-safety regulation, food labeling (including labeling of genetically engineered food), and analysis of voting on regulations affecting farms and food. He is currently designing a survey on the demand for local food products, and is beginning to work with Connecticut farmers to develop cost-and-return studies. Before arriving at UConn in August 2016, Bovay completed his Ph.D. at UC Davis and then worked for two years at the USDA Economic Research Service in Washington, DC.

Ignite

Ignite addresses a gap in the ecosystem for connecting people, generating new ideas, and building business development skills by creating structure and support to “ignite” increased
entrepreneurship and business success. This encompasses TRIP’s programming that convenes and connects people to spark new ideas and embrace innovation. There are 3 parts:

1) education

2) events and other related programming

3) business development support

The output will be an inspired and enabled community that produces in the first year of funding three start-ups, at least two in tech, and for example, one in food/sustainability or marine science.

Ignite leads from the TRIP Core team are Kristin Harkness, Hannah Gant, and Susan Froshauer, bringing expertise in tech, community outreach, research and business development, respectively. Two other Igniters are Mary Anne Rooke, an investor/start-up mentor and Kim Kelly, Common’s Incubator Director, a convenor and laboratory expert. Hannah also brings Spark resources and facilities. To organize the Ignite Project, TRIP will hire a Builder as a full time administrator to work with the project leads.

Events to Ignite

During the TRIP planning phase, TRIP developed Innovation Boosts, sessions modeled after Entrepreneurship Pitches that design for collaboration in which new partnerships, ideas and projects are explored around particular themes that define our Story of Place (e.g. marine science, food/agriculture, engineering). Boosts will be facilitated through Ignite in an ongoing way to support ideation around identification of gaps and needs in a public and participatory way. Boosts filter ideation through the design principles discovered through the Story of Place process about what works here to support strategically place-based project development or improvement. Through Boosts, we aim to ignite innovation and inspire to at least 1 start-up during the first year.

TRIP will also produce regular series of tech-focused events at Spark and The Commons, such as Hackathons, Make-a-thons, Internet of Things contests, Weekends of Code, Code Jams, Lessons from Tech Stars.

Educational Programming

Events generate ideas and education programming carries entrepreneurs and teams forward by supporting critical skill development that fosters new face-to-face interactions and connects to resources to jumpstart the startup ecosystem broadly.

Ice House Entrepreneurship Program is a successful business accelerator program developed by the Kaufman Foundation and introduced to TRIP by the Small Business Development Center. Ice House cultivates an entrepreneurial mindset through experiential learning techniques. TRIP Core Team member David Howes, ED of the Interdistrict School for Arts, is leading the introduction of Ice House into the community in the school system and beyond. This is the first time that Ice House will be taught in a middle school setting, the ideal age for this type of learning. TRIP aims to bring an Ice House trainer to southeastern CT for a train-the-trainer for 25 people costing $1000 per person. ISAAC, New London High School, and Groton High School are committing professional development funds to support teachers to take the course. TRIP would love to share this opportunity with others throughout the state of CT.
Kristin, a veteran computer programmer who worked at Kayak.com and Priceline, will activate education in the tech realm with a coding bootcamp program similar General Assembly or A100-style classes at Spark Makerspace. Programming is already underway with classes at Spark and at the New London ISACC Middle School. Bringing the structure of ongoing programming classes will make it possible for a whole new generation of tech startups to develop in southeastern CT.

The Commons has an educational program, the Inspiration Zone, which is a dedicated teaching lab and training room space to enable 7th and 8th graders and high schoolers learn firsthand about entrepreneurship and careers in STEM. This Ignite program through TRIP will work in the lab to implement a program called The Small World Initiative (SWI), now in 170 schools worldwide. Started in 2012, the program allows students to perform hands on field and lab research on soil samples to hunt for new antibiotics. Students learn about antibiotic resistance, drug discovery, data analysis and reporting. Susan Froshauer, an antibiotic drug hunter, and her co-hunter Joyce Sutcliffe, PhD, (formerly of Pfizer, and two antibiotic companies), both on the Small World team will help local teachers on-board the program. Students will complete studies, present their data, and have discussions with mentors. During the first year of TRIP Implementation, the goal is for the Zone to set up the lab completely, finalize the curriculum and solidify additional funding in partnership with a local school and an agency like the Girl Scouts of America who have funded SWI in the past.

Coupled with Ice House learning, and experiential presentations by exciting role models, Ignite expects students and teachers alike will seek longer term connection to the Zone lab, mentors, and further opportunities in science and technology. The Commons has connected with teachers from Norwich Technical High School, the Marine Magnet High School, and Groton and New London school systems to discuss a variety of Inspiration Zone Programming. With

Norwich Tech, one Zone event at the Commons has already created buzz, and involved Norwich students and Pfizer mentors working with students on a Science Fair. These activities have started and will continue to ramp up during the first 3 years of TRIP.

As part of Ignite, the Commons will host a variety of additional hands-on TRIP community learning sessions in such areas as intellectual property and patents, business entity formation, accounting, marketing and branding.

Business Development

Participating in an Ignite event and / or taking a class is just the beginning; Ignite programming is also designed to connect projects to local expertise, including start-up mentors and investors and State resources to concretize ideas into commercializable products or services.

As ideas emerge and get some traction during our events, The Commons and Spark will ensure mentors and experts attach to the potential start-up. We will actively leverage the deep resource pool available in Connecticut, connecting these nucleating start-ups with e.g. Connecticut Innovations Resources, Angel Investor Forum, Sech Tech (Gerson, Penner, Marco), UConn, Yale and others found through the CURE and statewide ecosystem.

Budget

Producing events that drive connectivity throughout the ecosystem and the communications
work involved in promoting and coordinating this variety of programming will require a full time staff person. TRIP requests $110,000 a year for three years broken down on annual basis $75,000 for the Builder staff position and $35,000 for programming and communication. In addition, CURE Commons will provide $75,000 of in-kind services each year for three years.

Community Concierge

Project Description

Community Concierge is a comprehensive program to assist employers in the recruitment, relocation and retention of employees. We plan to do so by making meaningful connections to our local arts, culture, history, shopping, restaurants, schools, services and community involvement opportunities. While the Community Concierge is open to any business or relocating individual, the concept was developed with special consideration of the large scale hiring by General Dynamics at Electric Boat.

Community Concierge will network the existing local features to provide a welcoming and enhanced experience for a potential hire or a newcomer, as well as their children, partners and/or guests.

Community Concierge will engage hotels, inns, B&Bs and private host homes to offer temporary accommodations to meet the situation and personality of a potential hire for a short stay during the interview process and/or extended stay while exploring home purchase or lease options.

Community Concierge will offer “Know your Community” training and provide mobile device friendly tools to taxi and Uber-type drivers who have become our de facto tour guides. The goal is to bolster the independent drivers’ sector of the economy while better meeting the needs of newcomers through the experience of an informed driver. The driver will be better equipped to answer logistic questions as well as share more in-depth information regarding points of interest and community history, quirks and charm. This training will also be open to front desk individuals in lodging facilities as well as guest house owners.

Community Concierge will establish a comprehensive local network database with information on family and individual quality of life activities such as civic associations, educational resources, local talent shows, open mic nights, location of local volleyball, and soccer league practices, churches, schools and other information that will provide a high quality experience for individuals and families. It will also provide information on what professional opportunities exist for spouses and significant partners.

The database will connect newcomers to established community members who have agreed to serve as community resource advisors (CRAs). CRAs will receive appropriate and constructive relationship building training. The CRAs will be available to share their specific expertise or interest with newcomers.

Community Concierge will coordinate social events at local venues and restaurants for cross-pollination of ideas and relationships. For example, those who have boats moored at our local marinas may want to sign up for “Take an Engineer Sailing for a Day.” In addition, periodically bus and walking tours will be organized for newcomers to introduce them to the region’s rich architectural and cultural venues.
Community Concierge will partner with appropriate partners such as The Thames River Heritage Park and regional museums and other venues to provide newcomers with an enjoyable and memorable way to know and appreciate the history of this place.

Community Concierge will coordinate with Connecticut College, UConn Avery Point, Mitchell College and Coast Guard Academy to assist with student and faculty recruitment, parent weekends and graduations to identify meaningful engagement opportunities for students and families and for those who are already here.

Community Concierge will also expand and build on existing relationships with the Naval Submarine Base New London, the US Coast Guard Academy and the USCG Station New London to provide added capability and services to their existing welcome programs.

Community Concierge will connect newcomers to Spark Makerspace and CURE Innovation Commons for supported exploration in entrepreneurship.

Community Concierge will revamp the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT’s existing relocation package to a more comprehensive tool including information on local resources, state- and/or area-specific procedures for change of address, listings of local services including but not limited to schools, churches, transportation, libraries, and emergency needs. It would also feature coupons or other incentives from participating businesses. This tool would be made available on the Chamber’s website, and distributed widely to anyone and everyone who is interested in it. The Chamber’s website receives tens of thousands of page views each month; this, combined with referral traffic from Word of Mouth Eastern CT and other Chamber media outlets, would make this the area’s leading relocation resource.

Community Concierge will host a comprehensive Local Business Directory to serve as a one-stop comprehensive resource for local and visiting consumers to find all business information.

Community Concierge will create videos to reach consumers via digital platforms and social media. A series of short videos would be produced that highlight the best features of southeastern CT and showcase our high quality of life. This would be used by any local employer needing to recruit talent from out of the area. Some of these videos could double as tourism marketing appeals.

**Value Proposition**

The goal of this proposal is to work on civic and economic development alignment by helping the region move away from our tendency to work in parochial, often isolated remote silos, to a system that supports a nurturing, living, breathing community. This would be accomplished by developing new and expanding existing chamber programs, activities and systems designed to capture the interest and attention of current residents, millennial and newcomers to the region. Community Concierge would be designed to be inclusive rather than exclusive with the goal of moving the community away from a provincial approach to managing community interests to providing pathways for involving all interested parties.

We are well aware of the dramatic and accelerating pace of change that is impacting the way
we work live and play. With the decline in traditional media and the rise in digital media every community is challenged to adapt and change at a more rapid pace than ever. What we are less sure of is how these changes are impacting our lives and our communities. Will these changes ensure that our best days are yet to come? What lies ahead for our communities and our civic structures? Will we be able to attract and maintain qualified employees? These are just a few of the uncertainties that we can begin to address with our partners should we be successful in obtaining this grant. A well-organized inclusive community will foster economic growth and cultural enrichment as well as increased democratic participation in the communities involved.

The stakeholders affected would be essentially everyone: businesses, current residents, minorities, newcomers, students, immigrants, nonprofits, start-ups, real estate developers, homeowners, innovators and researchers. We will reduce barriers for disenfranchised groups to get more engaged in their community.

**Funding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Item</th>
<th>Grant Funded</th>
<th>Chamber In-Kind Services</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each Year</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Staffing</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Database development &amp;</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Maintenance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Video</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Travel</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td><strong>$300,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential other funding sources for sustainability include the Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce, EB, Pfizer, Dominion, and other members of the Chamber.

**Team Members/Partners**

Chamber of Commerce-potential partners include:
- Southeastern Council of Governments (SECOG);
- Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer);
- Other chambers of commerce;
- Chamber members and other businesses located in the region;
- CURE;
- Spark MakerSpace;
- Local educational institutions;
- Southeastern Cultural Coalition;
- SCORE;
- Eastern CT Association of Realtors (ECAR);
- Builders and Remodelers Association of Eastern CT (BAEC).

**Relevant Metrics**

The Chamber’s Board of Directors require the measurement of existing programs offered through a variety of methods including: Feedback from employers – surveys of people served - # of requests for support of services provided and the nature of the services requested as well as website & social media activity. We would extend this process to all activities in the Community Concierge.

**Alignment with Core Objectives**

The activities described above in addition to the following activities presently offered to the community by the Chamber will serve as a magnet for attracting newcomers and retaining existing citizens. The more friendly and receptive we make the community, the more attractive it will be to newcomers and existing residents.

**Current Efforts for Area Recruitment and Retention**

General Dynamics Electric Boat, Pfizer, and Dominion asked the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT to partner in their efforts for employee recruitment and retention. The Chamber’s current focus on this collaboration committee is:

- To plan networking events for employees of the three companies at the region’s premier venues. This provides an opportunity for networking and socializing, and highlights the area’s attractions, especially to those who are new to living or working here. The events also feature local non-profits, so that attendees can build connections and dedicate their time to causes they find important, further digging in their “roots” in this community. Three such events have been held so far, each with over 200 attendees.
- To administer the Facebook page “Word of Mouth Eastern CT” as a “digital welcome wagon” for any new community members, including new employees, Military families, and others. The page features general information about the region, suggestions for restaurants, activities, and services, and real estate listings. EB, Pfizer and Dominion regularly refer this resource to their new hires. Word of Mouth currently has over 3,000 followers. [https://www.facebook.com/WordofMouthECT/](https://www.facebook.com/WordofMouthECT/)

The Chamber also operates the Young Professionals of Eastern CT, a networking division for young and ‘young-at-heart’ professionals with more than 300 members. The mission of YPECT is to create a platform that provides young professionals in eastern Connecticut with positive opportunities upon which to build professional networks, social relationships, and engage in volunteer activities that improve the economic vitality and quality of life of our community. By participating in YPECT, young adults are encouraged to stay in the region while they develop their careers, build friendships, and start families.

The Chamber also administers a regional calendar of events (CORE). 7 regional organizations
have established a partnership to create CORE. Partnering organizations include the Chamber of Commerce Eastern CT, New London Main Street, Norwich Creates, Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition, Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer), The Day Publishing Company, the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce. The partners have established this regional calendar for events, activities and professional development opportunities. This shared regional calendar of events serves the existing business community, arts and cultural sector, tourism and those who we all serve, including residents and visitors. For event and activity providers located in southeastern CT, the use of this shared regional calendar tool minimizes time spent on marketing and maximizes audience reach. The shared regional calendar provides a valuable resource for event planning and assists organizations in minimizing scheduling conflicts throughout the region. For consumers, this initiative provides one-stop shopping with search and mobile device capability for event, activity and meeting information across the region. By utilizing this shared regional calendar operating system, which is universally accessed, utilized and promoted, we established a unified voice and resource that aligns, coordinates and magnifies our region's assets. www.core-ect.com

Attracting Investment – Public & Private
A dynamic proud community will be followed by the private and public sector with an increased level of interest in living and investing by the private sector in the region.

Increasing R&D Investment and Activity
The establishment of CURE and SPARK was an important step in this direction. Supporting their efforts and creating a culture of innovation and community spirit with further development activities in all sectors including R&D.

Increasing Urbanism

The Community Concierge service will serve to educate all newcomers and locals on the availability of our creative centers such as CURE and Spark, as well as other hub like places where people gather and interact.

Social interaction and a sense of belonging are key characteristics expressed by Millennials. Millennials are interested in spending more time in creative, interactive settings than commuting in a car. Community Concierge will continually work to educate visitors and locals on the availability of all modes of transportation including the Thames River Water Taxi.

Impact on Anchor Institutions

Community Concierge will facilitate meetings & communications with and between key partners to ensure all will be more informed and enriched. In addition, Community Concierge will work with community outreach individuals at our local educational institutions to expand engagement with students in local activities, including serving as volunteers.

Alignment with Guiding Principles
Community Concierge contributes to a culture of innovation and creative capacity by:

- Maintaining an active social media campaign that advises the region on all happenings;
- Educating the community about where gathering hubs are located;
- Providing support services for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and innovators;
- Serving as the central source of information of all the key drivers of an innovation place.

Community Concierge will work to create partnerships and generate significant interest from the business community that will in-turn build a process of support for maintaining and expanding services as needed.

A report will be provided to our partners and the Board of Directors on a regular basis to keep all informed of activities and to solicit recommendations for new ideas. The Chamber has the capacity to expand on existing partnerships such as the Southeastern CT World Affairs Council and other partners addressed above that will serve as the foundation for expanding our stakeholder network.

Recently, at the request of Latino leadership in New London, the Chamber has agreed to organize a Hispanic division of the Chamber to support and enhance the business opportunities for the Latino community. This important collaborative effort is one example of the Chamber’s capacity to attract diverse stakeholders.

The Chamber is a regional entity with 1,600 members spread throughout the region, and the vast majority of our member businesses are located in New London and Groton. We continually work to bring business men and women together to foster collaboration and networking. We annually host over 150 events for that purpose.

Community Concierge will continually strive for excellence. As we enhance & expand on existing programming we feel that it is important to review best-practices that already exist. A great example is the 2 Degrees Portland program. [http://www.creativeportland.com/connect-visit/2-degrees-portland](http://www.creativeportland.com/connect-visit/2-degrees-portland). A visit and conversation with organizers & founders there will help us gain an understanding of best practices.

In addition, each week the Chamber conducts staff meetings where we evaluate last week’s programs, make suggested changes as needed and plan our next week’s programs. The process in place now would extend to the Community Concierge’s activities.

The activities of the Community Concierge would enhance the flow of quality information, calendar community happenings, and be the depository of accurate information.

Collaborating with the various stakeholders and beneficiaries will enhance the region’s attractiveness which in turn will make the region an exciting place to live work and play, all of which will serve as our strongest attraction and retention tool.

Connecticut Naval Undersea Supply Chain Consortium
The goal of this project is to establish an industrial consortium focused on enhancing the global competitiveness of Connecticut’s naval undersea supply chain. The Consortium will build a network of companies that collectively address challenges, share solutions, collaborate on opportunities and capitalize on the growing national undersea business base. The Consortium will promote innovation by partnering with UConn to develop innovative solutions to improve quality and reduce costs, rapidly transition emerging technologies to suppliers, and work with suppliers to develop next generation workforce. The proposed consortium will function in a manner similar to the Aerospace Components Manufacturers (ACM) consortium which has helped Connecticut’s manufacturers to become worldwide leaders in the global aerospace industry.

The implementation team leading the Underwater Sea Project is Michael Accorsi from UConn School of Engineering and Paige Bronk from the Town of Groton.

Rationale

The naval undersea business base is growing and this growth provides significant opportunities for economic development within the Groton/New London region and across Connecticut. A recent force structure assessment conducted by the Navy indicates the need to grow their fleet from 48 to 66 attack submarines. Since 2012, Electric Boat (EB) has hired approximately 4,000 new employees to meet the Navy’s production requirements of two submarines per year and increases in EB employment are expected to continue through the next decade. In addition to jobs at EB, Connecticut is home to over 400 naval supply chain companies who have also benefited significantly from the increased demand for submarine production. This unique growth period provides opportunities not only for increasing production and employment but also for strengthening economic diversity and innovation within this supply chain.

Activities and Benefits

The Consortium will organize networking activities that will focus on industry needs and strengthening of partnerships amongst naval supply chain companies across Connecticut. The robust ecosystem created will help CT companies to secure more contracts from EB and other OEMs worldwide. At the same time, this robust and reliable supply chain will allow EB to be highly successful in meeting the Navy’s production requirements. The Consortium will partner with UConn and leverage UConn resources to promote technology insertion within the supply chain and pursue federal funding for technology development and transition. These activities will promote innovation and startup opportunities while also creating economic diversity within the supply chain. The Consortium will also partner with UConn and other Connecticut universities/colleges to develop targeted strategies and programs to address workforce development needs specific to the naval supply chain. These programs will ensure that the naval supply chain ecosystem has a reliable and highly trained pool of talent.

Long Term Economic Development and Innovation
The proposed industrial consortium is envisioned to be part of a larger institutional structure that includes focused activities in workforce development, basic and applied research, technology development and implementation, in addition to industry engagement and networking. The National Institute for Undersea Vehicle Technology (NIUVT) will be developed through the steady growth in naval undersea business in Connecticut, continuing collaboration between naval industry and UConn, and ongoing pursuit of external funds to build the institute. Establishment of the industrial consortium through the CTNext Innovation Places program is a critical component of this national institute.

There are many elements in place that strongly support establishment of the national institute. UConn has extensive technical expertise and testing facilities to help naval supply chain companies advance their product designs and manufacturing processes. Facilities at the UConn Tech Park exceeding $80M include advanced microscopy for material characterization, metal-based additive manufacturing, and robotic manufacturing testbeds.

Over the last 5 years, UConn Engineering has averaged over $1M per year in research support directly from Navy sources. Much of this research funding has been secured in partnership with Electric Boat, thereby significantly strengthening naval innovation in the region. Recently, UConn Engineering was invited by the Office of Naval Research to submit a proposal ($1.3M) to develop a regional Navy STEM workforce development program in partnership with Electric Boat.

UConn Engineering has also recently received two EDA grants that specifically target economic development through technology insertion and innovation. The Quiet Corner Innovation Cluster ($2M) focuses on technology insertion for small and medium manufacturers (SMMs) in Eastern Connecticut utilizing Tech Park facilities. The Connecticut Manufacturing Simulation Center ($2M) provides high-fidelity modeling and simulation services and training to help SMMs improve their product design and manufacturing through virtual prototyping.

The State of Connecticut and UConn are part of the newly-established national Advanced Robotic Manufacturing (ARM) Institute. Through this institute, SMMs will have the opportunity to test and develop new robotic technologies that can significantly increase their manufacturing productivity.

All of these programs are in place to help drive the establishment of the National Institute for Undersea Vehicle Technology in Connecticut within the next two years. Formation of the Connecticut Naval Undersea Supply Chain Consortium under the Thames River Innovation Places program will be an enabling component of the proposed institute.

**Summary**

The proposed Consortium will capitalize on the growing naval undersea business opportunities
and benefit from close geographical proximity to EB; engage and strengthen the large Connecticut based naval supplier network; and leverage strengths and resources at UConn to promote innovation and workforce development. The Consortium will create significant economic development benefits across Connecticut with a strong concentration of these activities in the Groton/New London region. The Consortium is a critical component to the National Institute for Undersea Vehicle Technology which will promote innovation and sustain long-term economic growth in the region.

Net total ask for support if fully funded over three years is $125,000 per year and $375,000 total.

**Placemaking Redevelopment Initiatives & Plans**

Critical to the success of the work of attracting and retaining a talented base of residents in our region is the need for effective, intensified, and reinforced placemaking. Infrastructure within the three communities has lacked significant investment, and the resulting deferred maintenance has become too expensive for private investment to be interested because these neighborhoods are currently in a depressed state. Yet, the multiple districts, downtowns, and village “nodes” of Groton and New London all possess a healthy and diverse mix of residential, commercial, multi-family and industrial uses all within walking distance. Activating these diversified nodes as underdeveloped assets through the creation of a Redevelopment Plan for the Thames St/ Bridge St area in the City of Groton and the Hodges Square area in the City of New London is a critical placemaking project for the TRIP initiative.

Leads of the Redevelopment Placemaking Initiative & Plan from the TRIP Core team are Barbara Goodrich from the City of Groton and Sybil Tetteh from the City of New London.

**Project Description**

The development of a Redevelopment Plan specific to Thames St/Bridge St. and Hodges Square that integrates assessment and review of the functionality of the Gold Star Bridge Multi-Use Path linking both areas. Such a Redevelopment Analysis and Action Plan will:

- Create an Existing Conditions analysis of each area including but not limited to, infrastructure, buildings, open spaces, public spaces, traffic and parking, considering and including, as appropriate and relevant, the previous work and plans that both communities have undertaken
- Generate new information, analysis, and data, incorporating property specific real estate, zoning, code and financial analyses, recommendations for future development or enhancements (public and private), renderings and maps
- Provide immediate assistance in the analysis and implementation of projects within Hodges Square such as those highlighted in the New London Creative Placemaking Program, and improvements planned for the Costa Harbor Property on Thames St.

The Plan will result in recommendations for strengthening each district as well as
property/parcel specific recommendations based on quantifiable data. The goal of this unique, multi-area, Redevelopment Analysis and Action Plan is to improve the economic viability, infrastructure, function, appearance and connectivity of both neighborhood commercial nodes on an individualized, and in some cases a parcel by parcel basis by:

- Increasing customer access and exposure and further develop a sense of place within and between each area and from these areas beyond to the employment, leisure, recreation, eating, creative, and shopping areas nearby
- Improving the functionality of the linked and welcoming gateways on both sides of the Thames River
- Improving the infrastructure, physical and programmatic that will jumpstart the revitalization of each area, and maintain it for the future, all while remaining flexible to changing economic and cultural climates

**Specific Activities**

The Redevelopment Analysis and Action Plan would include:

- The inventory and examination of all the un- or underdeveloped parcels and buildings and provide recommendations and concept plans for the maximization of their potential;
- Exploration of the traffic patterns to and within the areas, parking, signage, possibilities to improve multi-modality of the street/sidewalk network;
- Review and analyze the state Tax Increment Financing program for these areas and the use of Pink Zones within the district created by these two neighborhoods bookending the Gold Star Bridge;
- Recommend physical enhancements to each end of the multi-use path over the Thames River;
- Recommend physical enhancements to the Heritage Park water taxi landing on Bridge St. linking both sides of the Thames River;
- Assess CT. Building Codes with regard to the issue of making physical renovations to existing buildings.

**Specific Projects**

The Redevelopment Analysis and Action Plan would address the implementation of individual projects that are expected to enhance a strong sense of place. Respecting the on-going work happening in each community to strengthen each district and the differences inherent in each district, the Plan would focus immediately on providing refinements and assistance with the implementation of certain key projects such as:

- Establishing stronger and more diverse food related business development including pop up food events and incubator kitchen projects to enhance their position to serve residents and serve as a destination for the larger communities
- Bailey Circle – The strategy of this project is to increase the safety of all users of the
multi-use path over the Bridge, both in fact and by perception, through enhancement of the entrance/exit to both Groton and New London via the multi-use path with landscaping, lighting and wayfinding signage.

- Old Town Mill – An historic mill (c. 1650) that represents one of the earliest mill industrial sites in the country is currently underutilized. Revitalizing the mill into a working grist mill has potential to integrate community asset in the revitalization process and grow the destination value of Hodges Square.

- City of Groton Costa Harbor properties – Two parcels, one adjacent to Fort Griswold and one across Thames St. on the waterfront adjacent to Garbo Lobster and within fifty yards of the State Dock facility utilized by the Heritage Park Water Taxi. The development vision for the waterfront site includes establishment of a waterfront public park, rebuild of an existing dock and future build out of both parcels to maximize public access, parking, and waterfront access.

- Classes in community-sourced, participatory, public-interest architecture through the Yestermorrow Design/Build School as a pilot-satellite campus through Spark Makerspace, leading to hands-on experience renovating existing buildings in each community.

- Partnership with FRESH’s Edible Landscape program that will enhance streetscapes and walkways with edible plants through easy to manage raised bed “snack” gardens and the addition of fruit bearing street trees, beautifying the neighborhoods, meeting resident’s need to access healthy food, developing skills within the residents to sustain these improvements themselves.

This is the ideal opportunity to implement such a plan. Linking the two communities, Groton and New London, creates a stronger, more stable sense of place and connectivity. The timing capitalizes on the growth of EB, and long-term projection of new employees, which is a significant influence on both sides of the River, the construction of the National Coast Guard Museum, the re-activation of the Heritage Park, the purchase of three key properties within the City of Groton, and the study and work spent on the Hodges Square Placemaking initiative. It supports and will provide key information to and about the nascent but strong real estate interest and investments occurring on both sides of our River. Such a customized study and redevelopment plan is an essential element of any comprehensive, cohesive, implementable strategy to support the resurgence of vital and vibrant neighborhood and commercial core districts.

**Budget**

An estimate of the cost of the Redevelopment Analysis and Action Plan is approximately $200,000 broken out as follows:

- $135,000 for the Redevelopment Analysis and Action Plan
- $65,000 to provide technical assistance to refine and implement some of the projects spelled out above such as those noted in the Hodges Square Placemaking Program, the
transportation related infrastructure and safety improvements at Bailey Circle and Bridge St, the support of food incubators, food related markets and development and related events, FRESH Edible Landscaping program, the Yestermorrow Design/Build School and the City of Groton Costa Harbor Development project.

This budget figure is conservative but realistic. Due to procurement requirements, funds must be in place before a contract for this project can be executed. Therefore, any reduction in budgetary reward will reduce the scope and therefore the functionality of this project. Certain projects have value added benefits such as attracting additional funding partners, and becoming self-sustaining through “pay to play”. In addition, each community understands that additional funding from the public sector may be required to support the implementation of certain projects. The private sector will be proactively engaged through fees for classes, or services such as financial assessments or training or data provision, to provide financing on projects as appropriate.

**Cultivator Kitchen**

The Cultivator Kitchen is a private and nonprofit partnership development leveraging Spark Makerspace as a base for an innovative business development group in which the primary organizational activity is to develop people to become amazing employees or phenomenal entrepreneurs. People interested in a specific domain (such as restaurants) sign up to experience a class-like program hosted by Spark, a nonprofit dedicated to helping people learn and connect through access to resources and community, under the tutelage and leadership of seasoned veterans in that field to collectively start a new private business.

The genius of the Cultivator is activating the potential of people to become increasingly effective and responsible so that while people are built up so does trust that these “graduates” will be prepared to take on new business development opportunities that offer equity sharing. The feelings of accomplishment, pride, and ownership that come from the sweat equity work of starting something from nothing are transformative. Activating people to activate businesses that activate idle spaces in under-developed markets is a recipe for phenomenal profitability and revitalization.

The Cultivator is starting this summer in the restaurant and food space led by seasoned restaurant entrepreneurs Robert Ramsay from Montauk House Cafe and Rolando Robledo from Clover Food Lab who have a demonstrated capacity for teaching and inspiring. New London is opportunity rich with affordable spaces ripe for the installation of businesses that capture markets not currently being served by the existing business community. Hannah Gant, one of the originators of Spark, is part of the Cultivator team to anchor the connection with Spark supporting recruitment of an initial class cohort as well as shares classroom space in the Spark kitchen and coworking.

Growth of the Cultivator business in the restaurant space will be leveraged by establishing a large-scale commissary kitchen with support from Innovation Places funds. This will serve as a homebase for multiple activities with diversified market channels as well as ongoing business
development of new restaurants that fill up vacant spaces through the applied learning classes following the cultivator format.

The build out of spaces will also follow this applied learning format leveraging the partnership that Spark is pioneering with Yestermorrow Design / Build School located in Vermont. Yestermorrow has over 30 years of experience as an educational institution open to all in the green design / build movement. It is establishing its first satellite urban campus in New London through Spark in 2017 as a way to bring this expertise to places where it is most needed (urban areas with aging infrastructure) and in ways that create new economic opportunity for people historically disenfranchised. This partnership will build a critical mass of skilled people to make radical improvements in the built environment. Following the cultivator format, people will pay for classes that teach them while enabling public participation in the development of cool, hip spaces that also serve to rehabilitate some of the dilapidated building stock in downtown New London.

This work catalyzes the development of Collaborative Membership within Spark Makerspace (membership for organizations), thereby unlocking a dynamic that facilitates incredible mobility of talent throughout the local economy. Essential to supporting this development is hiring a Director of Collaborative Membership to oversee the coordination of individual Members getting placed in Collaborative Member organizations for learning opportunities or contracted “gig” work.

**Business Model**

The Cultivator is multi-sided with a symbiotic partnership between Spark Makerspace as a nonprofit that offers classes and access to resources and the Cultivator Kitchen as a new private business development group that runs some of these classes.

The Cultivator Kitchen effectively acts as its own feeder program for ongoing business development with high potential to generate sustainable cash flow through operations to finance ongoing business development activities that support the development of highly motivated people.

Spark’s participation as a nonprofit enriches the capital mix for the project by bringing income from grant and other philanthropic sources to support mission-based education, workforce development, and green sustainability aspects. Income from classes will be split between Spark and the Cultivator business.

**Immediate Opportunities to Activate**

174 Bank St. is a prime site to establish a summertime outdoor dining experience. Minimal capital improvements in spring 2017 will transform this longtime vacant, dangerous, and blighted lot into a restaurant operation run under a vending license supported by the class IV
certified commercial kitchens in the Montauk House Cafe and Spark Makerspace. The property owners of 174 Bank St. are eager to see this development happen on the property with the goal of transferring ownership. Negotiations are underway to contract a lease with an option to buy.

The market for outdoor eating in New London is underdeveloped with regard to number of establishments and quality of current offerings. Installing the Cultivator Kitchen with a cool and edgy vibe differentiated by a unique business model and excellent food will result in substantial revenue generation during July and August 2017.

The market for supporting people to start their own business and / or build skills that increase employability is also underdeveloped. Part of the cultivator concept is an attempt to address this gap by embedding nascent entrepreneurs in a living classroom experience. Not only does this hands-on approach promise to be a richer learning experience than traditional kitchen preparation programs, but it also provides a self-financing context with income for participants from the success of the restaurant business.

**Stage Two Potential**

Success in the form of financial profits and validation of other value-creating aspects will set the stage for developing permanent infrastructure that supports the Cultivator Kitchen to activate multiple operations. Critical to this is building a large commissary kitchen space. The lot adjacent to 174 Bank St. is an ideal location and building for such a development. 170 Bank St. (what for many years was the Salvation Army) is a great fit to install a large scale production kitchen in the bottom floor to support multiple activities including a full restaurant on the top floor.
The volume of activity forecasted within this space will effectively establish 170 Bank St. as diversified enterprising food hub. Part of the purpose is to provide a vibrant market for locally produced food through continuing to prototype new ventures and products as a context that cultivate people.

Redeveloping the building and constructing a more permanent outdoor dining site at 174 Bank St. for summer 2018 will also be a class-like project utilizing the expertise of the Yestermorrow Design / Build School from VT.

**Context**

Starting and running a restaurant creates context and cash flow to innovate in an environment that is ripe at multiple levels.

**City of New London**

New London has long teetered on the verge of tipping into realizing phenomenal potential. This compact urban core where the Thames River opens up into Long Island Sound is asset-rich and yet has been stuck in an economically stagnant state for decades. A primary aim of this work is to unleash dynamics that activate residents to become primary actors and beneficiaries of efforts that improve the community and regional economy through operations that intentionally better natural systems.

**Spark Makerspace**
Spark started as a community-run workshop and learning center in downtown New London in 2016. Core to the mission is to create context that supports people to make things and make things happen in ways that optimize learning and creative expression. A desire to “spark” community and place means that some of these learning opportunities happen in an applied way outside the doors of Spark’s spaces which include a woodshop, commercial kitchen, artspaces, meeting spaces, a retail storefront, and more.

Spark does not identify as a business incubator per se. The goal of Spark is not to start businesses; it is to support individuals to be creative and self-direct their own development. This is best accomplished within applied contexts that provide income which supports people and the work. Income also serves as a positive motivator pulling people into work that is a good fit for their specific talents and growth potential. Centering operations around human development and supporting motivated people to work together according to talent will increase the success rate of ventures. Nesting the Spark work within a nonprofit structure with a multi-faceted mission that includes environmental sustainability guides the work that happens to actively help, not inadvertently harm, natural systems.

With less than a year of operations under its belt, Spark has over 100 individual Members and is now establishing membership for small businesses and community organizations. Identified as Collaborative Members, these organizations include existing organizations and new entities developed by individual Spark Members.

The development of Collaborative Membership is being designed to support both the increased success of local organizations (nonprofit and for profit) and the skill-building and opportunity creation of individual Members. Connecting the two will be facilitated by bringing on a dedicated Director of Collaborative Membership at Spark to oversee contracting with businesses and organizations that become members of Spark to identify specific things they need to address to become more viable. The talents and learning goals of individual Members of Spark are known and tracked in a database. A Director of Collaborative Membership can utilize this tool as well as their knowledge of actively engaged Members to source people who would be a good fit to help the organizational members. This will take shape as placing people in opportunities that optimize their learning, portfolio-building, or just an opportunity to contract for paid work.

Some of the support of Collaborative Members will also follow the applied learning class format of the cultivator model with opportunities for individual Members to work with experts in the field, from SCORE for example, to get mentored in placements that effectively improve viability for the entity. This dynamic promises to help direct human talent to go where it is most needed while also supporting that talent to grow.

**Montauk House Cafe**

In many ways this project is an outgrowth of the approach that Robert Ramsay has taken starting the [Montauk House Cafe](http://www.montaukhousecafe.com). Robert opportunistically purchased a small restaurant one
mile outside of downtown New London as a test kitchen to support his consulting work in NY. He decided to open it as restaurant with no signage in this less-than-ideal location to see if he could build a customer base purely through social media. He was also interested to see if there was demand for better food in New London.

Initially the plan was to open for three months. Now, one year in, the unexpected success has made it difficult to close shop. Part of the desire to start the Cultivator Kitchen is to build on the learnings validated through the Montauk House to realize the larger vision articulated in this project description.

**Climate Change**

The development of this project is also an opportunity to think and design for shifts happening in the global context. A primary shift already making itself known is climate change, which stands to have a huge impact on how we feed ourselves. Natural systems are increasingly under duress and exponentially changing away from historical norms. What we grow and have become accustomed to eating as part of our normalized diet forms and is informed by current market supply and demand in the agricultural sector, whether in the local / sustainable market or in the industrial supply chain.

Not only is the norm of sourcing from great distances likely to become more difficult and costly but the types of food we currently grow are out of step with the crops that will thrive in the emerging weather and climate conditions. Given that most people do not like change, particularly when it comes to primary sources of comfort like diet, it is important to start experimenting with these new crops and foods now.

Part of what is possible with the Cultivator Kitchen project is to create a market that supports local farmers to take the risk in trying new crops as a way to introduce new foods to consumers as something trendy. This will help create a dynamic that pulls growing and eating activities into a more direct, dynamic, and productive human-land-world relationship.

**Testing the Concept**

Working as a Thames River Innovation Places project with the support of UConn Extension is enabling a Lean Startup approach to provide rigor and structure to support the project as a bonafide experiment in an innovative approach to community economic development with data collection throughout the process. This will enable continuous refinement of both starting the restaurant operation (something that has been done before) and learning how to operationalize the cultivator dynamics (something that has not been done before). Value creation will be observed along multiple tracks of work including how people learn and grow, how businesses are started and supported, and how work activities improve place.

**Operations**


Making the Cultivator Kitchen happen at 174 & 170 Bank St. is a first visible demonstration of how Spark works as a site for Members to start projects that benefit themselves, Spark as an entity and community, and the broader community in southeastern CT.

Robert, Rolando, and Hannah are incorporating a new business to house the restaurant operation. This Cultivator Kitchen will be a Collaborative Member of Spark. This will create opportunities for individual Members of Spark to help in multiple ways including creatively making the vacant lot at 174 Bank St. site look great.

Residents of southeastern CT interested in starting a restaurant business will be invited to take classes at Spark in May and June to provide learning through testing recipes and doing food service in the main Spark space at 86 Golden St. where the kitchen and event space is located. Work will also be done at the Montauk House to introduce what is like to work in a different kitchen. This will enable Robert, Roland, and Hannah to identify and train 5 - 8 people who will work with them to start and run the operation at 174 Bank St. over the summer. The Montauk House kitchen will likely serve as the primary kitchen prep and storage site supporting operations at 174 Bank St. It is anticipated that operations will begin in July with both food and liquor sales.

**Structuring Spark as an Ecosystem**

An overarching goal of this work is to help Spark Membership and the broader community of people paying attention to learn and see how Spark can work for them as a site for business development. This promises to inspire and support greater numbers of people to exercise personal agency to start or find work that is a good fit for their development.

Validation of the Cultivator Kitchen may include structuring this new private entity with Spark holding an equity stake for providing context and resources. This will provide Spark with cash flow for baseline operations and begin to flow money into establishing the **Enrichment Fund**. This internal fund will provide money for individual Members to take classes that support their growth in ways that enrich their abilities to contribute to the community.

Collaborative Members may also be able to access the Enrichment Fund as a resource internal to Spark for startup or working capital to pursue activities that support the ability of these organizations to do good work in the community. Repayment through loans or a percentage of income through an equity stake will replenish the Enrichment Fund to support ongoing development of individuals and entities.

**Budget**

The Cultivator Kitchen project requests support to purchase the building at 170 Bank St. to develop a commissary kitchen to establish the Cultivator Kitchen business development group leveraged by the unique partnership with Spark Makerspace. Further support is requested to
hire a Director of Collaborative Membership to ignite the potential of this project and Spark’s ability to support business success, workforce development, and increased entrepreneurship.

Building cost to purchase in year one is $300,000. Kitchen build out is $150,000 in the year one, $100,000 in year two, and $50,000 in year three.

Salary cost for Director of Collaborative Membership is forecasted at $75,000 per year with request of full amount in the first year ramping down to $50,000 in year two and $25,000 in year three.

Anticipated revenue just on the for profit Cultivator Kitchen restaurant side is $260,000 in year one through sales at 174 Bank St, $570,000 in year two after the commissary kitchen has been activated at 170 Bank St., and $1,000,000 in year three through ongoing expansion.

**Team**

Robert Ramsay is responsible for Operations. He brings decades of experience in the food space, including starting and running a large scale catering operation in DC and consulting in NY to start or turn around failing restaurant operations. He started the Montauk House Cafe in 2016 as a test kitchen to support his NY consulting after relocating to New London to be close to his daughters.

Rolando Robledo is responsible for Food. He is a New London native looking for a way to come home. He has moved around the country working under some of the most distinguished chefs including Thomas Keller, Danny Meyer, and Emeril Lagasse. In 2008 he became the second person in to operationalize Clover Food Lab, a phenomenally successful healthy fast food operation in Boston which he left in 2013 after taking it from two people to hundreds. He currently teaches at Johnson and Wales Culinary School in Providence.

Hannah Gant is responsible for facilitation of Partnerships, Educational Programming, and Communications. She is also a veteran in the food space, having managed farmers’ markets, worked as a cheesemaker, had a farm business, and started a candy bar business. In 2014 she completed a Masters in Business Administration in community economic development and finance at Pinchot University in Seattle. For the past two years she has been at the center of starting Spark Makerspace.

**Timeline**

The Thames River Innovation Place began with the City of New London and City and Town of Groton to create a strong nucleus at the heart of the economic engine for southeastern CT. The plan is to expand scope and efforts into the greater region as the core becomes functional and strong to include additional institutions and places, particularly networking with activities in Norwich.
Core Team Members

**Susan Froshauer**, PhD, is a biopharmaceutical R&D entrepreneur who now connects scientists and technology to resources that enable startups to nucleate and grow. Susan founded and served for 11 years as CEO of Rib-X in New Haven (now Melinta), which is about to commercialize a new antibiotic. Several others are under development. In visioning her company, she sought to change the way antibiotics are discovered. She disassembled traditional drug discovery teams, who organize into silos based upon disciplines, and by promoting this paradigm shift encouraged the discipline of structure-based drug design. By mixing chemists with structural biologists, computational chemists with pharmacologists, scientists were stimulated to think in new ways. Her leadership brought together a powerful management team and over $150 M of venture capital.

**Hannah Gant**, MBA, is the driving force initiating Spark Makerspace as site for positive disruption in the life and economy of southeastern CT with the specific goal of prototyping a context that optimizes human capital. She received an MBA in Sustainable Systems from Pinchot University with a focus on community economic development and finance. Before the MBA she started or operated five organizations in four years in the food space. She is connected to the New Economy movement nationally with an auxiliary homebase in Seattle (where she grew up) and also does work in Boston & NY. Hannah sits on the Board of the Renaissance City Development Association, New London’s economic development corporation.

**Kristin Harkness** is a tech entrepreneur based in New London. Kristin has been a software developer for 30+ years and co-founded her first company in 2003. Kristin was a developer, team lead and VP for over 9 years at KAYAK.com, the metasearch engine that reshaped how people search for travel. Since leaving KAYAK and moving home to CT, Kristin became the first engineer and an investor in Drafted, a startup aiming to disrupt recruiting which was incubated in Boston by Blade. Kristin is a member of the board of TECHCONN, a sometime angel investor, and is currently renovating a building on Bank Street in New London which will house her latest tech venture, Bits and Pixels.

**Tracee Reiser** Senior Associate Dean of Community Partnerships at Connecticut College, is an education entrepreneur. At the College she led efforts with faculty, staff and students to develop and implement the Holleran Center for Community Action & Public Policy, an innovative academic center and co-led efforts to design and create the Center for the Comparative Study of Race & Ethnicity. These Centers, with new models of teaching and learning, are thriving and the graduates are continuing as change makers and entrepreneurs. Tracee co-chaired the

Southeastern Connecticut Task Force on Racial Ethnic Balance in Schools that designed, created, implemented and sustained the innovative and award winning Regional Multicultural Magnet School. Further, she is part of the leadership team that designed and created and sustains the national model Science & Technology Magnet High School. For all of these entrepreneurial endeavors, Reiser secured a wide range of public and private funds.
**Kimberly Kelly** Kimberly Kelly is the Incubator Director of CURE Innovation Commons located in Groton. Kim has been in the biotech industry for over 19 years specializing in operations. She previously developed the infrastructure, programming and processes to move Worldwide Clinical Trials (formerly CEDRA) to tripling sample analysis and developed the sample control department which under her leadership became both a profitable entity and a draw for potential clients. Since leaving Worldwide Clinical Trials and returning home to CT, Kim was the Associate Director of Operations at Melinta Therapeutics (formerly Rib-X Pharmaceuticals) which was designed to induce connection between diversely skilled scientists and was built in a disruptive way to create a place for innovative thinking and collaboration. Similarly, The Commons is designed for collaboration and connectivity among entrepreneurs. Kim has worked to establish programming and hassle free spaces for the startups allowing entrepreneurs to focus on building their companies and build a valuable asset for CT.

**Aundré Bumgardner** shocked the world when he became the youngest person ever elected to the Connecticut General Assembly as well as the youngest African-American and Latino elected to a state legislature in US history, all at the age of 20. Representing the 41st House district encompassing the southern halves of Groton and New London, he worked tirelessly supporting a legislative agenda that would fortify Southeastern Connecticut as the cultural capital of the state. As a member of the Finance Revenue, and Bonding Committee, Education Committee, and Transportation Committees, he championed policy initiatives such as transforming New London to an all-magnet school district, environmental stewardship to combat climate change, implementing lean government principles to save tax dollars, the Thames River Heritage Park, and innovating vocational training to better leverage opportunities presented to the region by the renewed growth at Electric Boat. Growing up in Groton, and attending the Regional Multicultural Magnet School and ISAAC School in New London, as well the Cambridge School (Mass.) for high school, he has worked on various political campaigns providing him critical knowledge of the local, state, and federal governance at both the micro/macro levels. Now a student at Three Rivers Community College on track to complete his degree at the University of Connecticut, he understands the critical role higher education plays in enlightening the next generation of thinkers and makers in Connecticut.

**Mary Anne Rooke** is the founder of Rooke & Associates, a boutique management consulting firm based in Connecticut and serving the East Coast between New York and Boston. Founded on the West Coast in 1993, Rooke & Associates is now firmly rooted in southeastern Connecticut where Mary Anne was born and raised. Rooke & Associates specializes in helping early stage technology companies that are on the verge of high growth. She has held leadership positions in multiple industries ranging from start-up ventures to Fortune 500 companies in both publicly owned and privately held sectors. Mary Anne has served on several boards and commissions in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Connecticut including past Chairman and former President of the Angel Investor Forum (AIF) and the State Board of Directors for Crossroads Venture Group (CVG). Also, she is on the Grassroots Public Policy Committee for the national Angel Capital Association (ACA) and is an instructor for ACA’s New
England Angel Education Series. Currently, she is Vice President and Managing Director of the Angel Investor Forum (AIF) based in Connecticut. She serves on the Operating Board for the Yale Entrepreneurial Institute (YEI) as well as a mentor for startup ventures at YEI, UConn TIP, Fairfield University and The Refinery. Mary Anne is the Executive Director of Crossroads Venture Group (CVG). Previously, she served as the Executive Director of UConn’s Technology Incubation Program (TIP) located on 3 campuses. Through her management consulting, angel investor and startup activities – Mary Anne has worked closely with the entrepreneurial communities on both the east and west coasts of the US.

Paige R. Bronk, AICP, Economic and Community Development Manager – Town of Groton, has 25+ years of community experience in unique places like Newport, RI; Frankfort, KY; Savannah, GA; and Groton, CT. Earned degrees focused on environmental studies and geology from Alfred University, community planning and development from URI, and Master Mariner License (100 GT) from the Coast Guard. His emphasis has been on finding solutions to wide ranging community problems with a focus on implementation including the following examples. Savannah’s first formal Open Space Plan leading to implementation funded by millions in special purpose sales taxes. Newport Harbor Shuttle effort catalyzing the launch of a sustained water-based transportation network. Ranger Road redevelopment involving a public/private partnership through conversion of former Navy property into a Community College of Rhode Island campus and Head Start education/medical facility. Newport Heights, a HOPE VI effort and $100 million investment, involving planning and implementation of a new 425 unit housing neighborhood receiving the RIAPA award (2007) for “Outstanding Plan Implementation.” Coastal Extreme Brewing – negotiated 99 year public/private partnership agreement involving public land with private construction. Broadway planning design and collaborative charrette leading to construction of Newport's first “Complete Street.”

Sam Eisenbeiser, AICP, is the Economic Development Specialist for the Town of Groton. Sam has over 17 years of community planning experience, both as a consultant and as a municipal staff member. Since earning a Master’s degree in Community Planning from URI, Sam has specialized in technical skills including geospatial, transportation and market data analysis. As a private consultant, he contributed to the development plan for a series of undervalued parcels in the heart of downtown Meriden near the train station and central green as part of a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) campaign. A highlight of his current work includes the creation of an Airport Development Zone (ADZ) in collaboration with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center. Groton’s ADZ is one of just three in the state providing leverage to the area for targeted industry growth such as R+D. To maximize the industrial properties eligible for the ADZ incentive program, Sam pioneered the use of a spatial methodology which ultimately received state endorsement. A graduate of the Coast Guard Academy, Sam spent six years as a junior officer including a tour on a buoy tender out of Portland, Maine.

Kia Baird returned to Southeastern Connecticut after living and studying in Charlotte and Winston Salem, North Carolina. She is a graduate of Winston Salem State University where she studied the business of Music. Kia is a Soprano who studied the works such jazz vocalists as
Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Nancy Wilson. Kia’s performance resume lists classical training, including the African American Opera Barefoot narrated by the late Dr. Maya Angelou, and performing with the Eastern CT Symphony Chorus. Kia has performed at the Historic Harlem Cotton Club and in concert with Jazz greats Slide Hampton, Nicolas Payton and Saxophonist Antonio Hart. Kia is a featured soloist for RPM Voices of Rhode Island as well as performs in numerous bands local to the New England area. Kia recently finished performing and touring with stage band the Magic of Motown. Kia also sings sacred music weekly as the Director of Worship at Ledyard Gales Ferry Baptist Church located in Gales Ferry, CT. Kia is the founder of Kia B Music, an artist development and event promotion company, she is on the board of directors for the Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition and is the Interim Director of The Writer's Block Ink.

Carly Myers AICP, is a planner with 5 years of planning experience in the public and private sectors. Myers received her Masters degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Sustainable Community Design in 2012 (undergraduate degrees in conservation biology, geography, and environmental studies) and worked as a Neighborhood Planner for the City of Madison, a booming state capitol/university town of 240,000. Myers came to CT in 2013 and started working with the private sector firm Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI), focusing on Plans of Conservation and Development, Community Development Block Grants, and technical/demographic analysis for economic development projects. She has been an active working member of Spark Makerspace since 2015, and disrupted her own life in 2016 to reduce her time at MMI in order to expand her role at Spark. She is an active adviser to the Board of Directors, and helps grow capacity in an administrative and project leadership role, helping to coordinate community events and projects with local non-profits such as FRESH New London.

David Howes is the Principal/Executive Director of the Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication (ISAAC), a public independent charter school in New London, Connecticut. Since graduating from Connecticut College in 1993, David has made a career in urban school reform. Prior to working at ISAAC, David taught for two years in San Antonio, Texas at one of the state’s first charter schools- a second chance high school for at-risk youth. David returned to New London to earn his Masters in Teaching ('00) from Connecticut College, and started teaching at ISAAC in 1996-1997 when it first opened as one of Connecticut's first charter schools. David left ISAAC in 2011 and worked as a School Designer for Expeditionary Learning, a national school reform movement, working to transform failing schools in New Haven and Hartford. David next worked as an Assistant Principal in Hartford at the Expeditionary Learning Academy at Moylan School (ELAMS) a public neighborhood elementary school. He returned to ISAAC in 2014 as the school leader. Twenty years later, ISAAC continues to be one of the only interdistrict charter schools in the state, serving a diverse student population and partnering with the community to "rise the tide" of quality education for all students in the region.

Clint Kennedy is a public school administrator and professor based in Groton and working in New London. Clint has been an educator for twenty years focused on the learning benefits
derived from the intersection of technology and learning. He is also currently a doctoral student at the University of Connecticut researching the New Literacies of online research and learning. Clint holds a BSE in Systems Engineering from the University of Pennsylvania and and MA in Educational Psychology from UConn. He will be defending his PhD dissertation in Educational Psychology in April 2017. Clint was formally the Chief Technology Officer for Branford Public Schools June 2008 to January 2014. In Branford, Clint oversaw the districts technology department, managed technology related staff, and directed the school's various educational technology initiatives including 1-to-1 initiatives at the elementary and middle school levels. Prior to working in Branford, Clint worked as the Director of Technology for 9 years for Stonington Public Schools. Clint is currently the District Supervisor for Innovation and Personalized Learning for New London Public Schools.

**Nancy Cowser** is the Executive Director of seCTer, the Southeastern CT Enterprise Region. seCTer is the region's Economic Development District, and is responsible for developing and implementing the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The Thames River Innovation Project is directly aligned with, and is highlighted in, the most recent CEDS. Prior to joining seCTer, Nancy was the Senior Vice President of Strategy at UCFS Healthcare, where she was responsible for strategic planning, legislative affairs, grant writing and project management. Her career has spanned many industries, including banking, manufacturing and nonprofit organization. She is recognized for her skills in quality improvement, conflict resolution, group facilitation and cross-sector and cross-disciplinary collaboration. She earned her Master's Degree in Business from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and her Bachelor's Degree in Business from Boston College.

Nancy Cowser has led grant writing at three agencies, and volunteers at a fourth, including multi-agency collaborations that involved consensus building regarding scope of project, specific roles and budget allocations. She also led compliance with the agency’s core federal grant portfolio, and created a new division to lead quality improvement, which was recommended as a model program on which to present at an upcoming NACHC (National Association of Community Health Centers) conference, as was her preparation work for a recent federal grant program review which resulted in an extremely high compliance score compared to national averages. Nancy also serves as a federal grant reviewer.

**Jennifer Muggeo**, MPH, is the Supervisor for Finance and Special Projects in Population Health at Ledge Light Health District. After completing her undergraduate work in Business Management, she exercised her entrepreneurial muscles at a privately owned staffing agency for creative talent, which had to frequently pivot and respond to changing market circumstances in the economic downtown of the early 2000’s. She disrupted her own life in 2005 to join the public sector, where she implemented significant changes to the financial and information technology infrastructures of the multi-municipality health district. While she continues to be responsible for those domains twelve years later, Jen’s role in Special Projects in Population Health focuses largely on working with community partners and residents to improve the social, economic and political conditions that impact health outcomes, with a particular emphasis on
creating more just and equitable communities that offer opportunities for innovators from all walks of life to fully participate.

Thomas A. (Tony) Sheridan emigrated from Ireland to New London at age 19. He became a licensed plumber and pipe fitter with Local 305. Tony earned his high school equivalency with New London Continuing Education, graduated from Connecticut College with a BA in urban affairs, and was awarded a Watson Fellowship to study worker participation in decision-making in several European countries. After his fellowship he completed his MA in organizational psychology at the University of New Haven. He went on to work for the Town of Waterford as Development Coordinator and for Connecticut College for 13 years as Director for Human Resources. Throughout this time he volunteered on numerous local boards and agencies.

Tony was elected to one term as minority Selectman of Waterford and subsequently was elected First Selectman for four terms. Major accomplishments as Selectman included: three separate town charter changes to streamline the management of town government, the organizing of a plan for conservation and development for the town, founding and chairing the Council of Governments (COG). In addition, he constructed affordable housing for seniors and reduced staffing levels which resulted in lowering the general government budget by $800,000 over his term of office. Following his tenure as First Selectman, Tony served as External Relations Consultant for Northeast Utilities and as Manager of Community Relations for Dominion Nuclear CT.

Currently, he is the President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, a membership organization of 1,600 companies where he is organizing regional forces to support local businesses. During his tenure at the Chamber he worked tirelessly to stop the BRAC process from closing the local Navy Base in Connecticut. Tony lives in Waterford with his wife Peggy. They have two sons, Keenan who is a Dean at Savannah Country Day School in Georgia, and Tosh who is a professional musician in New York City.

Sheri Cote is Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut who understand the opportunities and challenges that businesses face in today’s economic climate. At the Chamber she manages a $1.2 million annual budget, directs communications and services for 1,600 members and oversees more than 150 events annually – including ribbon cuttings, networking events, leadership training, award dinners, large community events (including the Eastern Connecticut Premier Home Show and the Total Life Expo). She also secures and manages small- and large-scale grants (at the local, state, and federal levels), forms and nurtures strategic alliances with corporate partners and fosters relationships with elected officials, community leaders, and the local media.

Sheri is also a dedicated public servant, having served on the Waterford Board of Education for 8 years, and currently serving the Waterford Economic Development Commission and Waterford RTM (Representative Town Meeting). She also served on the Board of Directors of LEARN for 8 years, 2 as Chairperson and still serves on the Executive Committee.
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Appendix A: Letters of Support
March 30, 2017

Ms. Glendowlyn Thames
Executive Director
C1Next Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Dear Ms. Thames:

The CURE Innovation Commons, which is owned by CURE Innovations, LLC is proud to be a founding member of the Thames River Innovation Places (TRIP) initiative. The Commons is a new asset in the Southeastern Connecticut community for entrepreneurship and connectivity in science and technology. We are delighted to be one of the lead institutions in the TRIP initiative, which has grown to be a cross-sector partnership among a wide span of community entities spanning New London and Groton.

Not only does The Commons bring equipped, commercial-grade lab space with discounts available from laboratory vendors, it also brings back-office support, offices, co-working and meeting spaces.

To support innovators at The Commons and in the region, we have partnerships with service providers, such as corporate and intellectual property law firms, investors, accountants, web designers or marketing experts. We also bring connectivity to the wide resource of CT through the Connecticut United for Research Excellence, Inc. (CURE).

In our exciting partnership with TRIP and others, The Commons has offered educational programming and mentoring for entrepreneurs. We also have invested in STEM outreach, having set aside over 400 square feet of teaching lab space for students, teachers and expert mentors in a project called the Inspiration Zone. This is one area of particular collaboration with another TRIP stakeholder, Pfizer.

During the planning phase of TRIP, The Commons provided the equivalent of $69,000 in-kind support including , events, space, social media, team participation, and $1,000 to the operating budget. This engagement has been a mutually beneficial process and has revealed new opportunities to expand existing
partnerships and create new ones as well.
Ms. Thames:

As the parent organization for the Innovation Commons, Connecticut United for Research Excellence, Inc. (CURE) is a strong supporter of Thames River Innovation Places (TRIP). The Commons joined the TRIP initiative as co-lead to partner closely with the local community to cultivate and retain talent and to promote the start-up and growth of science and technology companies.

CURE, is the bioscience cluster of Connecticut and represents a diverse community of small and large life and healthcare sciences companies, ranging in scope from therapeutics, to healthcare technology, to medical devices. Universities, government agencies, scientists, educators, mentors, students, entrepreneurs, business experts, service providers and investors join in to form the breadth of the network. CURE works to ensure a sustainable, high-value bioscience and healthcare community that improves our quality of life and keeps the Connecticut community strong.

To back the TRIP initiative, CURE brings its deep network, connectivity to its 190 members, knowledge of technology development, educators, mentors and entrepreneurship expertise.

It is our pleasure.

Sincerely,

Co-Chair

Stan Choy, MBA
Co-Chair
Treasurer
March 30, 2017

Ms. Glendowlyn Thames,
Executive Director
CTNext Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Dear Ms. Thames:

We at Dinsmore and Shohl, LLP, an innovator at The CURE Commons (curecommons.org) since 2016 are pleased to support the Thames River Innovation Places (TRIP) initiative. We sought The Commons because of its reasonable fee structure; its commitment to supporting and cultivating entrepreneurs and growing companies; and the cooperative, collaborative spirit of the community.

The resources and assets, and the overall environment has made our company feel at home in the region. We feel welcome to or, in some cases a part of, The Commons and wider TRIP activities such as Hackathons, Boosts, annual science and technology picnic, Thirsty Thursdays, STEM programs, or the Connecticut Venture Group/CURE investor event.

We are excited to see the expansion and growth of entrepreneurship in the region, and support The Commons and its role in the TRIP initiative.

Sincerely,

Weston R. Gould, Ph.D., J.D.
March 29, 2017

Ms. Glendowlyn Thames,
Executive Director
CTNext Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Dear Ms. Thames:

Easymeeting, Inc, an innovator at The CURE Commons (curecommons.org) since September, 2016 is pleased to support the Thames River Innovation Places (TRIP) initiative. We sought The Commons because of its reasonable fee structure; its commitment to supporting and cultivating entrepreneurs and growing companies; and the cooperative, collaborative spirit of the community.

The resources and assets, and the overall environment has made our company feel at home in the region. We’ve enjoyed taking advantage of many of the perks as well as some of the events like Thirsty Thursdays, CVG investor event and more. Having the in house resources and increased network has been hugely beneficial for us and we are looking forward to growing our team while at the CURE Commons.

We are excited to see the expansion and growth entrepreneurship in the region, support The Commons and its role in the TRIP initiative.

Best,
Caity Serra
COO at Easymeeting.net
cait@easymeeting.net
855-299-3279 ext 892
March 31, 2017

Ms. Glendowlyn Thames  
Executive Director  
CT Next Innovation Places  
865 Brook Street  
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Dear Ms. Thames:

General Dynamics Electric Boat supports the Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP) initiative. As the primary builder of submarines for the United States Navy for more than 100 years, we have a long history of attracting and employing a skilled and highly-trained workforce, including engineers, machinists, and welders, to design and manufacture world-class submarines at our sites in Groton and New London.

Several TRIP initiatives could help support Electric Boat:

- **The Community Concierge program:** A recent survey of our employees indicated that they want to become more connected to their communities through service, educational, and cultural activities. A well-designed Community Concierge program could introduce our employees and their families to the opportunities that the Thames River area has to offer. Stronger connections to the area could improve employee retention.

- **Underwater Sea Consortium at UConn Avery Point:** This effort would focus on building a network of companies to collectively address challenges posed by the expanding submarine construction with the goal of increasing the number of suppliers in SECT. The partnership would include the UCONN School of Engineering, the Marine Science Department, and the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance.

Awarding the Thames River Innovation Places initiative with official status is a critical step to substantiate these ideas and others to attract and retain talent to Southeastern Connecticut, and to enhance the area's regional competitiveness. Electric Boat supports designation of New London and Groton as an Innovation Place in the state.

Sincerely

;)

Maura Dunn  
Vice President  
Human Resources and Administration

75 Eastern Point Road  
Groton, CT 06340  
860-433-2618
March 27, 2017

Ms. Glendowlyn Thames,
Executive Director
CTNext Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Dear Ms. Thames:

GestVision, an innovator at The CURE Commons (curecommons.org) since opening in June 2016 is pleased to support the Thames River Innovation Places (TRIP) initiative. We chose The Commons to locate our business because of its reasonable fee structure; it's beautiful and well-designed facility, its commitment to supporting and cultivating entrepreneurs and growing companies; and the cooperative, collaborative spirit of the community the Commons and CURE cultivates.

The resources and assets, and the overall environment has made our company feel at home in the region. We feel welcome and a part of The Commons and wider TRIP activities such as Hackathons, Boosts, annual science and technology picnic, Thirsty Thursdays, STEM programs, or the Connecticut Venture Group/CURE investor event.

We are excited to see the expansion and growth entrepreneurship in the region, support The Commons and its role in the TRIP initiative.

Sincerely,

Wendy L Davis
Founder and CEO
March 24, 2017

CT Next Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

To the CT Next Board of Directors:

This letter is to express Norwich Community Development Corporation’s (NCDC) support for the Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP) as an official innovation place within the southeastern corner of the state.

We have read and reviewed the TRIP Strategic Plan. The strategy to support existing work and start new projects by building upon all that is unique about the community and economy in this region makes so much sense. We have been impressed by the planning work and the ways in which the TRIP group has engaged communities beyond their immediate footprint. The TRIP leadership team has communicated in words and action that though they are rightfully starting with programmatically connecting New London and Groton however, this is not where the work stops. The goal of expanding the geography of TRIP to encompass many more communities in the region such as Norwich is not only smart and welcomed by the Norwich Community Development Corporation, it is imperative that we work together on this opportunity now to help expand it in the future.

In order to strengthen the candidacy of the Thames River as an Innovation Place, we are providing this letter to share that the economic development community in Norwich strongly supports the Thames River Innovation Place and sees opportunity for the entire region in the effort. We are particularly interested in supporting the Community Concierge as well as hosting Innovation Boosts at Foundry 66.

Robert 8. Mills
President
March 31, 2017

Pfizer Connecticut Laboratories
Eastern Point Road
Groton, CT 06340

Ms. Glendowlyn Thames
Executive Director
CTNext Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Dear Ms. Thames:

Pfizer’s Connecticut Laboratories located in Groton is supportive of the Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP) initiative. As Pfizer’s largest research and development site, with a long history in this area, our Connecticut Labs serve at heart of fulfilling Pfizer’s purpose as we work to translate advanced science and technologies into the therapies that matter for patients in need. We achieve this with diverse and highly trained colleagues who we attract both nationally and internationally.

TRIP presents an unprecedented development for the Thames River area. Companies and other institutions in the area will have the ability to work with a single body comprised of multiple municipalities and other stakeholder groups in southeastern Connecticut. A strong and sustainable TRIP group promises to create tremendous opportunities for Pfizer and other large and small employers in the area.

There are several benefits we see currently. One is the Community Concierge program. Many of our new colleagues come from outside of the area. We recognize a Community Concierge could be a viable solution to enhance our ability to attract, connect and retain talent. We support a systematic approach that more quickly engages people coming to the area.

We are also supportive of opportunities at CURE Innovation Commons and SPARK that focus on educational programming in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), entrepreneurship and cross-discipline innovation. We appreciate the concrete resources for innovators at both incubators from back-office support to laboratories for scientists or chefs to co-working environments.

Awarding the Thames River Innovation Places initiative with official status is a critical step to substantiate and leverage these ideas which could bring a greater vibrancy and an entrepreneurial mindset to our region. Pfizer strongly urges the state to designate New London and Groton as a Connecticut Innovation Place.
Sincerely,

John Burkhardt, DVM, PhD, ACVP, ABT
Vice President, Head of Global Drug Safety Research & Development
Site Director, Connecticut Laboratories
March 29, 2017

CTNext Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, Connecticut 06067

To the CTNext Board of Directors:

The Connecticut Small Business Development Center (CTSBDC) is pleased to support the application for implementation funding for Thames River Innovation Place. We are also pleased that our southeastern Connecticut area Business Advisor, Matt Nemeth, was invited to participate with work groups and attend meetings sponsored by the Thames River IP Team. We are excited about the possibilities under discussion and believe the Team has created a solid vision to foster innovation and business creation in the southeastern region.

We have discussed with the Thames River IP Team the possibility of locating Matt within the Innovation Place district, once established. In addition, we have offered tailored peer-to-peer learning experiences for owners and individuals who are attracted to the district.

We are really excited about Thames River IP's commitment to explore bringing a community-centric entrepreneurial mindset education program to the area's youth. The Team has discussed a "train the trainer" approach which we believe will enable young residents from diverse communities to understand the attitudes, thinking, and approaches that successful people bring to innovation and creation, and how they proactively seek opportunities in their communities. We believe this is truly a "disruptive" approach to nurturing our next generation of creators in Connecticut.

CTSBDC believes the Innovation Place program is vitally important to the future of Connecticut's cities, and a resource that will prove invaluable to our state's innovators and creators. We hope to assist all of the Innovation Places that implement programs and services, through a physical presence that brings no-cost advising and other services to the district, or through a more robust group advising or learning experiences. We believe a combination of location, activity, and interaction among participants will help Innovation Places flourish in every community committed to their success.

We are encouraged by Thames River IP's embrace of this important opportunity and your Team's diligent work to design a truly collaborative approach to fostering innovation. We strongly encourage CTNext Board to look favorably upon their application for funding.

Sincerely,

Emily J. Carter, State Director
Connecticut Small Business Development Center
University of Connecticut, School of Business 222
Pitkin Street
East Hartford, CT 06108
March 28, 2017

CT Next Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

To the CT Next Board of Directors:

The Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer) is proud to be a founding member of the Thames River Innovation Places (TRIP) initiative. We have a history of serving in a regional economic development capacity and feel that this group adds momentum and substance to the efforts to regionalize in southeastern CT.

seCTer is the Economic Development Organization (EDO) managing the region’s Economic Development District (EDD). An EDD is a region, designated by the Assistant Secretary of Commerce, to undertake and carry out economic development projects under the U.S. Economic Development Administration’s (USED) Public Works & Economic Development Act programs. One of our primary responsibilities as an EDO is to develop, manage and implement the region’s comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS). The CEDS is a planning tool and process developed by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of a master plan to strengthen regional economies. The CEDS is a requirement for USEDA funding, and is an excellent tool for regions in prioritizing economic development initiatives. The CEDS must be aligned with the goals of, and be approved by, the state’s Office of Policy Management (OPM) and Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). It must also be aligned with the goals of, and be approved by, the USEDA.

For southeastern CT, TRIP is not only aligned with the CEDS, it is a critical goal within the plan:

**Broad Goal 3**: Reposition the southeastern CT region as one innovation economy by continually transforming our current systems, structures and physical landscapes into those that are highly connected, self-reinforcing and innovation. Then brand the movement.  
**Objective 3B**: Create (utilize) advocacy groups to identify gaps in the innovation ecosystem (between current and emerging economy); develop strategies; quantify the benefits of investment; and advocate for action.

* A public-private partnership for economic development serving southeastern Connecticut
Action 3B1: Use Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP) process as a model for the region and as a catalyst to develop a regional network to support innovation. Support projects developed by TRIP.

seCTer has developed a list of potential regional metrics that it will utilize to benchmark and report progress on the various aspects of the plan. The specific metrics utilized will be finalized by project teams implementing the plan. These metrics will be monitored and reported upon by seCTer, and will be publicly available. seCTer is securing resources to capture regional data that matches our unique service area, which does not exactly mirror county lines, and to manage and report upon project progress.

We are delighted to be one of the lead institutions in the TRIP initiative which has grown to be a cross-sector partnership among a wide span of community entities spanning New London and Groton. We urge you to support this initiative.

Sincerely,

Nancy M. Cowser
Executive Director
March 27, 2017

CT Next Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

To the CT Next Board of Directors:

Connecticut College is proud to be a founding member of the Thames River Innovation Places (TRIP) initiative. Connecticut College has a long tradition of innovation and community engagement and we are delighted to be one of the key institutions in the TRIP initiative which has grown to be a cross-sector partnership among a wide span of community entities. TRIP has demonstrated effective strategies for collective action and we are continuously improving the structures for sustained community level outcomes. During the planning phase of TRIP, Connecticut College provided staff and faculty leadership involvement, facilities and resources for meetings and retreats, data and research, and $5,000 in cash to the operating budget. This engagement has been a mutually beneficial process and has revealed new opportunities to expand existing college/community partnerships and create new ones as well.

Throughout the past three years, Connecticut College has been designing and implementing the Connections Curriculum, an innovative new curriculum that engages students integrating their education and deepening their out of classroom learning. The TRIP initiative and the two anchor institutions, CURE Innovation Commons and Spark Makerspace are valued partners in this development. The College is increasing programmatic connections with the CURE Innovation Commons as well as exploring institutional membership with the Spark Makerspace community. Beyond these engagements, the College will continue to be a key entity within TRIP through providing facilities, research, staff, faculty and students as co-creators of knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurial enterprises.

The College has enjoyed working with Spark over the past two years primarily through Community Partnerships, the Holleran Center and the Ammerman Center. The Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology is an interdisciplinary community of students, faculty, staff, artists, and scholars dedicated to exploring the dynamic intersections of creativity with the arts, sciences, humanities and social sciences through innovation, research and creation. The new connections and collaborations with Spark over the last year have enhanced plans to increase community-based creativity and innovation in the Center.
Action and Public Policy has established a relationship with Spark that is furthering students’ learning about social innovation and community collaborations. Hannah Gant from Spark is now teaching the Junior Seminar in the Program in Community Action. Students in this Seminar focus on how social, political and civic systems work and how they can be effective change agents leveraging market forces for positive impacts. The Connecticut College and Spark campuses form unique teaching and learning environments and we pleased to bring more students and scholarship into

the community and connected to economic development efforts. Part of what is being explored with Ms. Gant’s dual role as a Spark leader and Connecticut College faculty is how our facilities might be utilized in new ways for learning opportunities centering on innovation available to the broader community.

While working at Yale University, I co-founded the Yale Entrepreneurial Institute which is a thriving university department that helps entrepreneurs and innovators at Yale start scalable new ventures. It is a hub for innovation and I envision the Thames River Innovation Place initiative guiding the New London/Groton geographic area into another hub for innovation and entrepreneurial developments.

I encourage the CT Next Board to support the candidacy of the Thames River Innovation Place. This validation is precisely what is needed to further build momentum that is effectively connecting institutions of higher learning like Connecticut College with all that is in development in both the local and global context.

Please let me know if I can provide further information.

Sincerely,

Richard Madonna
Vice President

To the CT Next Board of Directors:

The University of Connecticut (UConn) Department of Extension Programs in Community & Economic Development are pleased to enthusiastically support and participate in the Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP) project work in New London and Groton. Extension’s goal is to
connect research to local issues by creating practical, science-based answers to complex problems. The Extension system is comprised of over 100 statewide educators and experts in areas including community economic development, youth development, food systems, agriculture, and sustainability. Given our demonstrated experience in research-based community program development, and the broad range of resources available through the state’s premier research University, we believe Extension’s participation will add significant value to the TRIP project.

We are eager to engage with communities in southeastern Connecticut through this initiative. Specifically, UConn will assist with development of appropriate program performance indicators, including participation in relevant workgroups, design and implementation of public participation, as well as assistance with data collection and communication as appropriate. The extent of our participation in the project will be determined as the project progresses based on interest and need and we have outlined three potential scenarios in the scope of work. We intend to apply a “developmental evaluation” approach, in which data is collected during program implementation to allow ongoing adaptation and innovation. This parallels the lean startup approach being applied in the project to support a more entrepreneurial ecosystem. We see this as a scholarly case study of an innovative effort to support urban communities and intend to document and share our learning with scholars and community development practitioners around the country.

Laura Brown, Associate Extension Community & Economic Development Educator, will spearhead this engagement from Extension. Laura will partner with leaders of TRIP and UConn colleagues including Dr. Assistant Extension Educator - Evaluation Specialist, Miriah Russo Kelly, and Assistant Professor and Extension Economist, Dr. John Bovay to determine performance indicators as part of an open community process. This initial scoping will establish a baseline assessment for project-specific performance indicators as well as milestones.

Should the project request more significant involvement, Brown and Kelly will assist with development of a performance dashboard that allows for real time tracking that project participants can feed data into continuously. This will be observed and managed by implementation teams to support pivots if need be so that operations stay aligned with overarching goals as new opportunities and risks present themselves. UConn Extension Economist Dr. John Bovay, a New London resident, will join the effort once enough data is amassed to perform more serious analytics to inform the ongoing improvement of work.

In addition to activities noted above, should the project request additional research support, the UConn project research team noted above would hire and supervise a graduate student for one year to assist with data collection, cleaning, analysis, communication, and scholarship. This
option could involve working with data from multiple communities involved in the Innovation Places proposal and would interface with the state’s plan for comprehensive metric tracking. Hiring graduate student assistance would add value to the project by allowing the research team to collect and analyze data in a more timely way to allow “real time” feedback to community partners. Given the team’s “lean” approach, this turnaround will be an essential component of the evaluation. A graduate student could also significantly contribute to the envisioned research agenda by developing scholarly writing, presentations, and literature searches (for instance of best practices from other communities) as the project progresses.

We understand that one of the hallmarks of an “innovation place” is strengthening connections between institutions of research and what is happening in the community and economy. Extension’s involvement in supporting activities in New London and Groton seems like a fitting validation of this.

Respectfully,

Michael O’Neill  
Associate Dean & Associate Director, UConn Extension

Bonnie Burr  
Assistant Director/Department Head, UConn Extension

Laura Brown  
Associate Extension Community & Economic Development Educator - UConn Extension

Dr. Miriah Russo Kelly  
Assistant Extension Educator – Evaluation Specialist - UConn Extension
March 31, 2017

RE: Thames River Innovation Places Application

Dear CTNEXT Innovation Places Review Board:

On behalf of the School of Engineering at the University of Connecticut, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Thames River Innovation Places application and, in particular, the project to create the Connecticut Naval Undersea Supply Chain Consortium. The proposed consortium will significantly strengthen the naval supply chain in Connecticut and thereby promote economic development both regionally and across Connecticut.

A primary function of the consortium is to create a strong professional network across these supply chain companies so they can work together to compete more effectively for naval contracts. Additionally, the consortium will also address workforce issues and innovation development. UConn Engineering will work with the consortium to advance these two functions. Specifically, we will work with the consortium to develop targeted workforce development activities to support Connecticut's naval sector. The need for a highly skilled workforce to meet the Navy's projected submarine production has become a major issue.

UConn Engineering will also work with the consortium companies to promote innovation in product design and manufacturing processes. The UConn Tech Park supports advanced technologies in many areas including advanced microscopy and material characterization; metal-based additive manufacturing; cybersecurity; complex systems engineering and robotic manufacturing. We will work with the consortium leadership to conduct technology assessments across the consortium members to identify technology gaps and opportunities for technology insertion.

UConn Engineering has a strong commitment to economic development in Connecticut and look forward to the opportunity to contribute through the Connecticut Naval Undersea Supply Chain Consortium.

Sincerely,

Michael Accorsi

Dr. John Bovay
Assistant Professor and Extension Economist - Agricultural and Resource Economics
March 31, 2017

CT Next Innovation Process
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Dear CT Next Innovation Process:

I am writing to enthusiastically support the Thames River Innovation Place initiative. TRIP is developing into a process, structure and a series of projects that will advance our community and solidify New London and Groton as an economic, social and cultural hub.

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital is a leader in the Connecticut health care system and a major employer in New London and Groton. Our team represents the very best doctors, healthcare professionals, and administrators. We are a technology advanced system and require the best educated and skilled employees. The TRIP initiative will contribute to creating and sustaining this area as one where talented people want to work and live, which is vital to our vast and expanding evolution and success as a leading health care provider and innovator in the field.

From the Concierge Project that will welcome and engage people to the Ignite Project that will offer enterprising opportunities for production and creation, the Thames River Innovation Place initiative is comprehensive and focused on innovation. I believe the leadership team has demonstrated the knowledge, skills and capacities necessary to steward the process, move with agility, and not only create and sustain projects, but continuously build the innovation ecosystem across all sectors. Lawrence + Memorial Hospital will continue to be connected the initiative and promote the mutually beneficial strategies that act as catalysts towards New London/ Groton innovation place.

I encourage the CT Next Innovation Places to recognize the Thames River Innovation Place initiative as a powerful program and select it for an Innovation Place award.
March 30, 2017

Glendowlyn L.H. Thames
Director, Small Business Innovation Group
CTNext
Connecticut Innovations
865 Brook Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067-3444

Dear Glendowlyn,

This purpose of this letter is to share with you that Crossroads Venture Group (CVG) is a keen supporter of the Thames River Innovation Places (TRIP) and its efforts in facilitating the growth of entrepreneurial activities in the Southeastern CT region.

CVG hopes to collaborate with the TRIP team to host CVG's Entrepreneurial and Investor Network type events in the Groton/New London area. These events connect promising early stage startup ventures as well as later stage companies with the investment community via 1:1 meetings between investors and entrepreneurs, company pitching and showcasing opportunities and networking sessions. Over this past year, CVG has successfully co-hosted several Entrepreneurial and Investor Network events with CURE's Innovation Commons in Groton.

I truly hope you will give TRIP the opportunity to become one of CTNext's Innovation Places. This funding will allow this talented and diverse TRIP team to promote more entrepreneurship, collaborations, alliances and partnerships within this southeastern CT community -- an area rich in resources that are needed to launch new ventures and scale existing businesses.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Rooke
Executive Director
Crossroads Venture Group
222 Pitkin Street, Suite 113
East Hartford, CT 06108
www.CVG.org
March 30, 2017

CT Next Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
To the CT Next Board of Directors:

My name is Isaac Brody.

I am a young professional running my own social media company out of WeWork in Manhattan. Our goal is to create a unique marketing plan and to develop a distinct voice for each of our clients. Visit me at: http://www.socialikeinc.com

I have a long history with New London as my great-grandparents settled on Home Street in 1898 and started J. Solomon’s Inc. My grandmother, mother and wife were all born in New London. (I met my wife in New York) I spent my summers in New London. With it’s six miles of waterfront, 3 colleges, old world architecture and charm, restaurants, recreational opportunities, laid back ambiance and affordable housing, New London offers a respite from the frenzied pace of New York.

I love the idea that Spark Makerspace offers the opportunity to spend my summers in New London with my young family and still maintain a presence in a business community. Easy transportation from NYC to NL makes it possible to travel between two workplaces without missing a beat in the day to day management of Socialike.

Computers have changed the job market so dramatically that many professionals can work from ‘anywhere.’ All my hard work is for naught if I can’t enjoy the fruits of my labor with my family. It’s a quality of life that Spark makes possible through access to tools and equipment I need to manage my business. New London is a significantly more attractive option for New Yorkers than the Hamptons or the Jersey shore. Traveling to eastern Long Island or New Jersey is torturous in the best of circumstances. Everyone wants to ‘get out’ in the summer and because restaurants, housing and recreational options are significantly less expensive and plentiful in New London, it is a perfect alternative.

I am so keen on Sparks that I have directed my family foundation to support this organization and will continue to do so. Their commitment and dedication to empower downtown New London and Southeastern Connecticut is especially important to me. I think NL is a hidden treasure with unlimited potential and possibilities. My parents and in-laws are retiring to New London so I have strong ties to the community and a vested interest in its success.
Please support the New London and Groton Sparks Marketspace as an innovation Place so that investments can be made that enrich the experience for people like myself.

Sincerely,

Isaac Brody

March 27, 2017

CT Next Innovation Places
865 Brook Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

To the CT Next Board of Directors:

The Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication (ISAAC) is a proud member of the Thames River Innovation Places (TRIP) initiative. I have served as the Executive Director/Principal of ISAAC for the last 3 years and have been part of this public charter middle school since its inception in 1996.

I joined the TRIP effort as a member of the Core Team level last fall after a conversation with co-lead Hannah Gant from Spark Makerspace about re-imagining schools as a type of business incubator. The vision that the TRIP group holds for developing the fresh thinking of young people as a way to position them as bonafide contributing members of society motivated me to get involved.

Part of what the TRIP group learned through the Story of Place process is to think of southeastern Connecticut as a place of experimentation and innovation, where big things have (and can) happen even though we are relatively small. ISAAC is a perfect example of this mindset and understands itself as a laboratory for learning where promising practices can be shared with the larger districts in the region. Being incubators of innovation is a primary reason charter school legislation was written. We are agile in a way that the larger public school system cannot be. This agility allows us to test the market in pursuit of ways to better serve and develop students that can be rolled out at scale when validated.

ISAAC is the only public charter school in the Thames River region. We have a history of innovation through project based learning, character education, and student ownership. Students at ISAAC engage in Learning Expeditions, which are integrated, interdisciplinary long-term projects that focus on real world issues, require original research and culminate in high quality products that are presented to the community in a celebration of learning and often have
a service component. Some examples of past expeditions include children’s books depicting the history of human interaction with the Thames River, an original student musical about the whaling industry in the Thames Region, and student-created websites featuring heroes who make a difference in their community.

ISAAC’s participation in the TRIP effort has set the stage for playing an important role as we move to the implementation phase. Scientific study has demonstrated that the optimal time to influence the course of someone’s life is during the ages of eleven-fourteen. This is the audience of students who ISAAC educates day in and day out, from throughout the region and all walks of life.

ISAAC is eager to seize the opportunity through the genesis of TRIP to make real a dynamic in which young people can be supported to be and become entrepreneurs. Accordingly, we are spearheading the effort to bring the Ice House Entrepreneurship training program to the Thames River. Bringing this business accelerator program here is happening in partnership with Spark Makerspace, the Small Business Development Center, New London Public Schools and Groton Public Schools. We are currently engaged in outreach efforts to grow the base of people who take this “train the trainers” class with members of our community from outside of the school system in August 2017. The goal is to train up to 25 people with the ability to lead this innovative program teaching not just the nuts and bolts of entrepreneurship, but importantly the mindset required to creatively solve problems, pivot after pivot.

ISAAC, the New London Public Schools, and Groton Public Schools will all contribute to the cost of the professional development, which is $1000/participant. The Ice House Entrepreneurship Program is nationally recognized and will provide high quality training to area educators who will then turn-key this training with colleagues in their own schools. ISAAC is excited to host the training and is hopeful that this experience will lead to real growth of the entrepreneurial mindset throughout our region.

Ice House has been done in countless school settings but never in an age cohort as young as a middle school before. We are thrilled to be breaking ground in this respect and excited about the potential to demonstrate its efficacy. The involvement of UConn Extension in the TRIP effort playing a formal role helping establish a system for tracking performance will provide the structure to observe systematically the impacts of the success we anticipate.

We welcome the support of the state to make this happen by selecting the Thames River region as an official innovation place in the state.

Thank you,

David Howes
Executive Director of ISAAC

March 28, 2017
To the CT Next Board of Directors:

The Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP) initiative has made clear that this work involves analyzing different domains to identify gaps, support integration of efforts, and improve how all stakeholders can be effective as team players in southeastern CT.

Efforts during the TRIP planning phase created a context for our organizations to step into leadership to realize undeveloped potential to bring sustainable practices into the work happening at the mouth of the Thames River. This builds on a partnership between Spark Makerspace and FRESH New London and the respective bodies of work we carry.

Spark is a community-run workshop and learning center in downtown New London. In order to build up a local skill-base in responsible building restoration Spark is partnering with Yestermorrow Design / Build School in Vermont. Yestermorrow specializes in teaching deep green building techniques to all people, not just professionals. They offer over 80 courses per year in sustainable design/build, energy efficiency & renewables, ecosystems & working landscapes, and architectural craft & woodworking at the campus in Waitsfield, Vermont. Spark is working with Yestermorrow to establish its first satellite campus - called the Yestermorrow Community Design Studio at the mouth of the Thames River - in New London, to bring this expertise into the urban environment where it is most needed. The Spark / Yestermorrow partnership will also involve Spark Members going up to VT to take classes in addition to classes being held in New London.

Yestermorrow believes that people shape - and are shaped by - the places in which they live. The design of our built environment, including homes, public spaces, roads, etc., have a profound influence on our sense of self, our communities, and supporting ecosystems. Yestermorrow’s mission is to empower design professionals and ordinary citizens alike to celebrate and create healthy places through participatory design and the hands-on act of making. Yestermorrow’s pedagogy is rooted in the design/build praxis. They teach that good design doesn’t end at the drafting table, but rather continues throughout the build process. In this way, the build process is full of design feedback, engaging practitioners in a deep and iterative ways.

For 37 years Yestermorrow’s influence on the design/build community has been far reaching. Yet we have come to understand that the current moment demands that we do more to create a healthier, more socially just and climate-resilient built environment. The partnership between Yestermorrow and Spark is service to this need. Our goal to be a resource to all residents of New London and Groton who wish to learn new marketable skills while simultaneously revitalizing their communities.
The Community Design Studio at the mouth of the Thames River will provide design/build courses in New London and Groton that advance community-sourced, participatory, public-interest architecture projects that serve as a model for the region and country. Courses will attract students locally as well as from outside of New London and Groton (with an emphasis on the Boston and New York City markets). Students can range from professional and emerging architects and builders and policy-makers, to change-makers, career seekers, and committed residents. A number of seats in each class will be reserved for local residents for free or a discount, depending on need. Learning objectives will focus on community-sourced design, and applying design/build skills to public-interest architecture projects.

Courses will place-based, and customized to advance the goals of the specific projects identified in the TRIP Redevelopment Project Plan.

FRESH New London has a decade-long history supporting all residents, young people in particular, to reclaim and beautify community spaces in order to grow delicious, culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable foods. FRESH’s mission is to build momentum for food system change through local agriculture and youth empowerment - using food to connect the community, encourage stewardship, inspire leadership and incite change.

Since 2005, FRESH New London programs have centered on building community leadership to promote food sovereignty and community revitalization. In that time, FRESH has worked intensively with over 300 youth leaders and thousands of New London residents for over 45,000 hours of practical community improvement projects, centered on growing food in the urban environment.

FRESH New London engages a broad and diverse membership who design, lead and implement innovative projects to build a more resilient community. A partnership with Spark and Yestermorrow will give FRESH members the knowledge and resources to enhance their capacity to create vibrant community gardens and edible public spaces. Through this work, FRESH and local residents will co-create and support additional community garden spaces, plant fruit trees and install community “snack” garden beds - for public harvest. These spaces serve as a locus to connect the community, build civic pride and advance principles of food justice.

Jon Day, founder of DAY & AGE- A Regional Design/Build & Restoration Company, has joined the TRIP team leading relationship and program development between Spark and Yestermorrow. Jon has a history as a successful visual artist, designer, craftsman, and entrepreneur. Jon is committed to empowering creative people to be effective at changing their world and making a difference. He is inspired by the unique and exciting opportunity to operationalize Yestermorrow’s first satellite program in southeastern CT.

Together we are moving toward identifying other organizations and individuals on both sides of the Thames River to join the effort in scoping how to make our region more sustainable. Once a wider and more representative group has formed we will work with TRIP to do an Innovation Boost to open-source the analysis of needs and gaps. We are particularly excited to bring business discipline into this idea generation process to develop projects and collaborations that drive environmental and social sustainability to happen in ways that are financially
self-sustaining.

We encourage the CT Next Board to support the candidacy of the Thames River Innovation Place initiative as an official “innovation place” in CT. This validation would generate further momentum strengthening our work as individual actors and elevating what we can do together to make New London and Groton a phenomenal place to live, work, visit, and start businesses that increase the sustainability of our region.

Alicia McAvay, Director of FRESH New London

Michael Crowledy, President of Yestermorrow Design / Build School

Hannah Gant, founder of Spark Makerspace

Jon Day, founder of Day & Age

Appendix B: A Summary of the Thames River Story of Place

A Summary of the Thames River Story of Place

Planning for the Thames River Innovation Places initiative began with an exploration of the qualities that make our region distinctive. Using a methodology known as Story of Place, the team developed a deep understanding of the context of the Thames River drawn from natural history, human history, and current conditions in order to discover recurring patterns. This approach helped us to identify innovation pursuits that build on and reinforce the region’s character and are therefore likely to be both successful and authentic.

Landscape Context
Geologically, the southeastern CT
region is defined by the churn of the tides. The region was formed when proto-Africa and proto-America collided, crushing the small continent of Avalonia between them, and then pulled apart again. The land folded like an accordion, then stretched and rifted, creating the fractured geological structure that underlies the southeastern corner of Connecticut today.

These initial waves of earth were then accentuated by waves of ice as glaciers carved out lakes and river valleys, and waves of water which formed a complex saw-tooth coastline. Both human and ecological systems have adapted to take advantage of this landscape of compression, complexity, and continual change.

Pattern One: Continuous Differentiating
Among the adaptive patterns discerned from our research, one particularly stood out: Continuous Differentiating. As a port city, colonial New London became a place where diverse cultures and peoples met. During the Whaling era, sailors arrived from all over Europe, the New World, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and Arctic, making it one of the most diverse cities in the world. Each subsequent economic wave, from provisioning the West Indies to the development of Electric Boat and Pfizer, has introduced new immigrant workers bringing new cultural experiences to the region.

The municipality itself differentiated as Groton split from New London, Groton city divided from the Town of Groton, and New London divided from Waterford. As with so much of CT, each community, as it achieves enough strength, differentiates itself from neighboring communities.

Pattern Two: Just Enough Structuring to Achieve Critical Mass
A second adaptive pattern offers a useful counterbalance to all of this differentiating: Just Enough Structuring to Achieve Critical Mass. Although diversity in a system can be a source of strength, it can also be a source of fragmentation in the absence of a larger structure. For example, although the fledgling U.S. lacked the resources to form its own Navy, by providing privateers operating out of New London with letters of mark the U.S. was able to provide just enough structure to quickly assemble a fleet out of a number of individual actors.

Today we observe this pattern manifesting as a culture of strong personal agency and
a creativity in getting things done with limited resources. This has been the engine for the founding of a plethora of community groups, foundations, churches, and not-for-profit organizations. In recent years, the Heritage Park has brought together diverse small sites on both sides of the river to create one world-class destination. Both the CURE Innovation Commons and SPARK Makerspace provide just enough structure to help startups gain access to resources and collaborators.

While the scattered historical sites along the Thames River are not a regional draw individually, by connecting them into one “park” with a water taxi, the Thames River Heritage Park achieves critical mass.

**Pattern Three: Coalescing Around Super-ordinate Aims**

The third adaptive pattern allows this community to create the “just enough structuring” needed to take advantage of the “continuous differentiating”. We call it Coalescing Around Super-ordinate Aims, referring to the larger collective purposes that must be in place if fragmented communities are to come together to “punch above their weight.”

John Winthrop, Jr. founded the New London colony to become a global center for the study of Alchemy. From the outset, this community focused on innovating in the fields of metallurgy, medicine, agriculture, and education. Each of the subsequent institutions that took root here had a similar higher aim that made it coherent and meaningful. For example, whaling provided light to the cities of Europe, and today the Coast
Guard, Navy Submarine Base, and Electric Boat protect the nation’s coastal waters. Southeastern CT coalesces around the defense industry.

**Vocation**

We used these patterns to help us articulate a vocation for the Thames River, a role that it is uniquely called to play in service to other communities in Connecticut and along the eastern seaboard. We arrived at the concept of *A Center for Growing Innovation Culture*. By placing focus on innovation culture rather than on specific innovations, the team chose to work on making innovation a consciously cultivated capability and to spread it across every sector of the community. This will require an approach that integrates education, policy, entrepreneurialism, investment, and fostering community pride and identity. The need for ongoing integration among these diverse cultural dimensions has led to the founding of a core team drawn from across the region and committed to continuing this effort into the future.

**Appendix C: Supplementary Tables and Maps**

### Table 1: Mixed-Use Zoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Mixed-Use Allowed</th>
<th>Single Use Only</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Mixed-Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of New London</td>
<td>931*</td>
<td>1,962</td>
<td>2,893</td>
<td>32%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Groton</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>1,204</td>
<td>1,695</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Groton</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td>1,763</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,872</td>
<td>4,479</td>
<td>6,351</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Proposed future text amendment of Fort Trumbull area in New London allows for mixed use within the boundary and increases the developable square footage.

**Within the impacted area, 32% of New London zoning allows for mix-use and continues to investigate possible mix use development in the future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1/4-mile radius</th>
<th>2-mile radius</th>
<th>Total Impact Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area (Acres)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>6,469</td>
<td>7,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>37,130</td>
<td>42,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents/Acre</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>11,122</td>
<td>28,572</td>
<td>31,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs/Acre</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix C: Supplementary Tables and Maps

Table 3: Downtown New London Vacancy Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Commercial Sq. Footage</th>
<th>Vacant Commercial Sq. Footage</th>
<th>Percent Vacant - Comm.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>121,590</td>
<td>12,817</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>170,159</td>
<td>43,463</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>63,755</td>
<td>22,798</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>21,558</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>259,920</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>344,909</td>
<td>50,773</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>231,702</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>217,625</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,431,218</td>
<td>137,351</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix C: Supplementary Tables and Maps

Map 1: New London Downtown Study Area (Vacancy Rates)
Appendix C: Supplementary Tables and Maps

Table 4: Mixed-Income Housing Accessibility
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Center Point</th>
<th>2 State Street, New London</th>
<th>301 Thames Street, Groton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walking Distance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-min</td>
<td>10-min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
<td></td>
<td>222</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Renter-Occupied</td>
<td></td>
<td>191</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Owner-Occupied</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multifamily - 2-4 units</td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multifamily - 5 or more units</td>
<td></td>
<td>138</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 600/month</td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600-900/month</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 900/month</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Value - with a mortgage</td>
<td></td>
<td>$126,682</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Value - without a mortgage</td>
<td></td>
<td>$105,371</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix D: Thames River Innovation Places Asset Map**