A Vision Plan to Re-connect Downtown New London to the North End

When the 1800's became the 1900's, the city of New London, Connecticut was ideal. Its fabric had evolved over the previous century from a small coastal town into a flourishing port development with healthy interconnected neighborhoods. This urban fabric of streets and buildings was disrupted during the mid-1900's when the revolutionary interstate system swept across the country and I-95 was constructed just off center of downtown. Now, 60 years later, New London has not yet recovered from the shock of that dramatic alteration; the lands around the interstate are fragmented and vacant, and the Northern and Southern portions of the city are almost completely cut off from one another.

This project is about developing a new vision for New London. Researchers will explore ways to reconnect the north end, where two college campuses are located, to the downtown, approximately 2 miles south. They will investigate a physical solution that will restore New London to the compact, walkable college town that it could be.

The research team feels that this project is important for New London, but it will also serve as a working model for thousands of traditional hometowns in America that have suffered from highway construction and urban renewal. The real importance of this project lies in the fact that the restoring of connections in our traditional communities is increasingly being seen as a significant strategy for not only for reducing the nation’s environmental footprint but also for enhancing economic and social sustainability.

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