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Report on Manresa Island findings and recommendations now complete

(Norwalk, Conn.) - After more than two years of work, a report studying the redevelopment possibilities of Manresa Island is now complete.

The four concepts outlined in the report are: a marina and boatyard; a renewable solar energy generation and storage facility, an educational campus, and a residential single-family home development. All four concepts include preserving open space and public access on the island. The full report can be viewed at norwalkct.org/manresareport.

Manresa Island is comprised of two parcels that occupy approximately 144 acres of Norwalk's shoreline. In 1960, a power plant was commissioned on the southern parcel by Connecticut Light & Power. The plant began operations as a coal-fired plant but was converted to oil in 1972. In 1999, the property was acquired by NRG Energy. In 2012, the site was inundated with storm surge during Hurricane Sandy and was subsequently closed in 2013. In 2017 the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Manresa Association and the City of Norwalk partnered to conduct a study with the aim of identifying potential future uses of the property and assessing the potential economic impact of those uses. Each contributed \$75,000 to fund these efforts.

"Getting to this point is the result of a great public and private partnership between the city and Manresa Association. We are committed to working with NRG, Manresa, and state and federal agencies to optimize the reuse of this property," said Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling. "This is one of, if not the best location in all of Norwalk. The site must be cleaned up and public access to the island needs to be expanded. Whatever happens on Manresa Island must provide value to our residents and reflect the desire of the community."

The Manresa Association was formed in 2013 as an advocacy group dedicated to ensuring that Manresa Island is environmentally safe, provides open space and conservation habitat, and contributes to the physical beauty of Norwalk and the Long Island Sound coastline. The association is comprised of over 900 households and several local neighborhoods and clubs.

"I appreciate the strong working relationship with the city and Mayor Rilling's leadership in helping create this partnership. His administration has been supportive throughout this process," said Charlie Taney, president of Manresa Association. "This report is the culmination of well over two years of work. This is phase one, and we now can look toward phase two."

A Steering Committee comprised of staff from the Mayor's Office, Planning and Zoning, and Economic Development, as well as Common Council members John Ignieri and Thomas Livingston, and Manresa Association members Taney and John Moeling, worked closely with consultant Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. on the development of the report. The Committee also conducted outreach with NRG Energy to solicit information and receive feedback on these findings.

"I look forward to our continued partnership as we pursue the timely re-use of the Manresa site in a manner consistent with the final report," said Livingston.

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